

US wants gamers to become air traffic controllers

13th April 2026



The USA's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has launched a recruitment campaign aimed at gamers. The FAA wants them to consider becoming air traffic controllers. There is a shortage of workers in the sector, so the government hopes people skilled at gaming could fill the growing number of vacancies. The US currently needs at least 3,000 controllers. Nick Daniels, president of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, said: "Our union welcomes innovative approaches to expanding the candidate pool, including outreach to individuals with high-level skills, such as gamers, so long as all pathways maintain the rigorous standards required of this safety-critical profession."

The recruitment drive has a video with an Xbox logo on it. The tag line is explicitly aimed at gamers. It says: "You've been training for this... Become an air traffic controller. It's not a game. It's a career." The promo adds: "You'll keep millions of people safe every year. And make a lot of money." The enticing salary is \$155,000 a year. US Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy said the country needs to tempt "a growing demographic of young adults who have many of the hard skills it takes to be a successful controller". Some current controllers have said gaming could be a useful skill. They said it had "an influence on their ability to think quickly, stay focused, and manage complexity".

Sources: bbc.com / abcnews.com / cnn.com

Writing

Gaming is a very useful skill. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

aviation / recruitment / gamers / air traffic controllers / government / profession / video / Xbox / game / career / money / salary / transportation / ability / complexity

True / False

- 1) The USA has launched a training programme for gamers. T / F
- 2) The USA wants gamers to design air traffic control games. T / F
- 3) The USA does not have enough air traffic controllers. T / F
- 4) An air traffic controller union is against the recruitment plan. T / F
- 5) The government recruitment ad has an Xbox logo on it. T / F
- 6) Air traffic controllers can earn over \$155,000 a year. T / F
- 7) The Transportation Secretary said it is hard for gamers to get skills. T / F
- 8) Some air traffic controllers said gaming helped them in their jobs. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. campaign | a. cutting edge |
| 2. shortage | b. tempting |
| 3. sector | c. effect |
| 4. innovative | d. lack |
| 5. rigorous | e. difficulty |
| 6. explicitly | f. area |
| 7. enticing | g. clearly |
| 8. current | h. drive |
| 9. influence | i. present-day |
| 10. complexity | j. strict |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of gaming?
- b) Who is the best gamer you know?
- c) Do you have a favourite online gamer?
- d) What do you think of the job of an air traffic controller?
- e) How skilled are you at gaming?
- f) What are your favourite games?
- g) Why do you think there are too few air traffic controllers?
- h) How stressful is the job of an air traffic controller?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. a shortage of workers | a. at gamers |
| 2. fill the growing number | b. of young adults |
| 3. innovative | c. critical profession |
| 4. individuals with high- | d. in the sector |
| 5. standards required of this safety- | e. salary is \$155,000 a year |
| 6. a video with | f. level skills |
| 7. The tag line is explicitly aimed | g. to think quickly |
| 8. The enticing | h. of vacancies |
| 9. a growing demographic | i. an Xbox logo on it |
| 10. an influence on their ability | j. approaches |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you think of xBox?
- What career interests you most?
- What hard skills do you have?
- How well can you stay focused?
- How good are you at managing complexity?
- Would you be a good air traffic controller?
- What questions would you like to ask an air traffic controller?

Spelling

- launched a eniutrtrmce campaign
- a shortage of workers in the cserto
- fill the growing number of vciseaacn
- ioinvaevnt approaches
- maintain the oriougsr standards
- this safety-cciltari profession
- eltcipxiyl aimed at gamers
- The eigcntni salary
- tempt a growing gcdhmipraeo
- be a uscufselsc controller
- an niueefcnl on their ability
- stay focused and manage lmipeoyctx

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. f	4. a	5. j
6. g	7. b	8. i	9. c	10. e

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions. (Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What has the USA's Federal Aviation Administration launched?
2.	What is there a lack of in the aviation industry in the USA?
3.	What does the US government hope gamers could fill?
4.	What position does Nick Daniels hold?
5.	What does Nick Daniels welcome?
6.	What logo does the recruitment video have on it?
7.	How much could air traffic controllers earn?
8.	What cabinet post does Sean P. Duffy in the US?
9.	Who said gaming could be a useful skill?
10.	What did air traffic controllers say gaming helped them to manage?

Speaking – Games

Rank these with your partner. Put the best games at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| • Grand Theft Auto | • Pokémon Pokopia |
| • Tomodachi Life | • Crimson Desert |
| • Resident Evil | • Monster Hunter |
| • Nioh 3 (Team Ninja) | • Halo |

Answers – True False

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.