Electronic Arts' (EA) communication targets a wide range of stakeholders. However, for the purposes of this assignment, I'm assuming that the target audience is referring to its customers, the players of its video games. One of the simplest yet most effective ways of understanding EA's audience profile is to segment them by the platform they use to play EA's games – PC, console or mobile. What follows is a more holistic understanding of these audiences –

PC – From a demographic standpoint, EA's PC gamers are primarily between 18 and 34 years old. This age range straddles two generations – Millennials and Gen Z. This assumption is validated by data from Similarweb, a software company specializing in web traffic and web analytics. According to Similarweb's data on EA's website traffic demographics for February 2024, 35.69% of those who visited its website were between 18 and 24 years old and 32.19% were between 25 and 34 years old (Similarweb, 2024). Almost 70% of EA's PC gamers are men (Similarweb, 2024). They tend to live in urban and suburban communities in developed countries like the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and China and are usually middle- to high-income earners (Similarweb, 2024).

From a psychographic standpoint, EA's PC gamers are competitive and have an achievement-oriented mindset, often engaging in online multiplayer modes and communities. This can be further validated by CEO Andrew Wilson's recent comments during the Q3 2024 earnings call that happened on January 30, 2024. "We are launching amazing games and experiences that entertain massive online communities, create blockbuster interactive storytelling, and harness the power of community in and around our games. EA's Q3 results are a great example of our execution across our strategy (Q3 2024 Earnings Call Transcript, 2024)." These gamers are tech-savvy, early adopters of gaming hardware and value high-quality graphics and processing power.

Console – EA's console gamers are relatively similar to PC gamers from a demographic standpoint. The differentiation becomes more visible from a psychographic standpoint. Unlike PC gamers, who are willing to go a step further for the best possible gaming experience, console gamers value ease of use and the

plug-and-play nature of their platforms. However, given the success of EA's multiplayer modes and communities, it is fair to say that, like their PC counterparts, console gamers are also competitive and achievement-driven.

Mobile – The demographics of mobile gamers are a bit more expansive than PC and console gamers, with mobile games like Plants vs. Zombies and The Sims appealing to players as young as 11 and even adults older than 35. In terms of income, they are relatively similar to the earlier categories, but in terms of location, EA's mobile gamers are more globally spread due to the proliferation of mobile phones and the ease of playing games on them. From a psychographic standpoint, these gamers value the portability and convenience of mobile gaming; they value simpler games that can be played in short bursts, such as during a commute, a break, or even simply to kill time. Importantly, this audience segment likes sharing mobile gameplay and winning streaks via social media.

Three frequently used storytelling themes/arcs

Hero's Journey – The Hero's Journey is probably the most used storytelling arc across EA games. It involves a protagonist who embarks on a journey, faces adversity, overcomes it and undergoes a personal transformation. A great example of this is Wild Hearts, which was released last February. The game takes players on a journey through feudal Japan, where they hunt down giant beasts in order to restore peace to the lands (2023).

The Underdog – EA often portrays its games or game characters as underdogs who must overcome challenges and adversity to achieve their goals. Probably the greatest example of this is the "Story Mode" within the FIFA games, now rebranded to EA Sports FC, which allows players to play and experience the journey of a young, unknown player trying to make it big in professional soccer.

Overcoming the monster – Brands use this storytelling arc to frame themselves or their products favorably against a strong threat. EA has utilized this arc across some of its most iconic games. For example, in Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, players take on the role of a young Jedi, Cal Kestis, who

overcomes numerous hurdles and powerful foes, ending in an ultimate showdown with Darth Vader himself.

Why do these storytelling themes/arc appeal to EA's audience?

EA's target audience overwhelmingly consists of individuals between 18 and 34 years old. Many within this audience are young individuals trying to find their feet or striving to carve out a place for themselves. Arcs like The Hero's Journey and The Underdog offer players an opportunity to slip into a fantasy world without losing relatability. They contain aspirational stories of persevering against the odds to achieve an ultimate objective, which can be highly empowering for players.

What research methods inform EA's decision to use these storytelling themes?

In my opinion, EA's own user data and in-game analytics are the most powerful tools at its disposal to understand audience behavior. Analyzing in-game behavior helps to understand which arcs or themes strongly resonated with players and drove engagement. A/B testing with multiple endings helps EA to understand and develop games that provide the most fulfilling experience.

Market research, either on its own or via third-party providers, helps EA understand the reception of its games and what elements were hit or miss with its audience. Focus groups and surveys can help understand the motivations behind why certain games appeal to certain people and what exactly their audiences are seeking when they pick up an EA title. Additionally, trawling social media and discussion forums is hugely helpful in understanding how the gaming community responds to games and in-game themes and elements.

Here are three questions to better understand EA's storytelling approach and its potential appeal

1. As its target audience matures, will EA adapt or change its storytelling approach?

2. What potential storytelling themes might appeal to the impending new generation of gamers?

3. Are there potentially unexplored storytelling themes? What research methods could EA utilize to uncover them?