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## [Weekend Reading: The Games World Definition of Free Games](#)

*Nothing is really free in life, not even games*

In this real world where prices seem to be absolutely obscene sometimes, people love free things and anything is way better than the rest - as long as it is free. It's about the same in the ever-growing games world: we have the hardcore "[free game](#)" hunters, the occasional "free game" hunters and the beginners, those who click banners which tell them they have won a free game, one million bucks or half of the Moon. No matter which category suits you best, one thing is clear: the term "free" completely excites you and makes you click a button or two you wouldn't have clicked otherwise. And, sooner rather than later, you will sadly find out one thing: "free" has a completely different meaning in the games world than in real life. Here is its complete definition:

1. You should know from the start that there is no such thing as "free game". Whenever you see the term, just run away because there's always a catch: you will end up paying more than you ever wanted, formatting your computer or just having a tourette-like cursing session.
2. "Free game" often comes with online multiplayer titles. It generally means that you are free to install the game and, for free, be destroyed, made fun of and considered a pariah. In order to enjoy the full experience of a "free" online game, you should either: a) pay for some "small bonuses" (aka [micro-transactions](#)) that will give you an armor nobody has ever seen before and a weapon that can kill three people with one shot; b) purchase a "very cheap, first month 50% off" gold membership which allows you to enter some special areas and do some really special stuff not available for regular members (usually, the most fun part of the game).
3. Whenever a game is free, for real, it only means that it's so old or it has such a poor quality that nobody wants to sell it anymore. Usually, this term comes with the "Abandonware" status attached to it and, generally, you are really allowed to get it and play it for free. Of course, you have most likely played the game in the past, when you were five; you'll have to use all kinds of emulators because your current OS is too much for the poor little fellow; it has five pixels dancing on the screen but, hey! It's free!
4. "Free game" is slowly starting to replace the term some of the older ones once knew as "free trial" - and indeed it is a trial, a lawsuit between you and your conscience: you know the game is repetitive, linear and not at all different from the other 10 you already have but you keep thinking "what the hell? I got so far already, I MUST see the ending!". And yes, you'll start spending money on your free game as a crazed person.
5. Another trend starts to arise when it comes to "free games" - ad support. This means that you are allowed to get the game and play it for free, but you'll have to endure watching an in-browser commercial about a toy shop in Pennsylvania before you are allowed to start killing one hundred zombies or, even worse, you'll have to allow pop-ups from different websites. And from the moment you decide to accept a "free", ad supported game to the moment your mom enters exactly when a pop-up appears to tell you about some hot chicks in your area waiting to meet you, is just a short matter of time.

As you can see, this is extremely sad, but true: "free game" in the games world doesn't mean what common sense or the English teacher at school keep telling you it means. Generally, a "free game" is just a title like any other (or even of a much lower quality) that you will eventually have to pay for. The most dangerous type of games, if you are to ask me: since you usually have to pay small amounts of cash on a daily/weekly/monthly basis, it will be hard for you to tell how much you have actually paid for your game. Just try to draw the line and calculate to see how much you spent on your "free" games last year. And if the sum you get says you could've bought three [GTA IV](#) copies on Tuesday, cheer up: we've all spent the same amounts on our free games!