

## Are Violent Video Games Harmful?

In 2005, U.S. stores sold over 250 million video games. That's more than one game for every home. Some people argue that violent computer and video games are a bad influence on children.

These games can contain frightening images. Players are often facing an enemy in a fight, so the player is directly involved in a violent act. Mark Smith of Florida describes what he does in one game: "I'll cut off a guy's head," says the 10-year-old. "Or sometimes I'll take my sword and chop him into pieces."

Some people think that playing violent video games causes aggression in real life. They believe that children are learning violent behavior from these games, in which players earn points for fighting or killing. In the real world, people are punished for hurting others. In the games, they are not.

Scientists have conducted research to see how violent games affect children. Some studies have shown a relationship between violent video games and violent behavior. Other studies don't show a direct relationship. So far, no one has been able to prove a direct link. Researcher Jeffrey Goldstein thinks that winning video games may have some good effects. When kids are good at the games, he claims, they feel better about themselves.

Parents and experts are split on the issue, and kids are too. Victoria Andreassi, age 9, believes video games can be harmful. "I think kids start to like the video games, so they start to act like the people in the games." Kate O'Brien, age 11, disagrees. "I don't think violent videos affect kids' behavior, because the people in the games don't look real."

Companies are now labeling video games to warn buyers. The new rating system is great. It lets concerned buyers avoid violent games. After all, not all games involve fighting and killing. Some are educational. What do you think?

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# Fact and Opinion

A **fact** is a statement that can be proven true. An **opinion** is a statement that tells what a person thinks, feels, or believes.

- To find a fact, ask: *Can this statement be proven true?*
- To find an opinion, ask: *Is this statement a personal belief or feeling?*

Use this chart to organize facts and opinions.

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

**Fact(s)**

**Opinion(s)**

**Resource Links**

**1** RDI Book 1: p. 415

**SAM** Keyword: Fact

