

VIDEO GAMES: CAN SOME CAUSE VIOLENCE?

Activity: Video Game Survey

For this activity, you will conduct a video-game survey. For comparison purposes, a trial survey, using most of the questions listed on the sample survey, was recently conducted (September 2004) at St. Marcellinus Secondary School in Mississauga, Ontario. One hundred and thirty five students—77 males and 58 females—were surveyed. The respondents were 14 and 15 years old.

Here is a brief list of some of the survey results:

- 42 per cent of males indicated that they played for over an hour every time they sat down to play
- 39 per cent of those surveyed said that they started playing video games between the ages of three and six (male – 47 per cent; female – 28 per cent)
- 44 per cent of respondents said they would often play video games instead of doing chores, while 34 per cent said they played video games when they were supposed to be doing their homework
- 49 per cent of those surveyed indicated feeling anxious while playing video games (male – 55 per cent; female – 41 per cent); 64 per cent said that they would sometimes become noticeably angry while playing (male – 62 per cent; female – 67 per cent); 27 per cent admitted to expressing anger and acting aggressively after playing (male – 30 per cent; female – 22 per cent)
- 39 per cent of respondents believe that video games can cause a person to act violently outside of the game environment (male – 29 per cent; female – 53 per cent)
- 51 per cent of males surveyed said they preferred playing shooter and fighting games (female – 31 per cent)
- 71 per cent of males characterized the games they play as being either violent or extremely violent (female – 36 per cent)
- 37 per cent of those surveyed said they often played games rated “M” (mature) or higher (male – 60 per cent; female – 48 per cent), while 68 per cent indicated that they have never been prevented from buying or renting a game rated “M” or higher (male – 73 per cent; female – 62 per cent). Similarly, 72 per cent (male – 69 per cent; female – 76 per cent) of the 14 and 15 year olds surveyed said they seldom pay attention to game ratings

The results of the St. Marcellinus survey were compiled by students, with final results being calculated by a student and a teacher. While short of being an accurate scientific summary, it does provide a valuable, general idea of the impact of video games on the communities we live in.

Your Task

Now it's time for you to conduct your own survey. You can either use the sample survey that follows this page or make up a survey of your own. It might be valuable for you to compare your survey results with the St. Marcellinus results. Feel free to make any necessary amendments or improvements. You might wish to share the results and your interpretation of your survey with others in your school, local board of education, community, or even local news media.