Document Camera   Name:_____

Directions: Plan for the following prompt.

Video games are a fun way to escape reality and to explore a different world.
You have read several sources about the violence in video games and how it affects people.
Write an opinion essay explaining whether or not you believe violent video games make people
violent in real life. Use information from the text to support your opinion.

I _____

R1_____   a._____

                                   b._____

R2_____   a._____

                                   b._____

R3_____   a._____

                                   b._____

C _____

Practice

Name:_____

Directions: Plan for the following prompt.

You have read several sources about the advantages and disadvantages of extending the school day. Write an opinion essay about whether or not you agree with schools extending the school day. Use information from the text to support your opinion.

I _____

R1_____   a._____

                                              b._____

R2_____   a._____

                                              b._____

R3_____   a._____

                                              b._____

C _____

Top Score Writing

(Source 1 – Agree)

Violence in Video Games

1   Video games have been around for over 50 years, but they began to hit mainstream popularity in the 1970s and 1980s. Violent video games started to gain attention in the 1990s. Video games have become a highly-favored activity for people of all ages. This multibillion-dollar industry is raking in more money than videos and DVDs. With the rise in technological advances, video games are becoming more diverse, realistic, and violent. Games such as Manhunt, Mad Max, Mortal Kombat X, and Street Fighter are among those with extremely violent content. The leaders of the video game industry deny harmful effects, such as increased aggression. However, researchers believe otherwise.

Video Game Ratings

2   Video games are given a rating from the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) based on their content. Ratings range from C for Early Childhood to M for Mature audiences over the age of 17. Many of the popular games are promoting negative themes such as hurting people or animals, use of drugs or alcohol, criminal behavior, and foul language. There has been an increase in violent attacks by people who **habitually**[1] played violent video games. Some violent attacks that have made news headlines in recent years were committed by youths and teenagers who have admitted to excessively playing violent video games.

Real Life or Fake Violence

3   Violent video games are those that portray intentional acts by individuals to inflict harm on others. These "individuals" could be cartoon characters or a humanistic avatar, thanks to all the advances in technology. Video games are now being enjoyed by people of all ages. Although teenagers often spend more time than younger children on video games, the average girl spends more than an hour a day playing video games, and boys spend more than two hours each day. The concern comes from children and young adults being exposed to excessive violence in video games.

4   There are many different types of video games to choose from, although violent games are highly marketed. Most television commercials and advertisements are for video games that contain high-impact action and violent scenes. In some instances, the video gaming industry does not accurately rate their video games. If a game has a cartoon-like character, it may be more likely to be rated as appropriate for general audiences even if those cartoon characters commit violent acts. With all the advances made to technology and video games, characters are designed to be more realistic looking. This makes the experience more real, so you feel like you are actually inside the game. This makes it too easy for youths to switch from real life to fantasy.

[1] habitually – of the nature of habit, fixed by or resulting in a habit

"Violence in Video Games" written for educational purposes.

(Source 2 – Agree)

Video Games Linked to Real-Life Violence

5   As the level of violence in video games is increasing, the concern is growing for those who play those games, especially those who play in excess. Opponents of violent video games believe that hurting someone in a video game will foster the desire to want to hurt people or commit violent acts in real life. Violent video games increase aggression in people by exposing them to aggressive acts and stimulating excitement for completing violent missions. Children and young teenagers are easily susceptible to the thrill of playing violent video games. Children are spending excessive amounts of time playing video games which can lead to less socializing with peers. They become **desensitized**[2] to real-life violence and can develop trouble differentiating real life from make-believe. Instead of fostering prosocial behaviors and positive actions, violent video games are encouraging aggression and negative thoughts.

6   Many studies have proven that playing violent video games causes more aggression, bullying, and fighting among school-aged children. Children and teenagers that are exposed to violent media have shown numbness towards violence. They tend to imitate violence and show more aggressive behaviors. Researchers have shown a connection between school fights and **avid**[3] violent video game players.
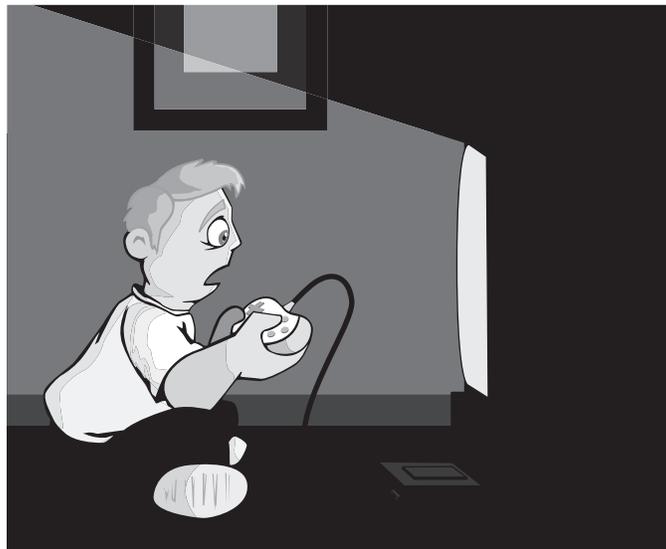
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[2] desensitized – to lessen the sensitiveness of

[3] avid – showing great enthusiasm for; or interest in

7   An interesting connection that researchers and parents have found is that violence in video games is rewarded instead of punished, as they would be in real life. In some games, you increase levels by completing violent attacks and missions. Some are so gruesome that they award points for how many people the player eliminates. When children and teenagers play these games in excess, they can quickly forget that violence in real life has serious consequences and repercussions.

8   Children who play violent video games extensively are more likely to have increased aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It also causes them to have decreased prosocial feelings and empathy.

"Video Games Linked to Real-Life Violence" written for educational purposes.

Top Score Writing
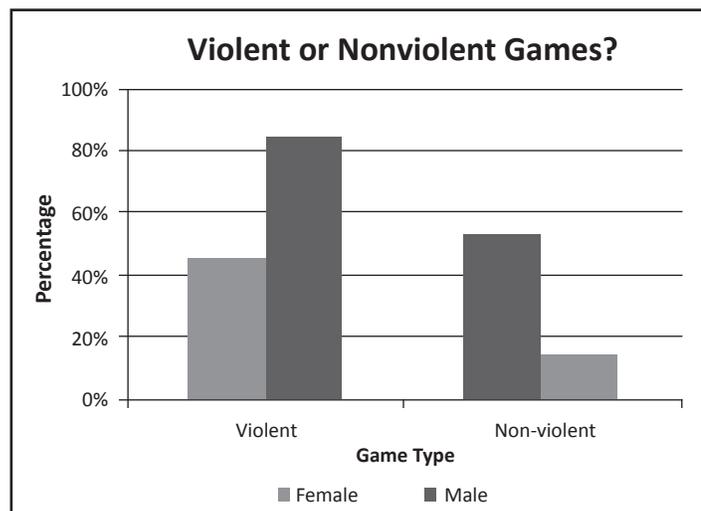
(Source 3 – Agree)
Linking Violence to Video Games

9   There are many video games that promote educational content. The problem is that many of the most popular games emphasize negative themes such as hurting people or animals, the use of drugs and alcohol, criminal behavior, and disrespect for authority. Children who play violent video games in excess become numb to the horror of violence, may imitate the violence they see in real life, and demonstrate more aggressive behaviors.

10   Many violent video games simulate violent actions that can lead to real-life violent behavior. Game controllers are also more advanced and help make games more realistic, therefore enhancing the training of violent behaviors. Video games encourage active participation in different types of violent behavior. For instance, one study found that first-person shooter games trained players to have better accuracy in shooting a gun outside of the game. Younger children may be more influenced by the violent images found in video games. Playing violent video games is not going to turn healthy children into violent people. However, it can greatly drive up the odds of aggression.

11   Recent studies have revealed the following information:

- About 68% of all American households have a computer or video game
- More than 90% of children in the United States play video games
- 85% of video games on the market have some form of violence
- Immediately after playing violent video games, young children are more likely to demonstrate physical aggression
- Boys appear to be affected more by violence in video games than girls
- Boys prefer violent video games over nonviolent video games

Violent or Nonviolent Games?

Percentage — 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%

Game Type: Violent, Non-violent

Female | Male

"Linking Violence to Video Games" written for educational purposes.

(Source 4 – Disagree)
No Proof

12   Opponents who hypothesize that playing violent video games leads to children and teenagers being more aggressive have not been able to provide sufficient evidence to prove their theory. The Entertainment Software Association (ESA) is an organization committed to helping parents make sure that their children are playing appropriate video games. The ESA established the rating system that assigns age and content rating information for video games. Their research revealed that there is no definitive link between violent programming and violent behavior. They also found that 95% of parents monitor the content of the games their children play and believe children use video games as a form of relaxation.

Benefits of Video Games

13   Video games can help sharpen decision-making skills. As a child's brain develops, they must learn how to make quicker and more appropriate decisions in life. Many games are filled with moral dilemmas which force the player to focus on the positive and negatives to make the right decision. This means that although some games entail violent acts or depict brutal scenes, the player is asked to make positive decisions. These strategy games encourage the child to think on a higher level. Violent games teach children how to make split-second decisions in case of an emergency. There may be some instances in real life when a child or teenager is exposed to a violent situation. These violent video games can prepare youth on how to handle these dangerous situations quickly and efficiently. Children can play violent video games without becoming aggressive.

Long-Term Effects

14   Multiple studies have been done on the effects on children and teenagers who play violent video games excessively. Researchers hypothesized that playing violent video games would make players more aggressive. The studies concluded that there was no definitive data to confirm that playing violent video games leads to any long-term effects. Another note is that no long-term studies have been conducted yet, so those who believe that violent video games lead to long-term aggressive behaviors are just **speculating**[4].

15   It is simply not fair to blame violent video games for increased aggression in children and teenagers. Just because a child enjoys playing violent video games does not mean they will become bullies or perform violent acts. There is no proof available to place all the blame on video games. There needs to be more accountability. Sometimes children and teenagers commit violent acts because they are naturally aggressive.

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[4] speculating – to engage in thought or reflection, to guess or make an assumption

"No Proof" written for educational purposes.

(Source 1)

More Time in the Classrooms Equals More Success

1   The concept of extending the typical school day has been gaining momentum across the nation. Advocates are for extending the school day because they believe that more teaching time is necessary to keep American students competitive in the world. Other supporters of the extended school day think that the increased time spent for reading, language arts, and math are taking away from the time available for science, social studies, physical education, and other special areas such as art and music. Additional time is necessary to cover all the subjects sufficiently. Every year, many children in the United States are falling short of the benchmarks set to attain basic achievement in their grade level. One suggested solution is to extend the school day. Some districts across the nation are already testing out this theory by extending the typical school day by 30 minutes in some and as much as two hours in others.

2   There are positives associated with an extended school day: more time for learning, more time for other subjects, and more time to complete work at school. Lengthening the school day will give teachers more time to spend on students and assist those who need additional time in more difficult areas. Extended school day options include adding time to each class session or intensive sessions in reading or math. Teachers often express that there is not enough time in the school day and they feel rushed to cover topics. For this reason, teachers are beginning to favor the concept of extending the school day. More time will give teachers the opportunity to meet students' needs more adequately.

3   Many subject areas have been cut over the past few years with the hope of increasing reading and math test scores. However, there is no data to show that cutting other subjects lead to an increase in reading and math skills attainment. Extending the school day can provide children with more time in favored subjects such as art, music, social studies, science, and physical education. The extra time in the day can allow children more access to the subjects they like.

4   Parents and children are beginning to agree with the concept of extended school days because it can cut down the amount of homework given since there is more time during the school day to complete assignments. When teachers have more time to cover important content, there is less need to assign homework assignments. More time to complete work at school allows children who are struggling to complete their school work during regular hours more time to finish. The pressure to complete work too quickly is taken off the students' shoulders, and they no longer have to rush through their work. Students have more time to understand the lessons being taught and more opportunities to ask questions or express their concerns. Not all children learn the same way, on the same schedule. The extended school day allows for more opportunities for success.
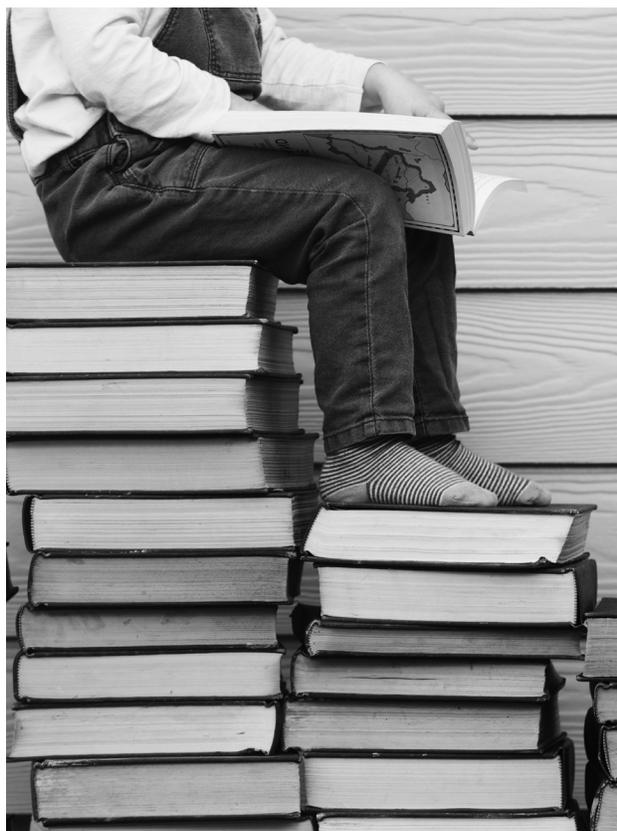
5   The extended school day definitely has its positive attributes. Students who participate in an extended school day have more time to learn important content, teachers have more time to teach lessons adequately, and more time is provided for other subjects. The idea of extending the school day is rapidly gaining attention across the nation, and more and more schools will soon be adopting the model.

"More Time in the Classrooms Equals More Success" written for educational purposes.

Top Score Writing

(Source 2)
Not the Answer

6   It is a known fact that American children are falling behind other countries, like Japan, when it comes to the standards of education being met. Politicians and school board members are starting to consider the possibility of extending the school day in order to provide more needed time in the classroom. Some educators think more time will be the answer to low test scores; however, some are unsure and not convinced that extending the school day is the answer. Research shows that countries with higher student tests scores actually have shorter school days than the United States. Policymakers need to take into consideration the positives and negatives of extending the school day before it can be considered law in any state.

7   One drawback of extending the school day is that there is no proof that more time will equate to more learning. Teaching methods need to be examined to be sure that they are effective. If teachers are not meeting necessary standards as valuable educators, then giving them more time with the same students will not equal better education. Schools should consider working with teachers or providing them more support so the level of education that they are delivering is more dynamic and beneficial to students.

8   American families also like their children to participate in extracurricular activities of their choice. These activities allow children to relieve stress and work on social relationships. Children can spend time developing their own interests. If schools are granted extended school days, then students will have less time to spend outside of school engaging in favored activities. Children spend a huge portion of their day being told what to do, how to do it, and what rules they need to follow; they deserve some time to be free and have some fun.

9   Extending the school day is not the answer to improving standardized tests scores. There are advantages to extending the school day; however, they do not outweigh the disadvantages. This debate continues in the school district and policymakers' meetings.

"Not the Answer" written for educational purposes.