

## PRO Contribute to Youth Violence

1. Increasing reports of bullying can be partially attributed to the popularity of violent video games. The 2008 study *Grand Theft Childhood* reported that 60% of middle school boys who played at least one Mature-rated game hit or beat up someone, compared to 39% of boys that did not play Mature-rated games. [2]
2. Video games often reward players for simulating violence, and thus enhance the learning of violent behaviors. Studies suggest that when violence is rewarded in video games, players exhibit increased aggressive behavior compared to players of video games where violence is punished. [23]
3. Violent video games desensitize players to real-life violence. It is common for victims in video games to disappear off screen when they are killed or for players to have multiple lives. In a 2005 study, violent video game exposure has been linked to reduced P300 amplitudes in the brain, which is associated with desensitization to violence and increases in aggressive behavior. [24]
4. A 2000 FBI report includes playing violent video games in a list of behaviors associated with school shootings.[25]
5. Violent video games teach youth that violence is an acceptable conflict-solving strategy and an appropriate way to achieve one's goals. [26] A 2009 study found that youth who play violent video games have lower belief in the use of nonviolent strategies and are less forgiving than players of nonviolent video games.
6. Violent video games cause players to associate pleasure and happiness with the ability to cause pain in others. [3]
7. Young children are more likely to confuse fantasy violence with real world violence, and without a framework for ethical decision making, they may mimic the actions they see in violent video games. [4]
8. Violent video games require active participation, repetition, and identification with the violent character. With new game controllers allowing more physical interaction, the immersive and interactive characteristics of video games can increase the likelihood of youth violence. [5]
9. Playing violent video games increases aggressive behavior and arousal. [27] A 2009 study found that it takes up to four minutes for the level of aggressive thoughts and feelings in children to return to normal after playing violent video

## CON Doesn't Contribute to Violence

1. Violent juvenile crime in the United States has been declining as violent video game popularity has increased. The arrest rate for juvenile murders has fallen 71.9% between 1995 and 2008. The arrest rate for all juvenile violent crimes has declined 49.3%. In this same period, video game sales have more than quadrupled. [7][8]
2. A causal link between violent video games and violent behavior has not been proven. [34] Many studies suffer from design flaws and use unreliable measures of violence and aggression such as noise blast tests. Thoughts about aggression have been confused with aggressive behavior, and there is a lack of studies that follow children over long periods of time.
3. A 2004 US Secret Service review of previous school-based attacks found that one-eighth of attackers exhibited an interest in violent video games, less than the rate of interest attackers showed in violent movies, books, and violence in their own writings. The report did not find a relationship between playing violent video games and school shootings. [35]
4. The small correlations that have been found between video games and violence may be explained by violent youth being drawn to violent video games. Violent games do not cause youth to be violent. Instead, youth that are predisposed to be violent seek out violent entertainment such as video games.
5. Playing violent video games reduces violence in adolescent boys by serving as a substitute for rough and tumble play. [36] Playing violent video games allows adolescent boys to express aggression and establish status in the peer group without causing physical harm.
6. Video game players understand they are playing a game. Their ability to distinguish between fantasy and reality prevents them from emulating video game violence in real life. [9]
7. Playing violent video games provides a safe outlet for aggressive and angry feelings. A 2007 study reported that 45% of boys played video games because "it helps me get my anger out" and 62% played because it "helps me relax." [37]
8. Violent video games provide healthy and safe opportunities for children to virtually explore rules and consequences of violent actions. Violent games also allow youth to experiment with issues such as war, violence and death without real world consequences. [38]
9. The level of control granted to video game players, especially in terms of pace and directing the actions of their character, allows youth to regulate their emotional state during play. [39] Research shows that a perception of being in control reduces emotional and stressful responses to events.

games. It takes five to ten minutes for heart rate and aggressive behavior to return to baseline. Video games that show the most blood generate more aggressive thoughts. When blood is present in video games, there is a measurable increase in arousal and hostility. [28]

10. Playing violent video games causes the development of aggressive behavioral scripts [29]. A behavioral script is developed from the repetition of actions and affects the subconscious mind. An example of a common behavioral script is a driving script that tells drivers to get in a vehicle, put on a seat belt, and turn on the ignition. Similarly, violent video games can lead to scripts that tell youth to respond aggressively in certain situations. Violence in video games may lead to real world violence when scripts are automatically triggered in daily life, such as being nudged in a school hallway.
11. A 1998 study found that 21% of games sampled involved violence against women [23]. Exposure to sexual violence in video games is linked to increases in violence towards women and false attitudes about rape such as that women incite men to rape or that women secretly desire rape. [30]
12. Several studies in both the United States and Japan have shown that, controlling for prior aggression, children who played more violent video games during the beginning of the school year showed more aggression than their peers later in the school year. [31]
13. Exposure to violent video games is linked to lower empathy in players. In a 2004 study of 150 fourth and fifth graders by Professor Jeanne Funk, violent video games were the only type of media associated with lower empathy. Empathy, the ability to understand and enter into another's feelings, plays an important role in the process of moral evaluation and is believed to inhibit aggressive behavior. [32]
14. When youth view violence in video games, they are more likely to fear becoming a victim of acts of violence. According to a 2000 joint statement by six leading national medical associations including the American Medical Association and American Psychological Association, this escalated fear results in youth not trusting others and taking violent self-protective measures. [33]
15. Violent video games can train youth to be killers. The US Marine Corps licensed *Doom II* in 1996 to create *Marine Doom* in order to train soldiers. In 2002, the US Army released first-person shooter *America's Army* to recruit soldiers and prepare recruits for the battlefield. [6]

10. Alarmist claims similar to current arguments against violent video games have been made in the past when new media such as radio, movies, and television have been introduced. Claims that these various mediums would result in surges in youth violence also failed to materialize.
11. Violent video games may affect the form of violence, but does not cause the violence to occur. [40] Youth might model violent acts on what they have seen in video games, but the violence would still occur in the absence of video games.
12. Exposure to violent video games has not been shown to be predictive of violent behavior or crime. Any link found between video games and violence is best explained by other variables such as exposure to family violence and aggressive personality. [10]
13. When research does show that violent video games cause more arousal and aggression, it is because the comparative game is less exciting. [41] A short-term increase in arousal and aggression does not mean a child is going to leave his or her house and commit a violent act.
14. In 2005, the US had 2,279 murders committed by teenagers (27.9 per million residents) compared to 73 in Japan (3.1 per million). Per capita video game sales were \$5.20 in the US compared to \$47 in Japan. This example illustrates that there is no correlation between violent behavior and playing video games. [11] [12] [13]