

Video Game Ratings



Pre-reading

Questions: What do you know about video game ratings?
What more would you like to know about them?

Definitions: Game console – a device for playing video games
Suitable – right for the situation

Reading

17 Video and computer games are popular among people of all ages. A recent study by the Kaiser
36 Family Foundation found that 83 percent of children aged 8 to 18 live in homes with a video game
console. Forty percent of those children have the game console in their bedroom.

49 The **content** of today’s video and computer games varies widely. Game packages have
62 information about the content that can help renters and buyers decide whether a particular game is
78 suitable before they take it home.

84 The Entertainment Software Rating Board maintains a two-part rating system for video and
97 computer games. First, is the lettered rating symbol, such as E or M. The letter suggests the game’s
115 age appropriateness and appears on the front of the game box. Second, are the content descriptors, such
132 as *Blood and Gore*, which point out specific elements of the game that have caused the rating and that
151 may be of concern. They appear on the back of the box.

163 Players can change the content of a rated game by downloading software from the Internet onto
179 their computers. These programs, called “mods,” can make a game’s content more **explicit** than the
194 rating indicates. This in turn, could make the game inappropriate for players like kids and teens.

210 Games rated AO (Adult Only) have content that is suitable only for people 18 and older. These
227 games may include, “prolonged scenes of intense violence and/or graphic sexual content and nudity.”
242 Games rated M (mature) “have content that may be suitable for people over 17, and may contain,
259 “intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content, and strong language.”

269 Games rated T (Teen) have content that may be suitable for kids over 13. They may contain,
286 “violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood and the use of strong language.” Games
300 rated E10+ (Everyone 10 and older) have content that may be suitable for kids at least 10. These games
319 may contain, “more cartoon, fantasy, or mild violence, mild language, and/or minimal suggestive
333 themes.”

334 An E (Everyone) rating is found on games that have content that may be suitable for kids at
352 least 6 years of age. Games rated EC (Early Childhood) are intended for preschoolers who are at least
370 3 years old. The games with an EC rating contain no material that parents would find inappropriate.

387 Source: Federal Trade Commission’s *Video Games: Reading the Ratings on the Games People Play*

Level 7.0

Understanding

1. Who does the rating for video games? _____

2. What does the word **explicit** mean in this text? _____

3. What are the two ratings? What do they tell the renter/buyer? _____

4. Where are the two ratings on each game found? _____

5. Do you feel a rating system for video games is necessary? Why or why not? _____

6. How popular are video games? _____

7. What does the word **content** mean? _____

8. How can the content of a rated game be changed? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Do you play video games? If yes, what are your favorite games? Why do you like them?
Do you check the ratings before you rent or purchase games? Why or why not?
