

Reading

1. Many school-age children in the United States play video games for close to an hour a day. Almost 90% of the most popular video games contain violence, and much of it is extremely violent. In the US, the video game industry **rates** games that contain violence or sexual **images** as “M” for **mature** audiences. **Researchers** have discovered, though, that children as young as seven years old have played these games.
2. In July 2005, the state of Illinois passed a law that made it **illegal** to sell or rent a video game containing violence or sexual images to anyone under 18 years of age. Those who broke the law would face a year in prison or a \$5,000 **fine**. The video game industry was told to **label** these games as “violent” or “sexually **explicit**.” In 2006, this state law was thrown out.
3. For several years, lawmakers in the US tried to get video game labelling acts passed. They wanted violent video games to have a warning like cigarettes. The warning would say, “WARNING: Exposure to violent video games has been linked to **aggressive** behaviour.” Many parents and researchers support these efforts. They argue that children who play violent video games may act more violently in real life.
4. Many **bills** related to video game violence have been **rejected** by American courts on the basis of free speech. Those who sell or rent video games fight the bills and win. They think that parents, not video stores, should be responsible for what their children are doing or seeing. In addition, no scientific study in the US has proven that video games lead to aggressive behaviour.
5. Despite the lack of **proof**, many people blame gun violence in America on the video game industry. They think that violent gaming causes **antisocial** behaviour that may lead to mass shootings. In 2012, after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, a US senator said that video games are a bigger problem than guns. The National Rifle Association (NRA) agreed. President Obama argued that there was no proof to this; however, he asked Congress to approve funding to conduct further studies. The president stated, “Congress should fund research on the effects violent video games have on young minds. We don’t benefit from **ignorance**.”

“I’m very careful about how I portray violence in my films. I do believe that violence, especially violent video games, are not a good thing for young kids.”

—Spike Lee