

Activity: *Debating the Issue*

Whatever the debate format, ask students to use academically productive talk in arguing their positions. In particular, students should provide reasons and evidence to back up their assertions. It may be helpful to read the sample positions in the Teacher Notes section of this guide to illustrate some possibilities, but students should be encouraged to take their own positions on the issue at hand.

Position 1: The rating systems in place now provide useful guidance for families.

Position 2: The rating systems we use should be improved and expanded.

Position 3: Rating systems are unnecessary. People should watch or play what they want.

Position 4: The rating systems we have are fine but parents and vendors need to pay more attention.

Activity: *Science Passage*

Ask students to complete the sentences below using one of the weekly focus words (or a related word).

banned rated occur complex interact

The problem with violence in video games and the media is a _____ [complex] one. There have been many studies done that try to link the playing of violent video games, or watching violent movies, with aggressive behavior. One such study at Massachusetts General Hospital uncovered some new information about teens and their violent games. The stereotype of a gamer shows them to be solitary and with no social skills. This new study found that kids who play games _____ [rated] M for mature were more likely to _____ [interact] in groups.

The Indiana University School of Medicine conducted a similar study. Teenagers were asked to play one of two games for half an hour. One game was nonviolent and the other was so violent that it was in the process of being _____ [banned]. After playing, the teens underwent a brain scan. Researchers found that the teens who had played the mature games showed more activity in their amygdalas, a part of the brain that controls emotions. They also noticed a decrease in activity in the frontal lobes, the part of the brain responsible for self-control.

When horrible crimes are committed by young people, critics are quick to claim that such things _____ [occur] because of violence in the media. Do we have evidence for this? Does what we watch, or play, have anything to do with how we act?