

## Video Games: What's Cool and What's Not?

by Marie Peters

Children have been crazy about video games for decades. It is common to see kids sitting in front of the tv for hours and hours at a time. Some parents get very upset by this, but should they?

A recent study by the United States Government showed that video games help with the early reading skills of young children. Four-year olds who took part in the study improved at recognizing letters and matching sounds with letters. Playing educational video games at a very young age also helped children be more successful when they entered elementary school. Older children benefit from gameplay, too. Studies from the University of Jonesboro share that teachers see improved test scores in reading and math when video games are a part of instruction. Kids pay attention to engaging math video games more than just completing bookwork daily.

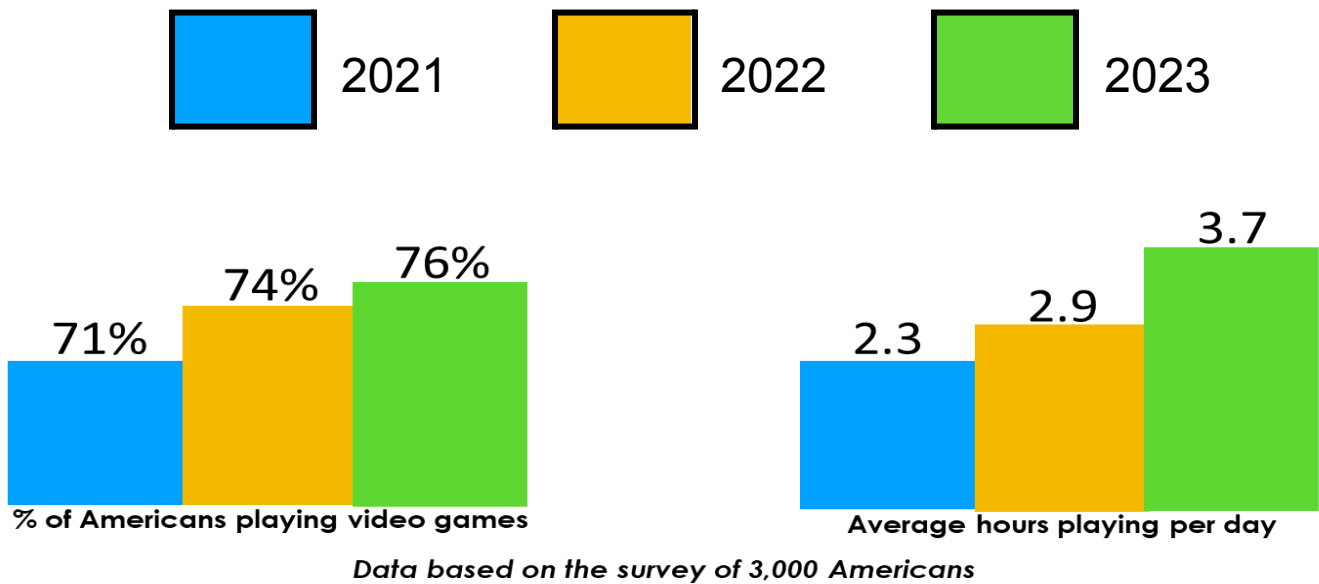
Interestingly, if you have poor eyesight, you may want to think about playing video games. Games that involve focusing on objects force the eyes to notice small changes in brightness of the images. As people get older, they lose their ability to see changes in brightness. This is why older drivers find night driving to be a real challenge. Playing video games can help with your vision as you age. What a fun way to correct bad eyesight!

While video games have been proven to help vision, they have also shown to cause some problems in the body. Studies prove that video games cause sleep problems in some normally healthy people. One major sleep problem is called insomnia. Insomnia means you are unable to sleep. Video games overwork a person's brain. This can make it difficult for the mind to rest. Some people have insomnia because they just can't stop thinking about the last video game they were playing.

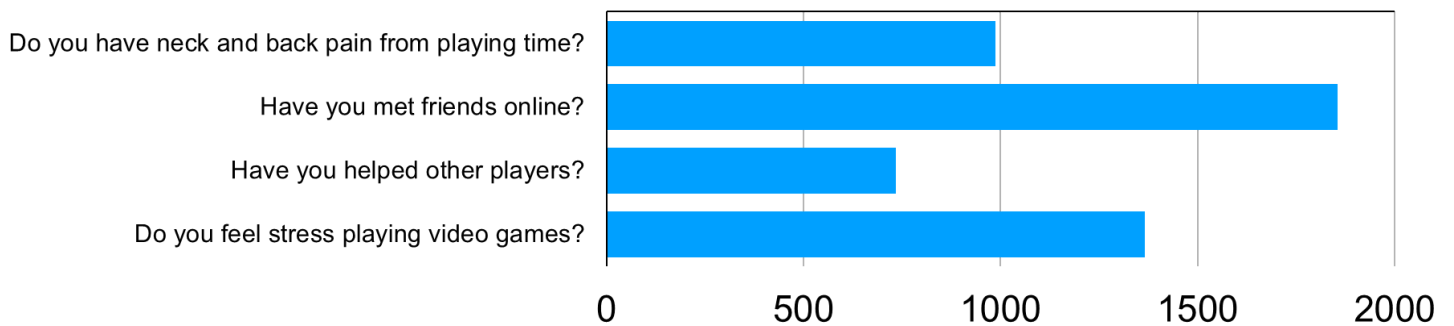
Sleep issues may be worth the trouble though because of the life skills video games teach. The majority of games promote teamwork and communication. This early introduction to problem-solving and cooperation can give kids a valuable head start in becoming an adult. However, it is important to note that, like eating too much candy, spending too much time playing video games can make us forget about important life things like homework, chores, and spending time with friends and family. Some people get so caught up in gaming that they never socialize with other people face-to-face.

It is clear there is much to consider when playing video games. Striking a balance between life in front and away from the screen is important in everyone's life.

## Screen Time Continues to Soar



## The Benefits and Downfalls of Playing Video Games



**\*This survey includes responses from 2,000 Americans ages 12-40. Each person was asked specific questions about the pros and cons of playing video games.**

### **Writing Task**

**On-Demand Writing Directions:** Carefully read the prompt below. Then read the provided texts. Enter your essay in the space provided.

### **Video Games**

**In your opinion, are video games more helpful or harmful to people? Write a well-organized essay stating your opinion. Support your opinion with evidence from the texts.**