

How Mortal Kombat (and moral panic) changed the gaming world

Level 1: Elementary

Article summary: This article explains the historical importance of Mortal Kombat and how it created a whole new market for video games.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking

Language focus: Dependent prepositions

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students use the key words in the correct form to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they know how the words are used in other contexts.

Key:

1. violence
2. console
3. version
4. extreme
5. fight
6. moral panic
7. arcade
8. shape
9. industry
10. opponent

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to let students discuss the appeal that doing the 'wrong thing' has for young people and how companies might benefit from this appeal and use it to sell products. Ask them to share personal examples of when young people do the wrong thing for fun. End by having students brainstorm the names of products that appeal to the idea of doing the wrong thing (e.g. guilty pleasures like chocolate or brands that are deliberately rebellious, such as *Liquid Death* or *Harley Davidson*). Encourage them to think of as many examples as possible and not to rule them out.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do this task individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Tell students that some of the words may appear in a different form in the article. As an extension activity, ask students to highlight the key words in the article.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1. console | 6. moral panic |
| 2. extreme | 7. version |
| 3. fight | 8. violence |
| 4. arcade | 9. opponent |
| 5. industry | 10. shape |

3. Comprehension check

- a. Students decide if the statements are True or False based on the information in the article. Encourage the students to use full sentences when they correct the sentences that are false, e.g. Item 1 is false, so students may say, *Joe Lieberman talked about violence in video games in 1993.*

Key:

1. False (*Joe Lieberman talked about violence in video games in 1993.*)
2. False (*Mortal Kombat first came out in arcades.*)
3. True
4. True
5. True
6. False (*Nintendo removed the blood from its version of Mortal Kombat.*)
7. True
8. True

4. Key language

- a. This activity helps students explore language for giving reasons and extra examples. Ask them to complete the table with the expressions in bold. As an extension activity, ask students to look for these examples in the article.

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Key:

Reasons: As a result of, owing to

Examples: On top of, In addition to

- b. Students complete the sentences using the expressions from the table for giving reasons and extra examples.

Key:

1. Owing
2. On top
3. In addition
4. As a result
5. On top
6. Owing
7. As a result
8. In addition

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the statements related to the article and give their reasons and justifications for each answer, referring to their own experiences wherever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. Explain to students that they will talk about a 'scare' from their childhood, meaning something that their parents worried about them doing, and they did anyway. For example, violent video games, sports (like skateboarding) or other teen fads. Ask students to complete the notes. Monitor and help with any phrases or vocabulary needed.
- b. Students work in groups and talk about the 'scares' from their childhood.
- c. Hold a class discussion about the most common answers. Have students discuss if, now as adults, they agree with their parents that these activities / media were dangerous.