ESRB Ratings

EARLY CHILDHOOD
Titles rated **EC (Early Childhood)** have content that may be suitable for ages 3 and older. Contains no material that parents would find inappropriate.

EVERYONE
Titles rated **E (Everyone)** have content that may be suitable for ages 6 and older. Titles in this category may contain minimal cartoon, fantasy or mild violence and/or infrequent use of mild language.

EVERYONE 10+
Titles rated **E10+ (Everyone 10 and older)** have content that may be suitable for ages 10 and older. Titles in this category may contain more cartoon, fantasy or mild violence, mild language and/or minimal suggestive themes.

TEEN
Titles rated **T (Teen)** have content that may be suitable for ages 13 and older. Titles in this category may contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood, simulated gambling, and/or infrequent use of strong language.

MATURE
Titles rated **M (Mature)** have content that may be suitable for persons ages 17 and older. Titles in this category may contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content and/or strong language.

ADULTS ONLY
Titles rated **AO (Adults Only)** have content that should only be played by persons 18 years and older. Titles in this category may include prolonged scenes of intense violence and/or graphic sexual content and nudity.

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Games for Kids

Thoughts on choosing a game for your favorite computer gamer.

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Choosing the Game

While kids often have ideas about what games they want, parent and grandparents should check the game to make sure it meets their standards and will run on the kids' computers.

Age Appropriateness

While a rating is not required, most games sold in the U.S. have been rated by the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB). ESRB assigns a rating to computer and video games based on content. These guidelines are very broad, but provide a place to start when deciding whether the game is appropriate for the child. See the ESRB section in this brochure for more details on these ratings.

Other parental review sites like www.whattheyplay.com and www.commonsensemedia.org provide an in-depth review of many games from a parent's perspective. These sites weight the type and amount of each type of inappropriate content. They provide a specific age that they feel can play this game.

Type of game

Video games come in many variations. The type of game can greatly affect whether someone would enjoy the game. People who enjoy one game are likely to enjoy games of a similar type. Some of the basic categories of games are:

First-Person Shooters (FPS) show the game world from the visual perspective of the player character. In some FPS games the game is won by eliminating the enemy faster than they eliminate you. These games often tend to be more violent than many of the other game types. In others, often referred to as tactical shooters, the battle is won by capturing or holding certain strategic points.

Role Playing Games (RPGs) provide the element of character development. The player completes quests and their character is given additional abilities as they gain "experience." It should be noted that these games tend to be among the most addictive due to the narrative fantasy themes.

Massively Multiplayer Role Playing Games (MMORPGs) are a type of role playing game where the action takes place exclusively online with a huge number of players interacting in the same world. These games normally require a monthly subscription fee and new content is provided regularly.

Real-Time Strategy (RTS) games most often involve tactical movement of troops and/or players. These games may be warfare based or may involve building and expanding a civilization. Play often involves a combination of resource gathering, building, upgrading, and combat.

Sports Games provide the experience of playing or coaching a sporting event. Some games allow you to develop a team over a season, providing more strategy.

Simulation games are designed to feel as close to the real experience as possible. Aircraft simulations are a very common type. You get to fly a jet or a helicopter or even take a turn at being an air traffic controller.

Arcade games are based on games that you might find in a video game arcade. Arcade games can be almost anything from the violent Street Fighter to the classic Pacman.

Puzzle games take thinking and logic skills. A common puzzle games are Tetris and Bejewelled. Sodoku is another type of puzzle game.

Quality of game

Not all games are created equal. Some games have better graphics. Some games are better balanced to provide a better experience playing through the game multiple times. Some have riveting stories and incredible cinematic elements. Other games fail to live up to their promise. Review sites like www.gamespot.com provide reviews and quality ratings of games that can help you determine if a player would enjoy this game.

System Requirements.

The time when any computer could play any game is long gone. Modern computer games require high-end video cards and fast processors. Before you purchase a game and then find yourselves spending hundreds more on computer components to allow the game to run, check the system requirements for the game. System requirements are normally found on the game box and will list a variety of requirements, including video card and operating system. System requirements are often very technical. If you are unsure whether your system meets these requirements, visit sites like www.systemrequirementslab.com or consult your local computer technician.

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