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AP Language and Composition

Cause and Effect Essay - 9/6/06

**FINAL DRAFT**

Video games and computer games have become widely popular and are played by millions of people throughout the world. Unfortunately, they have come to be a major problem as many people spend too much time on them and some become addicted to them. There are numerous possible explanations for why some people play video games excessively. Some people thrive on competition. Others have trouble finding other interesting or productive things to do. Most video gamers enjoy escaping reality by entering the imaginary worlds and roles presented in video and computer games.

Whether video gamers play against a real opponent, computer-generated characters, or their own previous scores, video games are generally greatly competitive; the struggle to be better in whatever the contest is invigorating to many, and a key factor in the popularity of games. This kind of competition keeps people coming back to the game until they surmount the challenge, or until they bore of the game. But for many, competition rarely allows boredom, and gamers continue to play.

In fact, boredom is often a factor that draws people to video games in the first place. Many people can think of no “better” things to do – parents’ suggestions such as “clean your room” or “study for school” often seem unattractive to video gamers, and for good reason; that requires work, and work is not “fun”. Though some video games may not be actually “fun”, they are not labeled “work” and are thus acceptable substitutes.

Video games are the “miracle timewaster” – they generally require little or no creativity, yet take up hours of “work”-free time.

Most video games are not always just a half-way point between “fun” and “work”, however. Some video games provide alternative worlds to explore and interact with, and entitle the video gamer to an imaginary role as a hero or villain. Such possibilities allow a gamer to escape the repetition of everyday life, or to hide from problems they may face in reality. Video games are an effective distraction.

Thus we see that video games are attracting to a wide range of people because of their entertainment values on many levels: promise of competition, boredom, or a need for distraction are three causes among many that may drive people to play excessive amounts of video and computer games.