

## YOUNG WRITERS TELL READERS WHY VIDEO GAMES ROCK

### The value of video

By Kyle Kiefer  
Honorable Mention,  
Opinion Writing  
Division: Middle School

More positive than negative

My opinion is on video games and how they help us in life. Personally, I think video games increase hand-eye coordination and improves the speed in your fingers.

Although recent studies in the United States have shown that playing high-action video games can improve certain aspects of your eyesight by up to 20 percent, an eye expert in the United Kingdom has called the researchers' findings into question.

Playing video games changes the pathways in our brains responsible for eyesight, for the brain continually modifies to the constant pressure that playing these video games puts on our visual system, they said.

The researchers successfully found a group of students who played little or no video games at all (which was quite a challenge) and gave the students a test that measured how well they could discriminate the direction of a letter "T" within a mass of other distracting symbols and letters.

The researchers then separated the students into two separate groups.

One group played the game "Unreal Tournament" for an hour a day, every day, for a month. While a control group played "Tetris" a less visually intricate game.

After about a month, the students playing "Unreal Tournament" could discriminate the "T" much more easily than the control group.

Unfortunately, a researcher in U.K. disagreed



David Martin Olson/The Reporter

Kyle Kiefer finds more positives than negatives in the playing of video games.

with their findings. "The American researchers are confusing visual acuity with visual search, which is what the T test really measures," according to Maggie Woodhouse, a senior lecturer in the School of Optometry and Vision Sciences at Cardiff University. "The test they're using is not for visual acuity," she said after being told of the research. "They've trained their students to make rapid eye movements and to scan large areas to find objects to interest ...

That is visual search." Still, there may be an advantage from playing high-action video games. You may be able to pick out a friend's face at a fast-moving sport like hockey or a football game.

Unfortunately, the enhancement might not last for very long though. Woodhouse also said playing video games "gives you brain damage," or eye strain, although that seemed to be her subjective view rather than a scientific one.

Researchers at Rochester

University said the results of their test propose that people with visual problems could improve their visual perception with unique software that copies the need to recognize objects quickly in an action game.

Altogether, I think playing video games has more positive effects than negative ones; I think that playing video games is good for you.

The author was a seventh-grader at Notre Dame School in Vacaville when this entry was submitted in February.

### Wii-markable, Wii-warding, game system

By Michael Martin  
Honorable Mention, Opinion Writing  
Division: 5-6 Grade

The Wii is one of the most high-tech things ever made. It has lots of features, such as instant Internet access so you can go on www.google.com or www.yahoo.com and go to Web pages.

If you like the Nintendo GameCube, Wii is compatible with all of its games. It also comes with a free game called Wii Sports that has these games in it: tennis, baseball, bowling, golf, and boxing.

They are all like the real thing. Boxing and some other games such as Red Steel and Zelda Twilight Princess require a little more control, so you have to have an extension controller called a nunchuk.

If you like old games, such as Super Mario Bros., there are some games like that you can download. You have to have a GameCube controller or virtual controller to play those games.

If you like new games, such as motion-sensing games, the Wii has those. So to play baseball, simply swing your arm to hit the ball or to throw the ball, use the throwing motion on the remote, but do not let go of it, and always remember to put on the strap!

If you like bowling, the game is just like bowling. It really does get you better! Trust me. I tried it. I am a lot better at most of the games on the Wii Sports game than I was when I first got the Wii.

If you have a Nintendo Dual Screen, aka Nintendo DS, you can play those games on the Wii. That means that you play the games on the NDS on the big screen. Just plug it into the back of the Wii with a USB cord and plug it right in the back of the Wii.

The Wii has a new feature that no other game system has: Wiiconnect24. It is made to have your Wii connected to the Internet 24/7. It has that because it has a weather chan-

nel, so you can check the latest weather forecast. You may also want to know the latest news, and you can do that also. It has a news channel so you can see the news around the world.

One of the things I think is the best about the Wii, is it comes with a built in e-mail address that comes in handy a lot. Like a couple weeks ago, I went away for a little bit and I took my Wii with me, and I could still e-mail my best friend's friend.

The only problem is you have to have each other on your friends list.

That is another good reason to have Wiiconnect24 so you can get e-mails. It is also very handy if you go on vacation so you can still check your e-mails because the Wii is so small it will fit just about everywhere.

The best wifi for the Wii you can get is Nintendo USB wifi that you plug in to a computer that has Internet access. They sell that at Wal-Mart and GameStop. It costs about \$39.99 plus tax.

The No. 1 games I think are either The Legend of Zelda Twilight Princess (This game is very long, rated Teen) or Red Steel (Gun shooting game rated Teen). Both of them are my favorites, but those are the only games I have played so far. So those are some of the must-buy games for Wii. There is not any online play for any of the Wii games.

I think the Wii is one of the best systems ever made and there should be one in every house. It is that useful. So I give the Wii a 10 out of 10; it's a 100 percent, must-buy system.

It might be hard to find right now, but in a couple of months you should be able to find one in a store like Wal-Mart or GameStop. The Wii costs about \$250. I know that is a lot but that is a lot cheaper than the \$600 that is the PlayStation 3.

The author was a sixth-grader at Gretchen Higgins Elementary School in Dixon when this article was submitted in February.

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This advertisement, promoting Sylvan Learning Center, earned Tanner Stuart an honorable mention in The Reporter's 2007 Campus Star Design-an-Ad competition in the 5-6 Grade Division. Tanner was a fifth-grader in Ed Finkas' classroom at Browns Valley Elementary School in Vacaville at the time this entry was submitted in February.

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This advertisement for Hometown Buffet, designed by Clay Smeback, earned the student an honorable mention award in The Reporter's Campus Star Design-an-Ad contest in the 5-6 Grade Division. Clay was a fifth-grader in Ed Finkas' classroom in Browns Valley Elementary School at the time this entry was submitted for competition in February.