

## Critically Thinking about Arguments: Video Arcades

Directions: Read the following two arguments and answer the questions that follow; then determine which one is the better argument by using the rubric to evaluate each argument. Be prepared to discuss your findings in class.

### **Argument One: Play to Stay**

The stress of going to college is very real. As millions of young adults across the nation leave home to undertake four years of intensive academic studies, they often work part-time jobs to pay for tuition and fees, commute long distances, and frequently live in communal settings that deny them privacy and quiet space. The anxieties associated with the college experience frequently fatigue one emotionally to the point where it is very difficult to focus well on studies and perform to one's best ability in course work. Co-curricular activities such as sports and clubs provide recreational and social opportunities, but these do not meet everyone's needs. Campuses should maintain arcades in which students can play video games because these provide the opportunity for students to relax that are cheap, they generate profit, and because they are popular with students.

When compared to other forms of recreation on campus, video games are very inexpensive. Many universities spend tens of millions of dollars each year on fields, courts, training facilities, trainers, coaches, travel, equipment, insurance, and recruitment, and while some programs generate profits enough to cover their expenses, most do not. As video games can be purchased \$3,000.00, it would cost less than \$90,000.00 to buy 30 games. The only other expense an arcade generates is maintenance, which can be offset by revenue generated by the cost for playing the games. Exercise equipment is easily more expensive than video games, and video arcades do not require membership fees as do fitness centers.

Video arcades generate profit for colleges and universities. Even as early as 1983, institutions realized they could earn hundreds of thousands of dollars per year maintaining arcades. Typically, colleges and universities rent the games and split the profits with the company that rents and maintains the games. The potential for video arcades to generate revenue for colleges and universities should be a factor in decisions related to how institutions cater to the recreational needs of students, especially in times when state and federal funding for higher education is declining and alternative sources of funding is necessary.

Colleges and universities today compete against each other to attract large numbers of students. Providing students with recreational space and resources is a means of attracting potential students to campus. Colleges and universities that do not meet student demands and preferences for recreation outlets risk reductions in student interest in applying for admission. Video game arcades attract students not only because the games allow students to channel stress out of their minds and bodies in harmless ways, but because they are a venue of socialization. Many arcades are also places where students can gather, enjoy refreshments, and not have to leave campus in order to spend time with friends. Students need to "zone out" after a hard day in their classes, and video games readily immerse them in fantasy scenarios and solitary activity wherein they can stimulate their senses without injury to themselves or others.

## Questions

1. What is the central assertion and what evidence is offered to support it?
2. What are the premises embedded in this argument?
3. Does the argument use inductive or deductive reasoning? Explain
4. What fallacies are embedded in the argument? Explain

### Rubric for Assessing Quality of Argument (40 points possible)

Element	Poor (3)	Sufficient (4)	Very Good (5)
Clarity	Main idea is vague; supports for central argument is vague; rationale for asserting the argument is unclear	Main idea is clear; most supports for central argument are clear; rationale for asserting the argument is unclear	Main idea, supports, and rationale for asserting the argument are plain and precisely stated
Organization	Argument seems random in assertions; flow of ideas is seems illogical; order of ideas is confusing	Order of argument is apparent; some details seem randomly placed and poorly linked to main ideas	Well organized and easy to follow; all details serve a clear purpose and are well placed
Relevance	Evidence and discussion points offered to explain and support main idea are not related to main idea	Most evidence and discussion points offered to explain and support main idea are related to main idea	All evidence and discussion points offered to explain and support main idea are immediate to main idea
Depth	Argument offers no insights into the complexity of issues and concepts involved I the argument	Argument offers some insights into the complexity of issues and concepts involved I the argument	Argument offers many insights into the complexity of issues and concepts involved I the argument
Breadth	Argument only addresses one or two supports for the argument; does not mention alternative or competing views	Argument addresses a few; supports for the argument; mentions but does not examine alternative or competing views	Argument many supports for the argument; introduces and explores at least two alternatives or competing views
Currency	Information is not current; data is outdated	Most information and data are current	All information and data are current
Fairness	Assertions are biased and based on subjective feelings and experience; openly judgmental of other views	Most assertions are objective; some bias evident in word choice; very little judgment of other views	Consistently objective and non-judgment of alternative views
Credibility	No references to expert opinion or scholarly research	Some reference to expert opinion and scholarly research	Well supported with expert opinion and scholarly research

Your score \_\_\_\_\_ (40-36=A; 35-32=B' 31-28=C; 27-24=D)

Your explanation for score

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## Argument Two: Better to Play Nice

For many young adults, college life is very challenging. Academic demands, new relationships, being far from home, and sometimes working during the school year often contribute to students' anxiety, depression, fatigue and distress.<sup>1</sup> Colleges and universities recognize the need to provide recreational and social outlets for students, and among the more popular activities is playing video games. This popular pastime, however, has no place on a college campus, as video games are linked to anti-social behavior, poor academic achievement, and consume revenue that could be used to support activities more commensurate with higher education's purpose and obligation.

Approximately 65% of college students play video games, and women are nearly as likely as men to play them.<sup>2</sup> Many of the games are violent in nature and allow the player to assume a role in scenarios that require the player to destroy property, assault other characters, and kill characters on screen. Though some have argued that it is the personality traits of players that determine violent behavior and not whether one plays violent video games,<sup>3</sup> others find that violent video games contribute to aggressive and anti-social behavior.<sup>4 5</sup>

Video gaming has replaced television viewing as a major leisurely activity and has also been associated with poor academic performance.<sup>6</sup> While many college students report that video games do not adversely impact their grades, about 45% indicate that gaming consumes time that could be spent studying.<sup>7</sup> Researchers note that many college students report that gaming interferes with sleep and with time spent with significant others, and that the characters featured in the games tend to reinforce stereotypes about gender.<sup>8</sup>

Like all human beings, college students require recreation and social outlets to decrease stress and to enjoy themselves. Given what research indicates about video games, however, it does not seem in the public's best interest to provide gaming on campus that reinforces aggression and stereotyping. A college education is supposed to cultivate civility and enlightenment, and recreational activities such as video-gaming reinforce the opposite. The money and physical space designated for such gaming rooms might be better used for other forms of recreating and socializing less violent and less banal.

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<sup>1</sup> Stevens, R. E., Loudon, D. L., Yow, D. A., Bowden, W. W., & Humphrey, J. H. (2013). *Stress in college athletics: Causes, consequences, coping*. Routledge.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, S. (2003). Gaming comes of age. Pew Research internet project. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2003/07/06/gaming-comes-of-age/>

<sup>3</sup> Bushman, B. J. (1995). Moderating role of trait aggressiveness in the effect of violent media on aggression. *Journal of Personal and Social Psychology*, 69:950-960.

<sup>4</sup> Saleem, M., Anderson, C. A., & Gentile, D. A. (2012). Effects of prosocial, neutral, and violent video games on college students' affect. *Aggressive behavior*, 38(4), 263-271.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, C. A., & Bushman, B. J. (2001). Effects of violent video games on aggressive behavior, aggressive cognition, aggressive affect, physiological arousal, and prosocial behavior: A meta-analytic review of the scientific literature. *Psychological science*, 12(5), 353-359.

<sup>6</sup> Burgess, S. R., Stermer, S. P., & Burgess, M. C. (2012). Video game playing and academic performance in college students. *College Student Journal*, 46(2), 376-87.

<sup>7</sup> Jones, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Ogletree, S. M., & Drake, R. (2007). College students' video game participation and perceptions: Gender differences and implications. *Sex Roles*, 56(7-8), 537-542.

**Questions**

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