



## A Message from the National Office of PTA

Do you know what's in that computer or video game your child wants to buy or rent? Just as with movies and TV shows, video games are created for people of all ages, which means



that some have content that may not be suitable for children. As parents, we have a responsibility to guide our children toward games that we decide are OK to play. Fortunately, there's a powerful tool to help us, the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) video game rating system.

The ESRB rating system provides information about age suitability and describes the content of the game so you can make an informed decision before you buy or rent a game.

Video games do much more than entertain. They can help our children expand their imagination, develop their ability to solve problems, learn fine motor skills—even help them exercise. The diversity in game content is seemingly unlimited, which is why it is so important for you to be informed. This brochure includes a complete description of the ESRB ratings and tips about choosing games appropriate for your family. We encourage you to read carefully this material and share it with your family and friends.

For more information about video game ratings, go to [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org). For general information about media safety including video games, TV shows, movies, and the Internet, go to [www.pta.org/mediasafety](http://www.pta.org/mediasafety).

## Some video games are for kids. Some aren't.

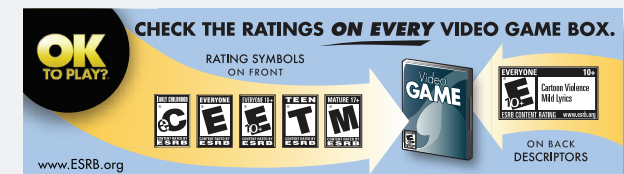
CHECK THE RATINGS ON EVERY COMPUTER  
AND VIDEO GAME BOX TO HELP CHOOSE THE  
RIGHT GAMES FOR YOUR FAMILY.



**PTA**  
everychild.one voice.®

## About the ESRB & the Computer & Video Game Rating System

In order to make informed purchase decisions, parents should check the ESRB rating on every computer or video game box. The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB®) is a non-profit, self-regulatory body established in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Association® (ESA). The ESRB independently assigns ratings for computer and video games and enforces advertising guidelines adopted by the interactive entertainment software industry.



The ESRB rating system has two parts:

**Rating Symbols** (printed on the front of game packages) suggest age appropriateness;

**Content Descriptors** (printed on the back) indicate elements in a game that may have triggered a particular rating and/or may be of interest or concern.

Parents and other consumers can search for rating information before they go shopping by visiting [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org).

# OK TO PLAY?



## Check the Ratings on Every Computer & Video Game Box

### Rating Symbols on the Front of the Box



**Early Childhood:** May be suitable for ages 3 and older. Contains no material that parents would find inappropriate.



**Everyone:** 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+:** 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:** 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:** May be suitable for ages 17 and older. Titles in this category may contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content and/or strong language.



**Adults Only:** 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.



**Rating Pending:** Title has been submitted to the ESRB and is awaiting final rating. (This symbol appears only in advertising prior to a game's release.)

### Content Descriptors on the Back of the Box



(See reverse side for a complete listing of content descriptors.)

For more information about the ESRB ratings, go to [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org).



## Helpful Tips for Parents

- > **Check the ratings.** Use both ESRB rating symbols and content descriptors to select appropriate games for your children. Before you go shopping, visit [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org) for specific ratings information.
- > **Consider your child's personality, maturity and abilities.** Video game ratings should be considered in combination with your own personal assessment of what your child can handle.
- > **Don't stop at the ratings.** Speak to older children and other parents, rent before purchasing, read game reviews, and try out demos of games online or in stores where games are sold.
- > **Play video games with your children.** Playing or observing helps you understand your child's video game experience, while providing a fun parent/child activity.
- > **Use parental controls.** Newer video game systems allow parents to restrict specific game content by rating. Check with the manufacturer of your video game system for more information, or ask a video game retail sales associate about the availability of parental controls.
- > **Be cautious with "online-enabled" games.** Many popular games can be played with friends (and strangers) over the Internet. Often, these games contain live chat or other user-generated content that is not rated by the ESRB and may not be consistent with the rating assigned to the game.
- > **Be aware of "mods" that can change a game.** Downloadable programs ("mods"), commonly created by players and widely available on the Internet, can alter a game's content and age-appropriateness.
- > **Set household media-use rules.** Encourage open communication with your children about the video games they are allowed to play, who they can play with online, and any time limits you feel are appropriate.

For more parent information, tips and resources on computer and video games, visit [www.pta.org/video\\_games](http://www.pta.org/video_games), or [www.esrb.org/about/resources.jsp](http://www.esrb.org/about/resources.jsp).

## ESRB Content Descriptors & Definitions

<b>Alcohol Reference</b>	Reference to and/or images of alcoholic beverages
<b>Animated Blood</b>	Discolored and/or unrealistic depictions of blood
<b>Blood</b>	Depictions of blood
<b>Blood and Gore</b>	Depictions of blood or the mutilation of body parts
<b>Cartoon Violence</b>	Violent actions involving cartoon-like situations and characters. May include violence where a character is unharmed after the action has been inflicted
<b>Comic Mischief</b>	Depictions or dialogue involving slapstick or suggestive humor
<b>Crude Humor</b>	Depictions or dialogue involving vulgar antics, including "bathroom" humor
<b>Drug Reference</b>	Reference to and/or images of illegal drugs
<b>Fantasy Violence</b>	Violent actions of a fantasy nature, involving human or non-human characters in situations easily distinguishable from real life
<b>Intense Violence</b>	Graphic and realistic-looking depictions of physical conflict. May involve extreme and/or realistic blood, gore, weapons and depictions of human injury and death
<b>Language</b>	Mild to moderate use of profanity
<b>Lyrics</b>	Mild references to profanity, sexuality, violence, alcohol or drug use in music
<b>Mature Humor</b>	Depictions or dialogue involving "adult" humor, including sexual references
<b>Nudity</b>	Graphic or prolonged depictions of nudity
<b>Partial Nudity</b>	Brief and/or mild depictions of nudity
<b>Real Gambling</b>	Player can gamble, including betting or wagering real cash or currency
<b>Sexual Content</b>	Non-explicit depictions of sexual behavior, possibly including partial nudity
<b>Sexual Themes</b>	References to sex or sexuality
<b>Sexual Violence</b>	Depictions of rape and/or other violent sexual acts
<b>Simulated Gambling</b>	Player can gamble without betting or wagering real cash or currency
<b>Strong Language</b>	Explicit and/or frequent use of profanity
<b>Strong Lyrics</b>	Explicit and/or frequent references to profanity, sex, violence, alcohol or drug use in music
<b>Strong Sexual Content</b>	Explicit and/or frequent depictions of sexual behavior, possibly including nudity
<b>Suggestive Themes</b>	Mild provocative references or materials
<b>Tobacco Reference</b>	Reference to and/or images of tobacco products
<b>Use of Alcohol</b>	The consumption or use of alcoholic beverages
<b>Use of Drugs</b>	The consumption or use of illegal drugs
<b>Use of Tobacco</b>	The consumption or use of tobacco products
<b>Violence</b>	Scenes involving aggressive conflict. May contain bloodless dismemberment
<b>Violent References</b>	References to violent acts

When a content descriptor is preceded by the term "Mild," it conveys low frequency, intensity or severity of the content it modifies.

Online-enabled games that include user-generated content (e.g. maps, skins) or possible exposure to chat (text, audio, video) carry the notice "Online Interactions Not Rated By The ESRB."