

Comprehensive Gamer Assessment Counselor Resources

Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) Game Ratings

RP – Rating Pending – Identifies a game that is not yet rated – This rating is placed on all promotional material for a game that is still in some early or mid-stage of development. It is replaced with an actual rating as the game reaches a later stage of development.

eC – Early Childhood – Ages 3 years old and above – Games have no objectionable content.

Examples of games with this rating category are: “Sesame Street: Elmo’s A – Zoo Adventure”, “Dora the Explorer: Journey to the Purple Planet,” and “Blue’s Clues: Blue’s Big Musical”

E – Everyone – Ages 6 years old and above – **Note:** Prior to 1998 this rating was called “K-A – Kids to Adults.” Games may contain minimal cartoon, fantasy, or mild violence, and may contain mild language and/or minimal suggestive themes.

Examples of games with this rating category are: “Madden 2018,” “Angry Birds Trilogy,” and “Mario Kart 8 Deluxe”

E10+ - Everyone 10+ - Ages 10 and above – Games may contain “more” cartoon, fantasy, or mild violence, and may have more mild language and/or minimal suggestive themes than games rated E.

Examples of games with this rating category are: “Minecraft,” “The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild,” and “Super Mario Odyssey”

T – Teen – Ages 13 and above – Games may contain violence with minimal blood, suggestive themes, crude humor, simulated gambling, and/or infrequent use of strong language.

Examples of games with this rating category are: “Halo 5: Guardians,” “Monster Hunter: World,” and “The Sims 4”

M – Mature – Ages 17 and above – Games may contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content and/or strong language.

Examples of games with this rating category are: “Gears of War,” “Call of Duty: World War 2,” and “Grand Theft Auto V”

AO – Adults Only – Ages 18+ - **Note:** Many mainstream and particularly American retailers will not sell games rated AO. Games rated AO are deemed appropriate for ages 18 and over. They may contain prolonged scenes of intense violence, graphic sexual content, and/or gambling with real money.

Examples of games with this rating category are: “Hatred,” “Seduce Me,” and “Manhunt 2”

Console Families as of August 2019

Modern Consoles

Retro Consoles

Nintendo	Xbox	Playstation		Nintendo	Sega	Playstation	Atari
Switch	Xbox One	Playstation 4		Gamecube	Dreamcast	PSP - Playstation Portable (Handheld)	Jaguar
WiiU	Xbox 360	Playstation 3		Game Boy Advance (Handheld)	Saturn	Playstation 1 (Classic)	Lynx (Handheld)
DS, 3DS, 2DS (Handheld)	Xbox	Playstation 2		Nintendo 64	32X		Atari 7800
Wii				Virtual Boy	Sega CD		Atari 5200
				Super Nintendo (SNES)	Game Gear (Handheld)		Atari 2600
				Game Boy (Handheld)	Genesis		
				Nintendo Entertainment System (NES)	Master System		

Styles of Gaming Reference

(Note: Many games cross styles, or fit a subgenre of these styles.
Use this as a guide, to support discussion.)

Action/Adventure – The player facilitates a puzzle solving adventure from a third person perspective with their in game character.

Shooter – The player facilitates an action adventure from a first person (FPS) or third person perspective, often with a weapon visible on screen, of their in game character.

Looter – Sharing elements with Action/Adventure or FPS style games, the focus of gameplay also combines RPG elements of character skill development and the acquisition of a constant stream of a variety of in game items.

Battleroyale – A sub-genre of traditional shooters. The player drops onto a virtual island where the play area is systematically reduced, and are tasked with gathering weapons and supplies and being the last person to survive.

Role Playing Game (RPG) – The player may manipulate their in game character from a variety of perspectives, and engage in, an often multi layered, adventure, where a character’s skills develop with experience.

Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG) – Similar to a classic RPG, though the in game environment is populated by many other active players engaging in the adventures simultaneously.

Open World/Sandbox – A player controls an in game character in a large-scale in game environment where there are no, or very few, objectives beyond the player interacting with the world as they choose.

Strategy/Real Time Strategy – A player may control a single character or many character units making up in game groups or armies, and engage in complex strategic gameplay to accomplish objectives or overthrow enemy armies.

Survival Horror – A player controls an in game character in a horror scenario. Much like an in game horror movie, the play style pits the player against challenging, often terrifying, opponents, with limited resources.

Fighting – A player controls an in game character where the style of play is to simulate martial arts, boxing, wrestling, or another form of person-to-person combat. These games often have a story element as well.

Sports – A player controls sporting events, either as individual players or an entire team, , and is often able to manage macro features of the teams season.

Racing – A player controls a racing vehicle in simulated races with other vehicles controlled by the computer or other players. The player may also manipulate vehicle components such as engine, tire grip, and cosmetic features.

AR (Augmented Reality) Games – A player uses a mobile device, like their phone, to play a game that overlaid on an image of the real world created by the device’s camera.

Exergames – A player uses their physical body to interact with in game activities. The focus may be to engage directly in exercise style actions, or it may be to engage in activities, like dance, that indirectly result in exercise.

Rhythm – A player uses real world peripherals, like musical instruments or plastic wands, in order to interact with timed visual stimuli in the game. This is often, though not always, to simulate playing music.

Simulation – A player acts carries out tasks that are a simulation of “real life.” This encompasses a range of activities from being an omnipotent overseer that controls in game elements like construction and economy across in game generations, to simulating social interactions or flying a passenger airplane.

Tabletop Gaming – Any games played in the real world on a tabletop. This encompasses board games, traditional and collectible card games, and tabletop role-playing games (a popular example is Dungeons & Dragons).