

GCSE Media Studies: *Workbook*
Year 10: Unit 3



VIDEO GAMES



Name	
Class	
Teacher	

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RECAP QUIZ

Big Question:
How and why are video games
regulated?

1. **8 elements of mise-en-scene:**
2. **8 camera angles:**
3. **5 (or more) magazine terms:**
4. **5 (or more) film poster terms:**
5. **3 (or more) media theories**
6. **5 ideologies:**

REGULATION OF VIDEO GAMES

Video Standards Council (VSC)

Big Question:
How and why are video games regulated?



The
Video Standards Council



VSC Code of Practice
Rules

REGULATION OF VIDEO GAMES

PEGI: Pan European Game Information

Big Question:
How and why are video games regulated?

ICON	CONTENT DESCRIPTOR	EXPLANATION
		
		
		
		
		
		
		
		
		

Controversial Games

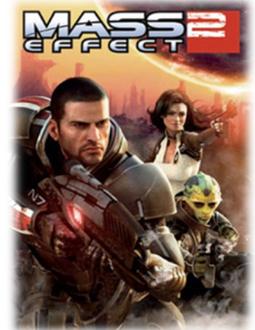
Manhunt 1 & 2 (2004, 2008)

Big Question:
How and why are video
games regulated?



Tomb Raider (2012)

Mass Effect 2 (2010)



GTA V (2013)

Hatred (2015)



Wider Reading: Game blamed for hammer murder (BBC.co.uk, 2004)

The parents of a boy who was murdered with a claw hammer by a friend have blamed a violent video game which the teenage killer was "obsessed" with. Warren Leblanc, 17, repeatedly stabbed 14-year-old Stefan Pakeerah after luring him to a Leicester park to steal from him on 27 February.

He pleaded guilty to murder at Leicester Crown Court on Wednesday.

Stefan's mother described Leblanc, who confessed to police moments after the assault, as "inherently evil". Stefan's mother had to leave court when the evidence in the case became too harrowing.

Following the hearing she said her son's killer had mimicked a game called Manhunt, developed by Edinburgh-based Rockstar North, in which the players score points for violent killings.

Manhunt was banned six months ago in New Zealand by censorship officials.

Mrs Pakeerah said: "I heard some of Warren's friends say that he was obsessed by this game. To quote from the website that promotes it, it calls it a psychological experience, not a game, and it encourages brutal killing. If he was obsessed by it, it could well be that the boundaries for him became quite hazy. "Mrs Pakeerah, 36, called for violent video games to be banned. She said: "I can't believe that this sort of material is allowed in a society where anarchy is not that far removed. It should not be available and it should not be available to young people. I don't play these games but if they are influencing kids to go out and kill people then you don't want them on the shelves."

Leblanc, of Braunstone Frith, Leicester, persuaded his victim to go to nearby Stoke Woods Park, known locally as The Dumps - to meet two girls. The court heard how he armed himself with a knife and claw hammer to carry out the attack. He confessed to the killing moments later when he was found covered in blood by two police officers.

Outside court Stefan's father, Patrick, said: "They were playing a game called Manhunt. The way Warren committed the murder is how the game is set out - killing people using weapons like hammers and knives. There is some connection between the game and what he has done."

When police discovered Stefan, they found he had sustained horrific and fatal injuries. The boy had been hit so hard with the hammer he had suffered deep cuts to his head and neck. His head had been fractured in several places. He had multiple stab wounds, with the knife being plunged so deep that it had caused serious injuries to his kidney and liver.

A spokesman for the Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers' Association said: "We sympathise enormously with the family and parents of Stefan Pakeerah. However, we reject any suggestion or association between the tragic events and the sale of the video game Manhunt. The game in question is classified 18 by the British Board of Film Classification and therefore should not be in the possession of a juvenile. Simply being in someone's possession does not and should not lead to the conclusion that a game is responsible for these tragic events."

Judge Michael Stokes QC said Leblanc had carried out "a brutal, cold-blooded murder" and could expect a life sentence.

Read this opinion piece article and complete the summary task below.
No, Mr Trump, video games do not cause mass shootings -
Katherine Cross, The Guardian (2018)

After the Florida school shooting, attempts to deflect the blame on to video games rather than guns are a jarring hypocrisy.



With Donald Trump, everything old is new again, it seems. His latest effort to grapple with the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, sees him joining his fellow Republicans, such as the Kentucky governor, Matt Bevin, in resuscitating a long-dormant culture war, blaming video games for mass shootings.

“I’m hearing more and more people say the level of violence on video games is really shaping young people’s thoughts,” Bevin said this week at a White House meeting on school security, where he also launched into a tirade about violent films. This echoes the thoughts of Wayne LaPierre, the president of the National Rifle Association (NRA), in 2012 when he tried to pin the Sandy Hook shooting on “vicious violent video games, with names like Bulletstorm, Grand Theft Auto, Mortal Kombat and Splatterhouse”.

It’s a remarkable series of logic leaps that allows a person to scorn a simulator while holding the actual gun whose use is seen as blameless, but here we are again. Video games, for all their newfound cultural hegemony, remain a soft target for sententious conservatives who want to moralise, cost free. The US comprises 4.4% of the world’s population, but has 42% of its civilian-owned firearms.

The best evidence we have suggests – inconclusively – that some video games may increase aggression in their players. But, as is so often the case with media influence, this is not straightforward. What has been clear to social scientists for a long time is that the “monkey-see-monkey-do” model of media influence is a fiction. They may influence passive behaviours such as stereotyping, but they absolutely do not cause active, violently antisocial behaviour like murder. In short, zero evidence exists to suggest playing violent video games will turn anyone into a criminal or a mass shooter.

One need only look to every other nation on earth, where video games are widely available but guns are, conspicuously, not. Though Germany and Australia are often bedeviled by similarly tedious debates about whether “violent video games” should be banned, such games are still widely played in both nations and neither is plagued by the relentlessly frequent mass shootings that afflict the US. But both countries have dramatically tougher gun laws, and neither conceives of gun ownership as an inalienable right. In every other industrialised nation, gun ownership is a privilege with numerous attendant responsibilities.

In the US, the opposite theory reigns, ensuring that a gun is easier to acquire in most states than a car. This has led to a nation awash in guns, where in a nation of 300 million, there’s more than one gun per citizen within our borders. The US comprises 4.4% of the world’s population, but has 42% of its civilian-owned firearms. Despite the fact that all research suggests that the availability of guns is the only reliable predictor of increased gun violence, this issue is never broached by conservative gun advocates. But it must be manna from heaven for the NRA, which is, in reality, a lobbyist group for gun manufacturers rather than rank-and-file gun owners.

Instead, a far more tenuous and vague link between video games and guns is sought, presumably to appeal to conservative parents who don’t want to give up their umpteen rifles and handguns, but do want their children to stop playing Grand Theft Auto.

We ought to be past this as a society. As a gaming critic, I’m the last person who would argue that there are no difficult discussions to be had about video gaming culture – I’ve critiqued the gambling impulses summoned up by loot boxes, and the subcultures of prejudice that exist in gaming fandoms, for instance. But as a democratic polity we should be able to conduct these discussions with maturity, and with respect for video games as a novel but rapidly evolving art form. When they are scapegoated for mass shootings, something else is at work; not academic critique, but a shabby cover-up meant to obscure the literal smoking gun.

This becomes especially galling when one looks at the morally squalid two-step played by the US military and gun manufacturers when it comes to video games. Gun makers sell lucrative licences to the largest video game studios, which are then able to use popular trademarked firearms in military shooter games such as Call of Duty, double-dipping from both the licence and the de facto advertising.

In the meantime, the harder conversations we need to be having – about romanticising and glorifying imperialism, say, or dissociating soldiers from the fatal consequences of their actions – are glossed over. So long as the maximum number of guns are being sold, the NRA and its pet lawmakers are content; this is what makes sense of the otherwise horrifying suggestion that we should arm teachers. It sells more guns.

We would do well to refuse rightwing attempts to cloud the issue by reigniting irrelevant culture wars and focus instead on the problem’s core: the freely-available weapons used time after time in these crimes. As the bodies of our schoolchildren pile up, it’s remarkable that Republicans want to regulate video games that poorly simulate killing, but leave virtually untouched the guns that punch exit wounds “the size of an orange” in our children.

TASK: *Katherine Cross is a gaming critic. Summarise 8 key points that she makes in her above article and then write your own view about what you’ve read and what you think – do you think people playing violent video games can cause real-world violence? Try to give reasons for your opinion. Feel free to include ideas from lessons so far or other sources of information or opinion.*

Key Points from the article:

1.	5.
2.	6.
3.	7.
4.	8.

My opinion (can video games cause violence?):

REVIEW: QUICK QUIZ

**Big Question:
How and why are video
games regulated?**

1. What is nostalgia?
2. Name our 5 ideologies.
3. Name 3 (or more) of Propp's characters.
4. Name 2 or more actors who have played James Bond.
5. Which footballer is on the cover of Pride magazine?
6. What year was No Time to Die released?
7. What age rating is No Time to Die?
8. Name the four elements of UGT.
9. What is Cultivation Theory?

REVIEW: QUICK QUIZ

Big Question:
**How and why are video
games regulated?**

10. TERMINOLOGY: Write down as many mise-en-scene, camera angles, edits and audio/sound codes (these are all called micro features) as you can.

EXTENDED WRITING TASK

POKEMON GO: GOOD, BAD... OR JUST A FAD?

Big Question:
How big is the gaming industry?

Your task is to learn and write about the gaming craze of 2016 – POKEMON GO. I would like you to read the below articles/links and use other sources to create a **report/article** on the following – please paragraph your work like this:

1. Write a brief history of the Pokemon franchise. Who started it? When? Where? What is it? What was its original format? What made Pokemon so popular in the first place? Why do you think it had such success to begin with? Who was the target audience and how did it appeal to them?
2. Give details of how it branched out from its original format. What other Pokemon media became available and were they successful? (Trading cards, games, merchandise, etc.)
3. Read these articles to learn about how **Pokemon Go** took the world by storm in 2016: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/search?q=pokemon%20go#page=3>. There are a lot so choose about 5 to read. You can also use other news sources if you like. Here are some specific, interesting articles:
 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/36904034/parents-are-naming-their-children-after-pokemon-go-characters>
 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-36842259>
 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-36891787>
 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-36833916>
 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36939145>
4. What are the main implications of **Pokemon Go**? What effects did it have on the world, people, the economy? How much money did it make for its parent company Nintendo? What were the positives that came out of the phenomenon? What were the negative implications?
5. What is your opinion of Pokemon Go? Summarise an answer to the question of whether Pokemon Go was good, bad or just a fad?

All of the above information should be written up on the next few pages OR into a Word document under the heading: **POKEMON GO: GOOD, BAD OR JUST A FAD?**

If you choose to type it, please put your name on it, then print your work when it is complete or email it to me. **This will be due** _____.



Other useful links/videos:

- How popular was Pokemon Go in the beginning? - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_z9PyZ5m8M
- Pokemon Go gratifications - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_zkBSTc55Y



POKEMON GO: GOOD, BAD...OR JUST A FAD?

**Big Question:
How big is the gaming industry?**



EXAMPLE STARTER PARAGRAPH:



The global sensation of Pokemon began originally as a Gameboy game in the 90s. It was developed by Nintendo in Japan. The franchise revolves around 'pocket-sized' collectible monsters who fight to win badges for their owners. The goal... to "catch 'em all." Pokemon is the biggest games franchise after Super Mario (also owned by Nintendo).



The Gameboy game was just the beginning. It soon branched out into...



Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple horizontal lines for text entry.

LESSON 3: FORTNITE

ENGAGE TASK: Recap Quiz

Big Question:
**Why do audiences play
Fortnite?**

1. Who regulates video games?
2. What is the age rating system they use for video games called?
3. There are 9 content descriptors to help parents decide if a game is appropriate for their child. How many can you name?
4. Name at least 2 controversial games or game franchises.
5. What dangers/concerns were raised by Pokemon Go?
6. Write out: 8 x camera angles; 8 x mise-en-scene; 5 x ideologies.

LESSON 3: FORTNITE

An active audience is the opposite of passive.

Active means you are engaged, enthusiastic and proactive in using the product.

Passive means you are merely watching, with no additional interest.

Mindmap how FORTNITE creates active users. In other words, how is it both engaging and engrossing and addictive?

Big Question:
**Why do audiences play
Fortnite?**



ACTIVE AUDIENCE

FORTNITE: INFO FOR PLAYERS AND PARENTS:

Fortnite has a [PEGI rating of 12](#). PEGI have said this is due to the: *'frequent scenes of mild violence. It is not suitable for persons under 12 years of age'*. This PEGI rating only takes into account the content in the game and not the contact element, where players may be exposed to swearing and offensive language from strangers in voice or on-screen text chat.

What do I need to know?

You need to create an account

In order to play Fortnite you have to create an account. To create this account you need to provide an email address (which you will have to verify) and display/user name. However you are not asked your age in order to create an account.

You are playing against other players

As Fortnite is an online game you will play against players of different ages from across the world. You **can** turn this communication off in your setting or choose who you play against. You are also able to block or mute other players who are behaving in an inappropriate manner.

You can make in game purchases

Although Battle Royale is free to play, other aspects of the game are not. There are packs which give you different access to the full game and extensions, in game currency and 'skins' which edit the design of your character. These start at £8 and go up to £119.99. The game does ask players to make additional in-game purchases whilst playing, though these are not required to play the game.

The graphics

Fortnite does feature violence when players are in combat with each other, the animation of the game is very cartoonish, and the violence isn't bloody or gory. However, it is worth noting that the aim of Fortnite is to defeat other players by fighting against them.

Where you can play

Fortnite is currently available on PC, Mac, PlayStation and Xbox , and on IOS (apple products) and Android. It is downloadable from the Fortnite website, this download gives access to both the free and paid for versions of the game.

Our advice

Have an open and honest conversation with your child

It's important to involve yourself in your child's online life and a simple and effective way to this is by talking to them about their life online. Try to maintain an open dialogue with your child and find opportunities to talk to them about what they love to do online. Parents can help children access the amazing resources the internet has to offer whilst keeping them safe online at the same time.

Asking your child about how they play Fortnite and what they like about it is a great way to start a conversation.

Our [conversation starters](#) can help you to have this conversation.

Play with them

It may seem daunting, but one of the best things that you can do is to engage with the gaming environment and begin to understand what makes Fortnite so attractive to young people, as well as giving yourself an idea of the reporting tools available within the game.

Know how to make a report

On Fortnite you can report players who are behaving inappropriately by using the in-game feedback tool located in the game Main Menu, [you can also make a report by emailing the creators of Fortnite.](#)

See what other people think of Fortnite

Common Sense Media allow parents and young people to give their reviews of games that they have played. They have created a [very useful video guide to Fortnite with footage of the gameplay involved.](#)

Fortnite

(2017)

Component 1: Exploring the Media

Focus areas:
Media industries
Audiences

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- Produced by Epic Games, the *Fortnite* franchise is a series of multiplayer free-to-play battleground games available on a number of platforms and devices. It was launched in July 2017
- The franchise includes *Fortnite: Battle Royale*, *Fortnite: Save The World*, and *Fortnite: Creative*
- Fortnite: Battle Royale* is the most successful free-to-play videogame ever, making \$1.2 billion in the first 10 months of release. Initially, players had to buy 'battle passes' to play, but in September 2018 the *Battle Royale* version was offered for free.
- The *Fortnite* franchise had revenue of £2.4 billion in 2018
- The franchise has helped make Epic Games a hugely successful company. In 2012 they were worth \$825 million; in 2018 they were worth \$5.8 billion.
- Fortnite: Battle Royale* won 'Best Ongoing Game' in the PC Gamer and IGN awards in 2018.

Gameplay

- Players, in groups of 100, are dropped via a flying bus onto a deserted island that is about to be hit by a natural disaster.
- The aim of the game is to fight to the death, with the last player standing the winner. Players seek out weapons and other materials, but are also able to demolish structures and rebuild them into forts, towers etc.
- As the game continues, the storm starts to encroach, driving the players into smaller and smaller areas and forcing conflict.
- In terms of genre, *Fortnite* could be considered as fusion of battle games (like *Battlegrounds*) and construction games (like *Minecraft*).

PART 1: STARTING POINTS - Media industries

Social and cultural contexts:

The global videogame industry has been growing since the early days of Atari home entertainment in the 1980s. In recent years, the diversity of game genres and platforms on which they can be played has meant an explosion in the gaming industry. Based on a 2015 economic forecast videogame sales are expected to reach \$90 billion by 2020.

In 2014, it was calculated there were 1.8 billion gamers in the world - 25% of the global population. This challenges the stereotype of gamers as young geeky men. In 2018 in the USA, 28% of gamers were under 18, but 23% were over 50 years old. There was a 66/44% male/female gender split.

The range of genres - from first-person-shooters to puzzles and learning tools - has varied the demographic for gamers. The variety of platforms - not just home consoles, but on tablets and smartphones - that high quality, complex and engaging games can be accessed has also led to the growth of the industry.

Gaming has increasingly become a social activity. In 1997 *Ultima Online* became the first on-line multiplayer game, and since then socialising in the game world has become an everyday activity for millions of people, usually geographically far apart. People develop alliances, friendships and even romantic relationships as their game characters. 'eSports' - live competitive gaming events between celebrity players has also become popular, attracting millions of viewers through sites like Twitch and even packing huge stadiums like traditional sporting events.

Consider the impact of new technology and convergence:

- One of the things that have made *Fortnite* so popular is the ability to access the game from consoles, PCs, laptops, smartphones or tablets. You can also download it for a range of operating systems. Not only this but you

can move, mid-game, between devices without interrupting gameplay. This means it can be played at home, or on the move, on a tiny screen or a video projector. This is a good example of **technological convergence**.

- Epic Games use an operating system called Unreal Engine to develop *Fortnite*. They have made this available on their website, and encourage their audience to use it to develop their own games. Unreal Engine has also been used by professional game developers to create titles like *Batman: Arkham City* and *Infinity Blade*.
- *Fortnite* is also a good example of **cross-media convergence**, where more than one media brand or form joins to promote each other. *Fortnite* is the most viewed game on YouTube, and has also used streaming platforms like Twitch (owned by Amazon) to broadcast live competitions.
- It has also incorporated other media brands and franchises. In collaboration with Marvel Studios, there was a special *Avengers: Infinity War* segment and recently a tie-in with *Godzilla*. The format of *Fortnite* means that any kind of costumes, weapons and games can be introduced to keep the game fresh. Films/TV/ sports can promote their brands to over 20 million of players, whilst famous collaborations keep *Fortnite* in the news and social media.
- Epic Games has a good relationship with various non-gaming celebrities such as Drake and basketball star Ben Simmons. This helps to promote the game beyond the traditional gaming market.

Consider Epic Games as an institution:

- Epic Games was started by Tim Sweeney in 1991 and was originally run from his parent's house. These humble beginnings may explain Epic's decision to make the Unreal Engine available to amateur games designers.
- In 2014, the *Guinness Book Of Records* named Unreal Engine as the 'most successful videogame engine'
- Epic Games owns video game developer Chair Entertainment and cloud-based software developer Cloudgine, and has studios in the UK, Japan, and Germany.
- Tencent - a Chinese investment company focused on internet and AI development - bought a 42% stake in Epic in 2012.

Consider different funding and profit models:

- *Fortnite* is an example of the 'Games as a Service' (GaaS) model - where there is a constant revenue stream from 'in-game purchases' after the initial purchase (or providing the game for free)
- Some of these are 'micro transactions' where players pay for weapon, costume and game upgrades rather than 'grinding through' the gameplay to score them. In *Fortnite*, players use V-bucks to purchase these items, and these can be earned in the game or bought using 'real world' money. Another game that does this is *Candy Crush*.
- Unusually in *Fortnite* the upgrades are purely 'cosmetic' i.e. they don't actually affect the gameplay. They often consist of new 'skins' (to alter your character's appearance) and 'emotes' (victory dance moves after a kill). These are only available for a short period of time, increasing their value and encouraging players to pay rather than 'grind' for them.
- Another revenue stream for GaaS titles is to offer 'season passes' - like a subscription that allows you to access new content over the course of a period of gameplay (the 'season') that play-for-free users can't access.
- *Fortnite* offers players 'battle passes' and then drip-feeds limited edition and exclusive content to these players over the course of the season.

Consider regulation of the media:

- Age ratings are systems used to ensure that entertainment content, such as computer games, are clearly labelled by age according to the content they contain. Age ratings provide guidance to consumers (particularly parents) to help them decide whether or not to buy a particular product. The rating on a game confirms that it is suitable for players over a certain age.
- In 2012 the PEGI system was incorporated into UK law and The Video Standards Council was appointed as the statutory body responsible for the age rating of video games in the UK using the PEGI system.
- *Fortnite* has the PEGI rating of 12 for "frequent scenes of mild violence". It seems that parents are more concerned with issues surrounding addiction than the levels of violence.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Audience

Historical and Political Contexts

The relationship between videogames and audiences has been a controversial area, with many moral panics. These ranged fears that violent games encourage copycat behaviour, to worries about addiction and the amount of ‘screen time’ that is healthy. *Fortnite*, when compared to other successful titles like *Grand Theft Auto* or *Call Of Duty* contains very little explicit or realistic violence, and the cartoon-like graphics also make the game suitable for younger players. In addition, there seems to be little racism or misogyny expressed by the players compared to other videogames - perhaps because free players are randomly assigned race and gender ‘skins’ at the start of each round. Critics have also praised the collaborative nature of the gameplay that encourages players to work together and protect each other (until the finale).

The main concern seems to be about addiction: with reports from teachers and parents that children are distracted from school work due to their engagement. One psychologist even compared it to heroin! There have been reports that Premier League footballers were being treated for addiction, and Prince Harry said the game is ‘dangerous’.

Consider the way media industries target audiences:

- *Fortnite* has used a combination of addictive gameplay, media/technological convergence and marketing to target a diverse and varied audience. 78% are male, 22% are female, 53% are 10-25, and 42% are in full time employment.
- The unrealistic violence and cartoon-style graphics, along with the emphasis on construction as much as killing, make it appealing to a younger audience.
- The rise of ‘eSports’ stars, mainly consumed via streaming platforms like YouTube and Twitch (where *Fortnite* is the most watched game) has led to players becoming major

celebrities. Ninja, the most famous *Fortnite* player has over 10 million subscribers and earns over half a million dollars a month. Ninja ranks highest in the world for social media interactions (i.e. people posting or sharing using their name - no.2 is Cristiano Ronaldo!

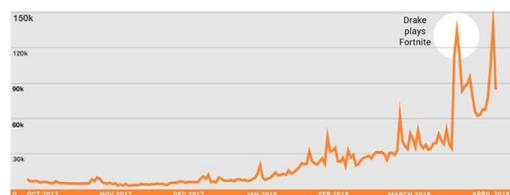
- This creates gamer celebrities that have become aspirational role-models for some audiences.
- The use of non-traditional gamer celebrities such as rappers and NBA athletes widen the appeal of the game. The popularity of ‘Twitch Girls’ (female streamers like KatyPlaysGames) has also appealed to women.
- *Fortnite*’s use of ‘seasons’ - with rumours and gossip about future seasons - follows the cable TV/ on-line subscription style of long-form TV drama.

Consider active and passive audience responses:

- The basic gameplay of *Fortnite: Battle Royale* is interactive and collaborative, encouraging players to work together. By being able to deconstruct and rebuild the game environment, players are encouraged to be creative.
- *Fortnite: Creative* is a different format that allows even more creativity in designing ‘skins’, ‘emotes’ and landscapes.
- In addition, Epic Games have made their operating system Unreal Engine available (at a price) to encourage the next generation of games developers.

Consider theoretical perspectives:

- Blumler and Katz’s ‘Uses and Gratifications’ theory considers why people interact with media texts.
- *Fortnite* - along with many videogames - could relate to the ‘escapism’ and ‘catharses’.
- However, the collaborative nature of the gameplay could also provide social interaction.
- The use of gamer and non-gamer celebrities could also relate to the search for role-models that contribute to personal identity. This could be linked to Dyer’s ‘Star Theory’.



Mentions of Fortnite on Twitter

The game is taking off massively on social

©BILBEACT | 30 SEP 2017 - 31 MARCH 2018

How Fortnite is transforming the gaming industry

Big Question:
Why do audiences play Fortnite?

The biggest video game at E3 2018 this week doesn't need its own press conference. Epic Games' Fortnite and its presence here at the gaming industry's largest annual convention can be felt everywhere, from the big keynote addresses of the world's largest game publishers to the pervasive e-sports theme underscoring much of the live entertainment here in Los Angeles.

Later today, Epic will host a 100-person tournament live at E3 featuring 50 celebrities and 50 professional streamers, marking the first large-scale tournament for the game hosted and coordinated by Epic itself. The contest will include big names like rappers PartyNextDoor and Vince Staples, actors Chandler Riggs and Jon Heder, and athletes like Demetrius Johnson and Terrence Ross, all onstage with streamers like Tyler "Ninja" Blevins and Ali "Myth" Kabbani. Even though Epic doesn't have any news of its own to announce at the show, it's using the tournament and Fortnite's popularity to ensure the game stays at the top of everyone's minds throughout the industry's marketing extravaganza this week.

Fortnite is the free-to-play battle royale game that pushed the genre from its explosively popular beginnings on the PC with PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds to a worldwide phenomenon on nearly every platform. (This morning, Epic added the Nintendo Switch to that list of supported platforms.) Everyone from little kids to middle school girls to musicians and athletes like Drake, Diplo, and Boston Red Sox pitcher David Price play Fortnite like it's their job. And for a certain class of YouTube and Twitch internet personalities, Fortnite is a job. The game has created a whole new class of web celebrity that's capable of blending live entertainment with competitive e-sports-quality performance.

Fortnite's influence on the industry is readily apparent at E3, both from an economic point of view and from a game design one. The game is forcing game studios and publishers to rethink how their products are developed, monetized, and updated over time. The game made an estimated \$300 million in the month of April entirely on in-app purchases of items like costumes, dance moves, and other cosmetics that have no effect on your ability to compete.

Fortnite's free-to-play model, combined with the inherent popularity of the battle royale genre and Epic's breakneck update cycle, has turned Fortnite into a mega-hit. Now, nearly every big publisher is looking for ways to capitalize on the trend while trying to adapt at the same velocity as Epic.

"NEARLY EVERY BIG PUBLISHER IS LOOKING FOR A WAY TO CAPITALIZE ON THE SUCCESS OF 'FORTNITE'"

Evidence of Fortnite's ongoing impact started even before the show. Activision announced last month that the new Call of Duty would feature its very own battle royale game mode. Then, on Saturday, Electronic Arts revealed just six minutes into its annual E3 press conference that the new WWII-focused Battlefield V would feature the same.

At the PC Gaming Show on Monday, the developer of a new game called Mavericks: Proving Grounds announced an upcoming beta featuring 400-person and even 1,000-person battle royale modes — all in a bid to out-innovate Epic to ever-larger and more chaotic variants on the genre. Indies are also getting in on the trend: the creators of popular webcomic Cyanide & Happiness announced their very own battle royale game yesterday, called Rapture Rejects, featuring a cartoony art style and a 100-person deathmatch mode.

It's even become a pervasive meme — well before E3 even kicked off — that the conference this year would be overflowing with battle royale copycats and graphed-on game modes to cash in on Fortnite's success. Symbols of the game company and franchise logos with battle royale Photoshopped beneath them have become an easy-to-crack a joke about the state of the game industry in 2018.

FORTNITE + UGT

Big Question:
Why do audiences play Fortnite?

- How can we apply Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) to Fortnite? In other words, what do audiences get from it?

Personal Identity	Information
Entertainment	Social Interaction



REVIEW: Produce as a Power Point

Big Question: Why do audiences play Fortnite?

Slide 1: Product Context

Which company produced Fortnite?

1. What makes Fortnite a Franchise?
2. What awards has Fortnite won?
3. How much was Fortnite worth in 2012 compared to 2019?

Slide 2: Game play

1. What is Fortnite about – give a summary?
2. What genre is Fortnite?
3. What options are there to play Fortnite?

Slide 3: Convergence

1. How many platforms is Fortnite available on?
2. Why is Fortnite a good example of cross-media convergence?
3. How did Epic Games use Unreal Engine?
4. Unreal Engines has also helped develop which other games?
5. How many views has it received on Youtube, what videos are these for?
6. What other media brands and franchises has it collaborated with?
7. Epic games tends to use non-gaming celebrities to help promote the games beyond the gaming market, who have they worked with?

Slide 4: Industry

1. Who was Epic Games started by?
2. What else does Epic Games own?
3. Why is Fortnite an example of a 'Games as a Service' (Gaas) Model?
4. What upgrades can you get on Fortnite?
5. What is a 'season pass'?
6. What is a 'battle pass' ?

Slide 5: Regulation

1. Who regulates the gaming industry?
2. What age rating does Fortnite have and why?
3. What is moral panic? How can this be linked with games?
4. Research criticism on Fortnite (teachers / parents / Prince Harry / Footballers)

Slide 6: Target audience

1. Create a chart which reflects the target audience of 78% males, 22% females. 53% 10-25 and 42% are in full time employment.
2. What is the appeal to younger children to play the game?
3. Who is Ninja and how many subscribers does he have?
4. Explain how these people can become aspirational role-models? Who are they for Fortnite?

Slide 7: Consider if the audience are active or passive? Find examples to support your findings. Link this to your previous slide.

Slide 8: Consider the uses and gratification theory: explain how players use the game.

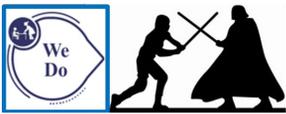


FORTNITE: Exam Style Questions

Big Question:
Why do audiences play Fortnite?

Identify two target audiences for Fortnite (2).

Choose one of these audiences. Briefly explain two marketing strategies used to target this audience (6).





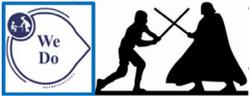
FORTNITE: Exam Style Questions

Explain why video games need to be regulated (10).

Big Question:
Why do audiences play Fortnite?



PLAN





PRODUCTION CONTEXT

- Produced by Epic Games, launched 2017
- Fortnite franchise is a series of multiplayer free-to-play battleground games available on a number of platforms and devices.
- The franchise includes Fortnite: Battle Royale, Fortnite: Save The World, and Fortnite: Creative
- Fortnite: Battle Royale is the most successful free-to-play videogame ever, making \$1.2 billion in the first 10 months of release. Initially, players had to buy 'battle passes' to play, but in September 2018 the Battle Royale version was offered for free.
- The Fortnite franchise had revenue of £2.4 billion in 2018 and the franchise has helped make Epic Games a hugely successful company. In 2012 they were worth \$825 million; in 2018 they were worth \$5.8 billion.
- Fortnite: Battle Royale won 'Best Ongoing Game' in the PC Gamer and IGN awards in 2018.

GAMEPLAY

- Players, in groups of 100, are dropped via a flying bus onto a deserted island that is about to be hit by a natural disaster.
- The aim of the game is to fight to the death, with the last player standing the winner. Players seek out weapons and other materials, but are also able to demolish structures and rebuild them into forts, towers etc.
- As the game continues, the storm starts to encroach, driving the players into smaller and smaller areas and forcing conflict.
- In terms of genre, Fortnite could be considered as fusion of battle games (like Battlegrounds) and construction games (like Minecraft).

SOCIAL & CULTURAL CONTEXTS

- The global videogame industry has been growing since the early days of Atari home entertainment in the 1980s. In recent years, the diversity of game genres and platforms on which they can be played has meant an explosion in the gaming industry. Based on a 2015 economic forecast videogame sales are expected to reach \$90 billion by 2020.
- In 2014, it was calculated there were 1.8 billion gamers in the world - 25% of the global population. This challenges the stereotype of gamers as young geeky men. In 2018 in the USA, 28% of gamers were under 18, but 23% were over 50 years old. There was a 66/44% male/female gender split.
- The range of genres - from first-person shooters to puzzles and learning tools - has varied the demographic for gamers. The variety of platforms - not just home consoles, but on tablets and smartphones - that high quality, complex and engaging games can be accessed has also led to the growth of the industry.
- Gaming has increasingly become a social activity. In 1997 Ultima Online became the first on-line multiplayer game, and since then socialising in the game world has become an everyday activity for millions of people, usually geographically far apart. People develop alliances, friendships and even romantic relationships as their game characters.
- 'eSports' - live competitive gaming events between celebrity players has also become popular, attracting millions of viewers through sites like Twitch and even packing huge stadiums like traditional sporting events.

TECHNOLOGICAL CONVERGENCE

- One of the things that have made Fortnite so popular is the ability to access the game from consoles, PCs, laptops, smartphones or tablets. You can also download it for a range of operating systems. Not only this but you can move, mid-game, between devices without interrupting gameplay. This means it can be played at home, or on the move, on a tiny screen or a video projector. This is a good example of technological convergence.
- Epic Games use an operating system called Unreal Engine to develop Fortnite. They have made this available on their website, and encourage their audience to use it to develop their own games. Unreal Engine has also been used by professional game developers to create titles like Batman: Arkham City and Infinity Blade.

SYNERGY

- Epic Games has a good relationship with various non-gaming celebrities such as Drake and basketball star Ben Simmons. This helps to promote the game beyond the traditional gaming market.

CROSS-MEDIA CONVERGENCE

- Fortnite is also a good example of cross-media convergence, where more than one media brand or form joins to promote each other. Fortnite is the most viewed game on YouTube, and has also used streaming platforms like Twitch (owned by Amazon) to broadcast live competitions.
- It has also incorporated other media brands and franchises. In collaboration with Marvel Studios, there was a special Avengers: Infinity War segment and recently a tie-in with Godzilla. The format of Fortnite means that any kind of costumes, weapons and games can be introduced to keep the game fresh. Films/TV/sports can promote their brands to over 20 million of players, whilst famous collaborations keep Fortnite in the news and social media.

INSTITUTION: EPIC GAMES

- Epic Games was started by Tim Sweeney in 1991 and was originally run from his parent's house. These humble beginnings may explain Epic's decision to make the Unreal Engine available to amateur games designers.
- In 2014, the Guinness Book Of Records named Unreal Engine as the 'most successful videogame engine'
 - Epic Games owns video game developer Chair Entertainment and cloud-based software developer CloudGine, and has studios in the UK, Japan, and Germany.
 - Tencent - a Chinese investment company focused on internet and AI development - bought a 42% stake in Epic in 2012.



REGULATION

- Age ratings are systems used to ensure that entertainment content, such as computer games, are clearly labelled by age according to the content they contain.
- Age ratings provide guidance to consumers (particularly parents) to help them decide whether or not to buy a particular product.
- The rating on a game confirms that it is suitable for players over a certain age.
- In 2012 the PEGI system was incorporated into UK law and The Video Standards Council was appointed as the statutory body responsible for the age rating of video games in the UK using the PEGI system.
- Fortnite has the PEGI rating of 12 for "frequent scenes of mild violence". It seems that parents are more concerned with issues surrounding addiction than the levels of violence.

TARGETING AUDIENCES

Fortnite has used a combination of addictive gameplay, media/technological convergence and marketing to target a diverse and varied audience. 78% are male, 22% are female, 53% are 10-25, and 42% are in full time employment.

- The unrealistic violence and cartoon-style graphics, along with the emphasis on construction as much as killing, make it appealing to a younger audience.
- The rise of 'eSports' stars, mainly consumed via streaming platforms like YouTube and Twitch (where Fortnite is the most watched game) has led to players becoming major celebrities. Ninja, the most famous Fortnite player has over 10m subscribers and earns over half a million dollars a month. Ninja ranks highest in the world for social media interactions (i.e. people posting or sharing using their name - no.2 is Cristiano Ronaldo)
- This creates gamer celebrities that have become aspirational role-models for some audiences.
- The use of non-traditional gamer celebrities such as rappers and NBA athletes widen the appeal of the game. The popularity of 'Twitch Girls' (female streamers like KatyPlaysGames) has also appealed to women.
- Fortnite's use of 'seasons' - with rumours and gossip about future seasons - follows the cable TV/ on-line subscription style of long-form TV drama.

FUNDING AND REVENUE

Fortnite is an example of the 'Games as a Service' (GaaS) model - where there is a constant revenue stream from 'in-game purchases' after the initial purchase (or providing the game for free)

- Some of these are 'micro transactions' where players pay for weapon, costume and game upgrades rather than 'grinding through' the gameplay to score them. In Fortnite, players use V-bucks to purchase these items, and these can be earned in the game or bought using 'real world' money. Another game that does this is Candy Crush.
- Unusually in Fortnite the upgrades are purely 'cosmetic' i.e. they don't actually affect the gameplay. They often consist of new 'skins' (to alter your character's appearance) and 'emotes' (victory dance moves after a kill). These are only available for a short period of time, increasing their value and encouraging players to pay rather than 'grind' for them.
- Another revenue stream for GaaS titles is to offer 'season passes' - like a subscription that allows you to access new content over the course of a period of gameplay (the 'season') that play-for-free users can't access.
- Fortnite offers players 'battle passes' and then drip-feeds limited edition and exclusive content to these players over the course of the season.

HISTORICAL & POLITICAL CONTEXTS

The relationship between videogames and audiences has been a controversial area, with many moral panics. These ranged fears that violent games encourage copycat behaviour, to worries about addiction and the amount of 'screen time' that is healthy. Fortnite, when compared to other successful titles like Grand Theft Auto or Call Of Duty contains very little explicit or realistic violence, and the cartoon-like graphics also make the game suitable for younger players.

In addition, there seems to be little racism or misogyny expressed by the players compared to other videogames - perhaps because free players are randomly assigned race and gender 'skins' at the start of each round. Critics have also praised the collaborative nature of the gameplay that encourages players to work together and protect each other (until the finale).

The main concern seems to be about addiction: with reports from teachers and parents that children are distracted from school work due to their engagement. One psychologist even compared it to heroin! There have been reports that Premier League footballers were being treated for addiction, and Prince Harry said the game is dangerous'.

ACTIVE AUDIENCES

The basic gameplay of Fortnite: Battle Royale is interactive and collaborative, encouraging players to work together. By being able to deconstruct and rebuild the game environment, players are encouraged to be creative.

- Fortnite: Creative is a different format that allows even more creativity in designing 'skins', 'emotes' and landscapes.
- In addition, Epic Games have made their operating system Unreal Engine available (at a price) to encourage the next generation of games developers.

THEORIES

- Uses & Gratifications: Fortnite - along with many videogames - could relate to the 'escapism' and 'catharsis'. • The collaborative nature of the gameplay could also provide social interaction. • The use of gamer and non-gamer celebrities could also relate to the search for role-models that contribute to personal identity. This could be linked to Dyer's 'Star Theory'.

Review: *Fortnite* Recap Quiz

Big Question:
Why do audiences play
Fortnite?

1: Who produced **Fortnite** and when was it launched?

2: Name 3 other games included in the **Fortnite** Franchise

3: What is a 'Franchise'?

4: How much did **Fortnite** reputedly make in the first 10 months?

5: How much were 'Epic Games' worth in 2018?

6: What award did **Fortnite: Battle Royale** win in 2018?

7: Briefly explain 'Convergence'.

8: Give 2 examples of how 'Convergence' has made **Fortnite** so popular.

9: What operating system did Epic Games use to develop **Fortnite**?

10: Name 2 celebrities that have helped promote the game (This is called 'Synergy')

Review: *Fortnite* Recap Quiz

Big Question:
Why do audiences play
Fortnite?

11. Who started Epic Games... and in what year?
12. What do you understand by the term 'Regulation'?
13. What is the PEGI rating for Fortnite?
14. Who are the main target audience for Fortnite?
15. What Genre (Type of Game) is Fortnite?
16. Which member of the Royal Family claimed the game was dangerous?
17. Which aspects of the Uses and Gratifications Theory are reflected in Fortnite?
18. In research from 2018, what percentage of gamers was thought to be under 18?
19. What does PEGI stand for?
20. Why do you think younger players in particular are engaged with Fortnite?

Review

**Big Question:
How does Fortnite appeal
to audiences?**

Wider thinking questions:

Give specific examples from Fortnite to explain.

1. Explain why regulation is so important? Why may parents care more about regulation than children?

2. Briefly explain why audiences play video games. Refer to **Fortnite** in your response (refer to Uses & Gratifications Theory)

3. Explain how video games use new technology to reach and engage audiences.

4. Games such as Fortnite strip young people of communication and social interaction skills. Discuss this idea.
