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## PERSUASIVE WRITING IN CONTEXT – VIDEO GAME BAN

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Read the situation described below and use it to complete the writing assignment that follows.

### THE SITUATION

The Prosper School Board is considering a proposal by the Prosper School Parents' Association that would ban certain video games on school property. The association is concerned about the graphic violence in many popular games and the potential risk they could pose to the safety of students and teachers. The Prosper High School Student Council is opposed to the ban on the grounds that it would infringe on the rights of students. The Board is soliciting input from students and teachers on the proposed video game ban and you have decided to respond.

You are Leigh Samson, a grade 12 student at Prosper High School. You have considered information and opinions from a variety of sources (see following pages 22 and 23). After considering the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed ban, you have reached a decision. You now need to write a persuasive letter that clearly explains

- your decision on the proposed video game ban
- the reasons why you believe your decision to be the best decision

### THE ASSIGNMENT

**Write a letter to Prosper Town Council that will persuade its members to either ACCEPT or REJECT the proposed video game ban.**

In writing your letter, BE SURE TO

- consider your purpose and audience
- study the information which follows and use it to write a persuasive letter
- use an appropriate tone

**Remember that you must clearly and directly choose to either accept OR reject the proposed ban.**

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**What is the video game ban?**

The proposed video game ban would prohibit the possession or playing of titles on the banned list on school property. The ban would apply to hand-held games, computer games, and console-style games. Students found in possession of any of the banned titles would have the games in question confiscated and might face other consequences

**Statement from the Prosper School Parents' Association**

The realistic and graphic nature of the violence in many video games is cause for concern. Although manufacturers have adopted a rating system designed to keep games with explicit content out of the hands of young people, in practice this system has not been very successful. Many games classified as "mature" are in fact being played by children. The larger concern for society as a whole should be the questionable values that these games promote, their glorification of senseless violence, and the potential link between make-believe violence and real violent behaviour. School administrators must assume responsibility for ensuring that these games are not being played by our children, and the proposed ban is a concrete and necessary first step.

**Statement from the Prosper High School Students' Council**

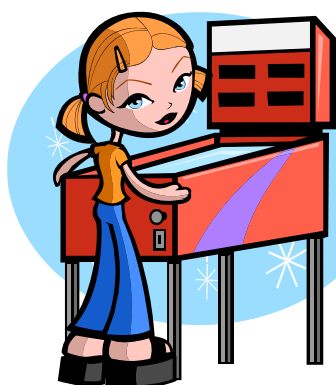
The proposed video game ban is a direct violation of the rights of students. While it is true that many video games feature graphic and senseless violence, it is also true that parents are responsible for determining what is appropriate for their own children. A school-enforced ban sends the wrong message and would likely not be enforceable anyway. There are enough challenges facing schools and students these days without inventing new rules and regulations that deal with issues that are not of direct importance to the quality of education or the safety of schools.

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## Opinions on the Proposed Video Game Ban

I am strongly in favour of the proposed ban. The destructive violence in many video games is really frightening, and I think we need to ask ourselves what the long-term consequences of exposure to repetitive violent imagery may be. At best, such exposure desensitizes people to real violence. At worst, it may be the beginning of an obsession with violent behaviour that can lead to real criminal acts.

Colleen Castellano, *Prosper High School student*



People have been arguing over the link between make-believe violence and real violence for decades. First it was movies, then television, then music, now video games. I'm not, sure that we can ever prove that exposure to artificial violence leads to real violence, and perhaps the opposite may be true. Some psychologists have theorized that make-believe violence offers an outlet or release for those with aggressive tendencies, and may reduce the likelihood of such people committing real acts of violence.

Owen Kerry, *Prosper resident*

Whether or not there is a link between make-believe violence and real violence is not the issue. The issue is whether or not we can turn a blind eye to the consumption of adult-oriented material by young people. We have a societal responsibility to ensure that rules are followed: people under the age of 18 cannot drink in bars or vote in elections; they should not be sidestepping the ratings process when it comes to adult-oriented video games either. The school has every right, and in fact the responsibility, to ensure that the laws are followed.

Ken Cheng, *Prosper High School counsellor*

I do not approve of the graphic and degrading violence featured in many video games. However, I feel that it is the responsibility of parents to determine what is appropriate for their children. I would not allow my own children to play such games, but I would not want a school-enforced policy to reduce my responsibility as a parent. In a different situation, I could wind up having a decision I made in good conscience overturned by an outside authority which would weaken and diminish my authority as a mother.

Maria Enriquez, *parent*

