Do video games cause violence or not?

In February 2018, a student with a gun killed 17 people at *Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School*. The student's neighbor said that he often played violent video games for about 15 hours a day. Earlier, in 2016, an 18-year-old man with a gun killed nine people. He was also said to play violent video games for many hours each day on his computer.

However, these are not the only school shootings. For example, two more shootings occurred at *Virginia Tech University* in 2007 (in which 33 university students were killed) and at *Sandy Hook Elementary School* in 2012 (in which 27 elementary school children were killed). The gunmen in these two cases had never played violent games before.

Some researchers say that violent games may cause violence

The *American Psychological Association* strongly believes that children should not play violent video games. About 97% of children between 2-years-old and 18-years-old play video games. And more than 85% of video games have violence in them.

Research from a study by the *American Psychological Association* showed that "playing violent video games often causes children to become violent and angry" towards other people. It also showed that children who play violent games can't make friends easily and often have less empathy for others.

They also say that violent games are bad because they reward children for bad acts. For example, in military games, children get a high score by killing as many people as they can. According to the study, video games "should not make a goal of killing humans because it teaches children that success is connected to causing pain to other humans."

More than 400 scientific studies say that there is a "significant" link between violent games and violent actions. However, other researchers have found different results.

Other researchers say that there is no evidence that violent games cause violence

Whitney DeCamp, a professor at *Western Michigan University*, says that evidence shows that there is no connection between video games and violent behavior. Many previous studies have shown a connection between playing violent video games and violent acts, but DeCamp says that there is a problem with this connection: the children may be violent *before* they play the games.

Christopher Ferguson, a professor at *Stetson University*, also agrees that video games do not cause violence. He says that violent video games may actually help *stop* violence in society. "If children can act violent in video games, then they don't need to act violent in real life and society," he said. Ferguson showed this by researching the amount of violent crime after the release of various popular video games. He discovered that there was less violence in society during the time after the popular games were released, which may prove his statement.

According to a 2015 study, 49% of American adults play video games. In Japan, about 60% of adults play video games. However, almost no one is killed by a gun in Japan. This is likely because Japan has banned having or selling guns. There were only six deaths by guns in Japan in 2014. There were 33,000 deaths by guns in the United States in 2014.

Video games are played by millions of people around the world. But only America has a big problem with gun violence. Therefore, these researchers say that video games cannot be the cause of violence.