

Kids' Take on Media

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Canadian Teachers' Federation

As the national bilingual umbrella organization for teachers in this country, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) has 14 provincial and territorial Member organizations representing 240,000 teachers across Canada.

For over 80 years CTF has advanced the cause of children, defended the rights of teachers and promoted a strong public education system.

Canadian Home and School Federation

The Canadian Home and School Federation is a national organization that advocates for quality education and the well-being of children and youth. With representation from all of the provinces, it provides a forum and a voice for parents to discuss and present parental views to the federal government and public. It encourages parent leadership, collaborates with stakeholders, and is the national resource centre for parents.

Media Awareness Network

The mission of the Media Awareness Network is to promote and support media education in Canadian schools, homes and communities through a world-class Internet site.

MNet aims to encourage critical thinking about media information, media entertainment and new communications technologies, and to stimulate public debate about the power of the media in the lives of children and young people. Its work is based on the premise that to be functionally literate in the world today, young people need critical thinking skills to "read" all the messages that are informing, entertaining and selling to them every day.

The Canadian School Boards Association

The Canadian School Boards Association is the national voice of the provincial associations of school boards and school trustees. CSBA is composed of ten provincial school board associations representing almost 500 school boards serving three out of five (over three million) of Canada's elementary and secondary school students.

Canadian Association Of Media Education Organizations (CAMEO)

Founded in 1992, CAMEO is an association of Canadian media literacy groups from across Canada.

The goal of CAMEO, through its member organizations, is to advocate, promote and develop media literacy in Canada.

Positive Entertainment Alternatives for Children Everywhere (PEACE)/**Travail de Réflexion pour des Ondes Pacifiques (TROP)**

PEACE is the English-language twin of Travail de Réflexion pour des Ondes Pacifiques (TROP), a non-profit, Québec-based organization. The primary objectives of the organization are to raise awareness of the effects of media violence and to press for changes in the media industries.

Concerned Children's Advertisers

Children's Advertisers (CCA) is a non-profit organization committed to the creation and implementation of awareness and education campaigns for Canadian children. As child-centred advertisers, broadcasters and agencies, CCA works with other advertisers, broadcasters and agencies to develop programs and initiatives that will help children to build healthy lives; support parents in the healthy development of their children; and support educators in the teaching of media literacy and life coping skills to their students.

Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)

The Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) represents some 145,000 members including more than 100,000 persons working in education.

CSQ members hold more than 350 job class titles. They are active in all spheres of education (teaching, professional and support staff) as well as in the fields of daycare, health and social services (nursing, professional and support staff, educators), recreation, culture, community and communications.

Family Service Canada

Family Service Canada is a not-for-profit, national voluntary organization representing the concerns of families and family serving agencies across Canada. The mission statement of Family Services Canada is "Strong Families in a Caring Society". Its mission is to promote families as the primary source of nurture and development of individuals, to promote quality services which strengthen families and communities and to advocate policies and legislation which advance family well-being in Canada.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

To provide current, factual information on the role of media in children's lives and what young people themselves have to say about it, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) commissioned ERIN Research to conduct definitive research on Canadian children's experience with communications media.

The research involved 5,756 students in Grades 3 to 10 in every province and territory. This is the first survey of this size to question young people on all the media they use, what satisfactions they get from media and whether the violence in their daily media consumption influences their behaviours and values. The participants in the study are representative of the population on the basis of age, gender, region, French and English language use, Public and Catholic school boards and urban-rural environments. Margins of error for percentage results for the full sample are ± 1.3 percent, 19 times out of 20.

The survey was designed by ERIN Research following consultation with the Canadian Teachers' Federation and the Media Awareness Network (MNet). In all, 122 different schools participated, representing 93 percent of the classes that were originally selected. This is an exceptional response rate.

The ERIN survey provides a solid baseline against which to measure change in Canadian children's use of, and relationship to, media. It will enable parents, educators and others to act in informed, supportive and creative ways to give young Canadians the best that the world of media can offer.

IT'S THE WEEKEND

Kids' selected two items from a list of ten possible activities that they would choose to do during their free time on the weekend.

- Girls' most popular activity is hanging out with friends. This rises from 20 percent in Grade 3 to 38 percent in Grade 10. Social activities – friends and shopping – become girls' clear priorities as they grow older. TV viewing, reading for pleasure and sports all decline. For girls, choosing computer games reaches a high of only 6 percent in Grade 4 and then drops off.
- Boys want to hang out with friends too particularly as they grow older. However, computer games are also a highly favoured activity.
- The younger kids are the ones most interested in electronic entertainment (TV, videos, Internet and computer games) on the weekend. In Grade 3, these media account for 50 percent of boys' choices and 24 percent of girls' choices.

Summary of Findings, Cont'd

- For both genders, electronic entertainment drops in popularity as a choice of weekend activity, but still remains twice as popular among boys as among girls (34 percent of Grade 10 boys' choices versus 16 percent of Grade 10 girls).

KIDS' DAILY ACTIVITIES

- Watching TV is a daily pastime for 75 percent of children, both boys and girls from Grade 3 to Grade 10.
- The youngest kids are the most frequent video and computer-game players. Almost 60 percent of boys in Grades 3-6 play video or computer games almost every day; even in Grade 10, 38 percent of boys chart it as a daily activity. For girls, the picture is very different: 33 percent of Grade 3 girls play interactive games every day; by Grade 10, the figure has dropped to 6 percent.
- Instant messaging is the new on-line communications medium of choice for kids, with 49 percent of kids in Grades 7-10 using it almost every day and an additional 20 percent using it several times a week.
- Video and DVD are also an important part of the activity landscape of young people, with 24 percent in Grades 3 to 6 and 17 percent in Grades 7 to 10 watching them almost every day. An additional 42 percent screen them a few times a week.
- For both boys and girls, reading for pleasure decreases consistently with age.

TELEVISION

In a series of open-ended questions, kids listed three shows they liked most and then identified their favourite one.

- Young people's choices converge on a small set of popular shows: 17 titles account for 50 percent of choices. *The Simpsons* and *Friends* are at the top of the pyramid.
- Boys' top choices emphasize animated programs, comedy and sports. Girls' top choices tend to feature people in supposedly realistic situations and often focus on social relationships.
- Children of all ages watch *The Simpsons* but for both Francophone and Anglophone kids, from Grades 3 to 10, boys' rate of preference for *The Simpsons* is about twice as high as that of the girls.
- Francophone kids who live inside and outside of Quebec choose different favourite TV programs. In both the younger and older age groups, those who live in Quebec choose more Quebec-based programs than those who live outside Quebec. For québécois students in Grades 3-6, 30 percent of their top 10 programs are made in Quebec versus 10 percent for Francophones in other parts of the country. For students in Grades 7-10, the differences become even more pronounced. For québécois teens, 60 percent of their top 10 favourite programs originate in Quebec, versus 10 percent for Francophone teens outside Quebec.

Summary of Findings, Cont'd

In another series of open-ended questions, kids chose their two least favourite programs.

- Kids' consistently dislike the same shows, regardless of grade, language or gender. Their least favourite programs include certain shows aimed at younger children (*Barney*, *Teletubbies*, *Caillou*), news and, for older teens -- both boys and girls -- soap operas.

To find out why kids like and dislike TV programs, they were asked to rate their favourite TV program according to ten different attributes.

- The key attributes of kids' favourite TV programs appear to be "Exciting" and "Funny". Equally important for girls is that the program is *not* violent.
- The majority of kids' favourite programs do not rate high for violence.

Television News

- The kids surveyed identify the news as one of their most disliked programs but children of all ages watch it. A large majority agree that the news makes them better informed.
- Frequent news watchers are more concerned than others about the larger world (64 percent compared to 52 percent of infrequent news watchers) but they also feel more motivated to do something about it.
- Younger children are the ones most frightened by the news, feeling that their personal safety is at risk (43 percent of girls and 28 percent of boys in Grades 3 and 4). Though young people become less afraid as they grow older, they are also less likely to say that they can make a difference.

Survey respondents were also asked to: *write two things you like about TV* and *write two things you don't like about TV*. For a sample of kids' responses from "Nunavut to Labrador, Montreal to Red Deer", see pp. 35-39.

COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES

In another series of open-ended questions, respondents listed their three favourite computer or video games.

- One of the top choices for both Francophone and Anglophone boys in Grades 3-6 is *Grand Theft Auto*, an ultra-violent action game aimed at mature audiences, which involves murder, bludgeoning and prostitution. For Anglophone boys in the Grade 7-10 category, *Grand Theft Auto* is the run-away favourite title, being chosen by one-third of the respondents in this group. It is much less popular among Francophone boys, for whom hockey rates number one.
- For boys in Grades 3 to 6, a strong link exists between their favourite computer and video games and TV shows and movies (*James Bond*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Spiderman*, and *Yu-Gi-Oh!*). For boys in Grades 7 to 10, the main focus is on action/fantasy/strategy and role-playing games.
- For girls in Grades 3 to 6, three Internet titles (*The Sims*, *Neopet* and *Miscellaneous Internet Games*) combined are even more popular than the young girls' first choice of *Mario*. These games offer both social interaction and "story". Among older girls, Anglophones and

Summary of Findings, Cont'd

Francophones make very similar choices. Traditional and “classic” games such as *Tetris*, *Donkey Kong* and *Zelda* still retain some popularity with girls in this age group.

- Both boys and girls identified *Exciting* as the primary quality of good games, followed by a competitive element, *I like beating other players, or my best score*. Girls’ ratings, however, are well below those of boys. Boys seem to be attracted to attributes of fantasy, to characters who do things they can’t, and to violence.
- M-rated games never really catch on among girls. Among boys, however, there is a steady increase in use up to grade 8, where their popularity appears to plateau. Though boys rate their TV shows as having rather little violence (38 out of 100), their computer games have considerably more violence (62 out of 100). For girls, favourite TV shows and favourite computer games are both low on violence (20 and 27 out of 100 respectively).

In response to open-ended questions, kids named two games they disliked and indicated what was wrong with those games.

- Games fail mainly because of lack of speed and lack of action. Excessive violence was cited as another reason by 60 percent of the girls and 33 percent of the boys.

MEDIA IN THE HOME

- Forty-eight percent of the children surveyed have their own TV set and 35 percent have their own VCR. Twenty-six percent have a computer with an internet connection for their personal use.
- Ten percent of children in Grades 3 to 6 have their own cell phone. By Grade 10, that number has risen to 22 percent. Sixty-two percent of the children surveyed said their family has a cell phone.

MEDIA USE IN THE HOME

This study focuses primarily on television, videos and computer games, media which children use mainly in their own homes and in the homes of their friends.

- A large number of children claim to have experienced no parental guidance on what they can watch, what they can play, or for how long.
- In Grades 3 to 6, roughly 30 percent of kids claim that they never have any adult input about what TV shows they can watch. By Grade 6, 50 percent report no adult input as to how long they can watch. In Grade 8, the figures for those who experience no parental supervision of their TV viewing rises to approximately 60 percent. On the other hand, close to 90 percent of children report that they watch TV with their family either “most of the time” or “sometimes”, and this pattern remains fairly constant from Grade 3 to Grade 10.
- While watching TV is still a communal activity (since parents also watch sometimes or most of the time), game-playing seems to be more solitary.
- Even for children in Grades 3 and 4, the top figure for parental involvement of any kind never rises above 50 percent. By the time students reach Grade 7, almost 75 percent of adults never tell children what video or computer games they can or cannot play.

Summary of Findings, Cont'd

- The majority of parents have never talked with their kids about racism, sexism or violence in the media. When they do, they are more likely to talk with boys about violence and with girls about racism. Sexism in the media is the topic least likely to be discussed between parents and their children of either gender.
- Nineteen percent of the kids surveyed say that their TV set possess a V-chip which allows parents to block certain television channels or programs that they do not wish children to see. Use of the V-chip declines as the children grow older.

Restricted and mature entertainment

- By Grade 6, half of all kids surveyed have seen an unsuitable movie, video or DVD. In Grades 7 and 8, that figure rises to more than 75 percent.
- The numbers of children who report seeing R-rated movies in theatres across the country varies widely, likely because movie ratings are a provincial matter. The proportion of Grade 7 to 10 kids who have seen restricted movies in a theatre ranges from 24 percent in Quebec to 44 percent in Ontario to 57 percent in BC. This is one of a very few instances in this survey where large geographic differences occur.
- In Grade 7, 76 percent of students have watched restricted movies on video in their home. In Grade 7, about one-quarter of children have personally rented an R-rated video. Many of the R-rated movies that children watch are, apparently, already in the home or have been rented by older siblings, friends or parents.
- Both in theatres and in the home setting, parental supervision leads to markedly less viewing of restricted material.
- Kids do not automatically assume that an “unsuitable” rating means that their parents would disapprove of the movie or game. When asked, “What would your parents say if you watched an unsuitable movie?”, two-thirds of respondents say that it would depend what the movie was. Just over half stated that their parents would respond to the use of M-rated computer games on an individual basis.
- Boys are more likely to have used both unsuitable movies and unsuitable computer games. Boys whose parents take no part in indicating what games they can or cannot play are in the majority. Eighty-four percent of Grade 7 boys have played video and computer games with a mature rating (suitable for 17 years of age or older.)
- The young people surveyed believe that there should be tighter age restrictions on Mature-rated computer and video games than on R-rated movies.
- About 75 percent of students say R-movies should be open to kids ages 12 and up, but only 50 percent say the same about M-rated games. Thirty percent say that there should be no age restrictions whatsoever for films. On the other hand, only 17 percent favour no age limit on M-rated games.

Summary of Findings, Cont'd

Feel-good and frightening TV programs and movies

- The primary qualities of feel-good shows seem to be heroism and overcoming odds. The girls' choices tend to the romantic, while boys' choices emphasize adventure. The *Harry Potter* series and *The Lord of the Rings* movies appear in both the feel-good and frightening lists.
- There is greater consensus on frightening movies than on feel-good movies. Just two titles (*The Ring/Le cercle* and *Signs*) account for 29 percent of all the frightening choices, while it takes 15 feel-good titles to reach this mark.
- Boys admit to less fear, and both girls and boys appear less fearful as they grow older. However, some kids are greatly moved by violent material. Ten percent “strongly agree” that violent material sometimes gives them nightmares; 10 percent “strongly agree” that violent material sometimes makes them afraid, and 14 percent “strongly disagree” with the idea that violent material does not bother them at all.
- Feel-good choices tend to be recent (two-thirds were seen within the past month), while disturbing experiences tend to be remembered longer. For boys, the frightening memories can remain longer than for girls. Thirty-seven percent of boys recalled scary titles from longer than one year in the past, compared to 26 percent of girls.

Imitative violence

- Fifty-one percent of kids in Grades 7 to 10 stated that they had witnessed imitation of some “violent act” from a movie or TV show. (“Violent acts” can include imitating a dangerous stunt. It does not necessarily mean aggressive violence directed against another person.)

Television programs that kids should not watch

- Kids were asked to name any television program that kids a few years younger than them should not watch. *The Simpsons* and *South Park* top every list.

Kids' views on media

The survey asked kids whether they think that violence in the media has any effect on their everyday lives. Results indicate that, left to their own devices, kids tend to regard media violence as benign. But various environmental influences can make kids sensitive to the potential effects of media violence. Those who are more aware:

- spend more time doing homework, reading and participating in lessons, clubs and hobbies
- discuss what they watch on TV with their families
- discuss violence, racism and sexism with their families
- have parents who supervise their television viewing.

Opinions about toward media violence are very similar in grades 7 through 10 – attitudes that one has developed by Grade 7 last at least until Grade 10. By contrast, response to other dimensions measured in this survey shows great change over this four-year period.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Teachers' Federation has embarked on a groundbreaking media research program designed to benefit children, parents and teachers across Canada. This major initiative was implemented in 2003 to raise public awareness regarding the use of media by Canadian children.

To provide current, factual information on the role of media in children's lives and what young people themselves have to say about it, the Canadian Teachers' Federation commissioned ERIN Research to conduct definitive research on Canadian children's experience with communications media.

The research involved approximately 5,700 students in Grades 3 to 10 in every province and territory. This is the first survey of this size to question young people on all the media they use, what satisfactions they get from media and whether the violence in their daily media consumption influences their behaviours and values. The participants in the study are representative of the population on the basis of age, gender, region, French and English language use, Public and Catholic school boards and urban-rural environments.

The ERIN survey provides a solid baseline against which to measure change in Canadian children's use of, and relationship to, media. It will enable parents, educators and others to act in informed, supportive and creative ways to give young Canadians the best that the world of media can offer.

2. METHOD

Questionnaire development

The survey was designed by ERIN Research following consultation with the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) and the Media Awareness Network (MNet). There are two parallel versions, one for Grades 3 to 6 and another for Grades 7 to 10. The Grade 3 to 6 questionnaire contains about 80 percent of the material in the survey for older grades.

The draft surveys were pre-tested with both French and English students, and revisions were made on the basis of students' and teachers' comments.

Survey distribution

Thirty-seven school boards agreed to participate. The school boards were selected from each province and territory, and care was taken to obtain a representative selection of urban and rural, French and English, Public and Roman Catholic school districts across Canada.

Each board was asked to contribute eight classrooms, two in Grades 3 or 4, two in Grades 5 or 6, two in Grades 7 or 8 and two in Grades 9 or 10. Some school boards selected the individual classrooms, while other boards requested that CTF make the arrangements with schools and teachers. The eight classes in each board generally came from between two and four different schools. The composition of the sample appears in Table 1.

CTF sent a package to each participating classroom containing a set of printed questionnaires and parental permission slips. Detailed instructions were also included for the teacher, who was instructed to give students the help they needed to understand the questions, and to assure students that their answers would be completely confidential. In younger grades, teachers often took their class through the survey question by question in order to avoid misunderstandings. At the end of the session the teacher put the completed surveys into a return envelope and sealed it in the students' presence. These envelopes were sent directly to ERIN Research via Canada Post.

Sample

Table 1 shows the distribution of the 5,756 respondents on four demographic dimensions—gender, language, grade level and region. In all, 122 different schools participated, representing 93 percent of the classes that were originally selected. This is an exceptional response rate.

The sample is closely representative of Canada’s school-age population with respect to both gender and language. The provincial samples are each within 2 percentage points of the actual population of the province, with the single exception of Quebec, which has 24 percent of the country's population and 18 percent of the sample. The discrepancy occurs because French language school boards were selected from the Yukon Territory, Manitoba, Ontario and New Brunswick, as well as from Quebec, in order to create a more broadly-based French language sample. The Atlantic provinces and the three Territories each have slightly larger samples than their populations would dictate.

The difference between the Grade 3 and 4 returns arises because most public schools elected to give the survey to Grade 4 classes rather than Grade 3 classes.

Table 1. Sample characteristics					
<i>Kids' Take on Media, 2003</i>					
Dimension	Number	Percent	Dimension	Number	Percent
Gender			Province/Territory		
Female	2,762	50	British Columbia	690	12
Male	2,750	50	Alberta	473	8
Language			Saskatchewan	155	3
French	1,353	24	Manitoba	220	4
English	4,403	76	Ontario	2,131	37
Grade			Quebec	1,036	18
Three	212	4	New Brunswick	341	6
Four	973	18	Prince Edward Island	151	3
Five	691	13	Nova Scotia	148	3
Six	702	13	Newfoundland & Labrador	178	3
Seven	726	13	Yukon Territory	38	1
Eight	717	13	Northwest Territories	146	2
Nine	852	15	Nunavut	48	1
Ten	664	12			

Note: Numbers do not total 5,756 in all cases as some students did not answer all demographic questions

Margins of error

Margins of error are calculated differently for results expressed in percentage terms (most results in this report) and for results expressed as means (e.g. Table 10, Table 16).

For percentage results, the confidence interval commonly associated with a sample of 5,756 is ± 1.3 percent, 19 times out of 20. This means that, 19 times out of 20, the results for another sample, drawn in the same manner, are likely to be within 1.3 percent of the present results. For smaller subsets of the sample the confidence interval is larger. For Grades 3 to 6 alone, or for Grades 7 to 10 alone, it is approximately 2.0 percent, 19 times out of 20. For French language respondents alone, who comprise approximately one quarter of the sample, the confidence interval is approximately ± 2.6 percent.

Mean scores in this report are expressed on 100-point scales, for example, 0 means “Strongly disagree” and 100 means “Strongly agree”. For a relatively small subset of one-quarter of the sample, the confidence interval for mean scores is approximately ± 1.2 points out of 100. In other words, a second sample of students, drawn in the same manner, would likely produce a result within 1.2 points of the present sample, 19 times out of 20. For the full sample, the confidence interval is smaller than this.

It is important to note that the calculation of confidence intervals assumes random sampling from a population. The present sample is not truly random, in that it selects school boards and classrooms rather than individuals. While there is no reason to believe that the sample differs from random in any systematic way, it is possible that the true confidence intervals are slightly larger than those cited above.

On the positive side, sampling classrooms has a decided advantage over sampling individuals. Surveys of individuals generally encounter relatively high refusal rates, and typically, only about one-quarter of those contacted for a survey actually complete it. This leads to potentially serious selection bias. For example, a survey on media use might attract people with certain views on media and miss people with differing views. Sampling intact classrooms means that essentially all students in the class complete the survey, thereby eliminating much selection bias.

3. IT'S THE WEEKEND...

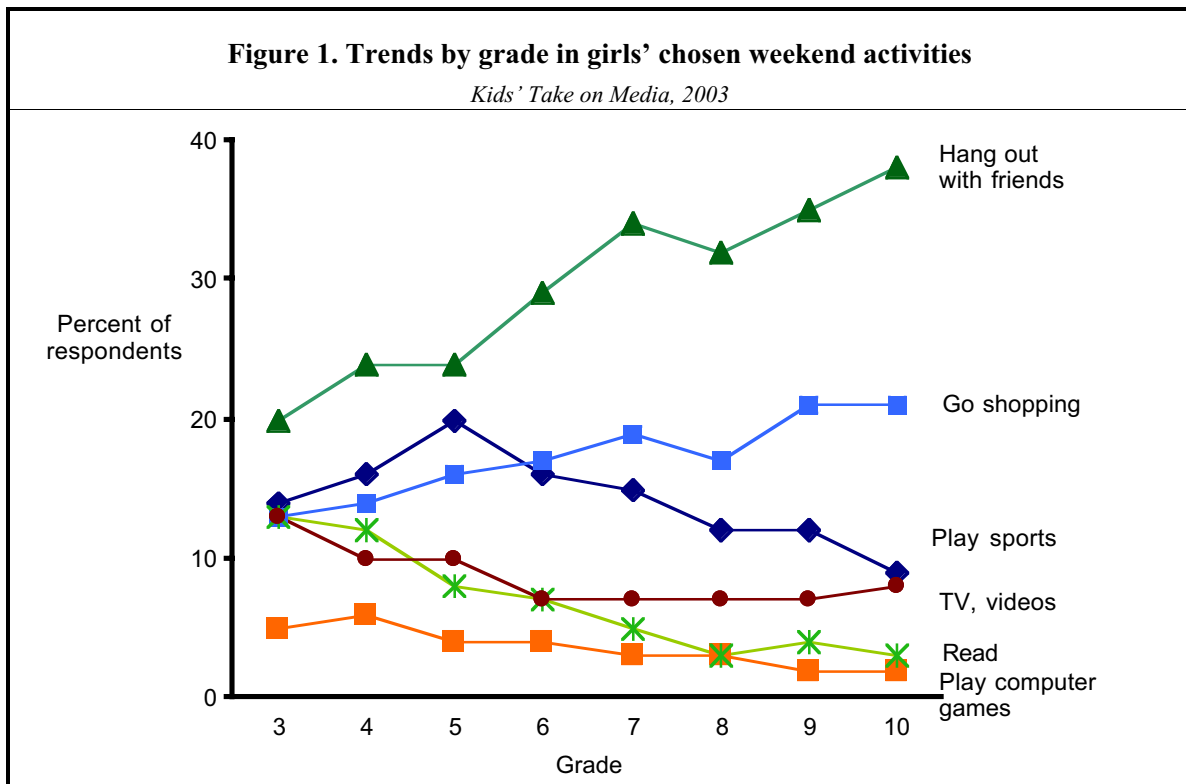
The survey began with an engaging gambit, a question designed to get kids thinking about their media use in the context of their own lives. We asked young Canadians:

It's the weekend and you have a few hours to do whatever you want. What would you do?

Kids chose two activities from a list of ten.

Girls' chosen activities

Girls' choices appear in Figure 1. Their most popular activity is “hang out with friends” – the top line in the chart. This line begins in Grade 3 at 20 percent, meaning that 20 percent of all the choices made by Grade 3 girls were “hang out with friends”. By Grade 10, “hang out with friends” represents 38 percent of girls' choices.



Social activities – friends and shopping – become girls’ clear priorities as they grow older. Choices for TV viewing drop by 5 percent from 13 percent in Grade 3 to 8 percent in Grade 10. Reading also declines, as does sports (after peaking in Grade 5). For girls, choosing computer games reaches a high of only 6 percent in Grade 4 and then drops off.

Figure 1 omits three of the ten activities – those that change very little across grades:

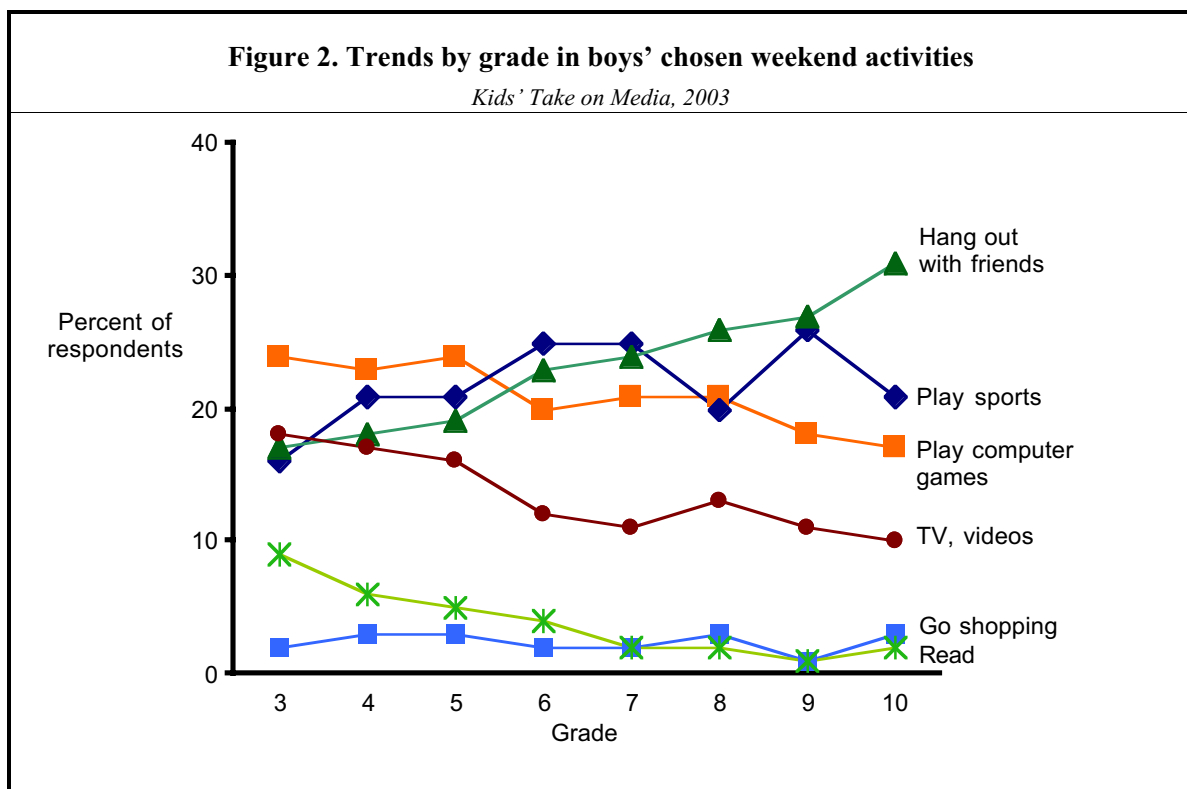
- “Talk on the telephone” was 4 percent of choices
- “Listen to music” was 7 percent of choices
- “Go on the Internet” was 8 percent of choices.

Boys’ chosen activities

Girls’ and boys’ choices differ primarily in the reversal of emphasis on computer games and shopping. Computer games are a strong choice among boys but are off the radar for girls. Shopping is the opposite, attractive to girls and in last place for boys. Their choice of TV drops from 18 percent in Grade 3 to 10 percent in Grade 10.

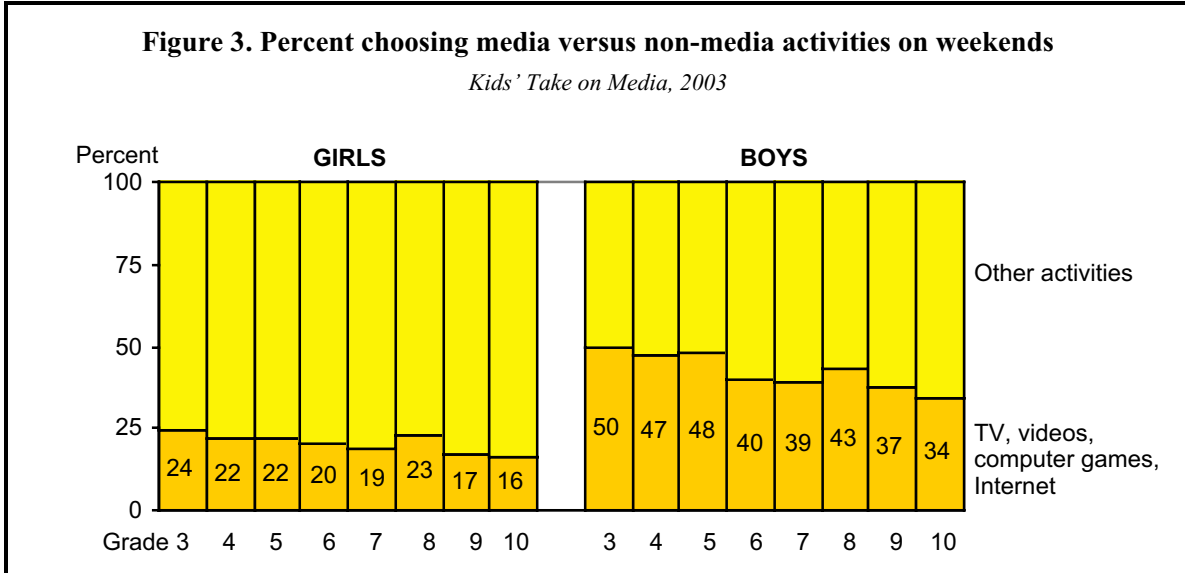
As with girls, the three activities that did not change with age are omitted from the chart:

- “Talk on the telephone” was 1 percent of choices
- “Listen to music” was 6 percent of choices
- “Go on the Internet” was 8 percent of choices.



Interest in the electronic media

In Grade 3, electronic entertainment (TV, videos, Internet and computer games) collectively account for 50 percent of boys' choices, compared to 24 percent of girls' choices. By Grade 10, electronic media represent 34 percent of boys' choices versus 16 percent of girls' choices. In other words, electronic entertainment drops in popularity for both groups, but remains about twice as popular among boys as among girls as a choice of weekend activity.



4. KIDS' DAILY ACTIVITIES

The preceding chapter reported activities that kids would choose to do in their free time on a weekend. What do they do on a daily basis? Figure 4 through Figure 8 illustrate kids' participation in fifteen activities.

Watching TV is the one constant among these activities. It is a daily pastime for 75 percent of children, both boys and girls, from Grade 3 to Grade 10. Almost 60 percent of boys in Grades 3-6 play video or computer games almost every day; even in Grade 10, 38 percent of boys chart it as a daily activity. For girls, the picture is very different. 33 percent of Grade 3 girls play interactive games every day; by Grade 10, the figure has dropped to 6 percent. For both genders, it is the youngest who are the most frequent video and computer-game players.

Instant messaging is the new on-line communications medium of choice for kids, with 49 percent of kids in Grades 7-10 using it almost every day and an additional 20 percent using it several times a week. In contrast, 9 percent of kids in the same age group frequent chat rooms daily and 10 percent visit them a few times a week. The Media Awareness Network's 2001 survey *Young Canadians In A Wired World* found almost comparable rates of use of instant messaging and chat rooms among both secondary and elementary school-aged children, yet now, two years later, daily use of instant messaging is four times more prevalent than daily use of chat rooms.

Video and DVD are also an important part of the activity landscape of young people with 24 percent in Grades 3 to 6 and 17 percent of those in Grades 7 to 10 watching them almost every day. An additional 42 percent screen them a few times a week. Though very few kids go to the movies every day or even a few times a week, 76 percent of students in Grades 3-10 see a film in the theatre at least a few times a month. (A small percentage of the younger kids say they see a movie in a theatre almost every day. It is possible that they focused on the word "movie" in the question, and included movies they watch on TV or video.)

For both boys and girls, reading for pleasure decreases consistently with age, as does playing video and computer games. In addition, there are sizeable differences in participation in most activities.

There are some notable differences between the activities that kids would choose in the free time on the weekend and what they actually do. The "weekend" data suggest that girls might do more shopping as they got older, but in fact they do less. It is likely that girls' definition of shopping changes over time, with younger girls perhaps including a trip to the grocery store with Mom or Dad, and older girls thinking in terms of an independent expedition to the mall.

Figure 4. Kids' daily activities, part 1

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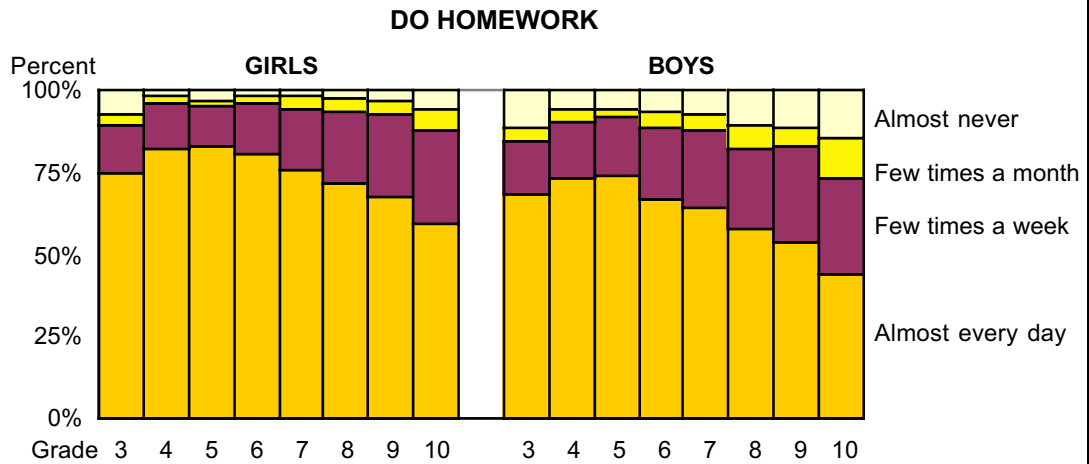
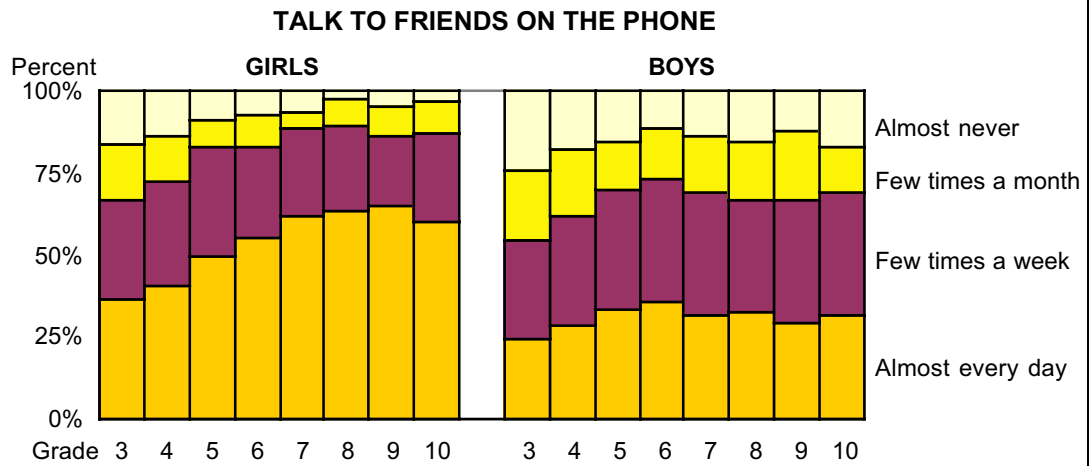
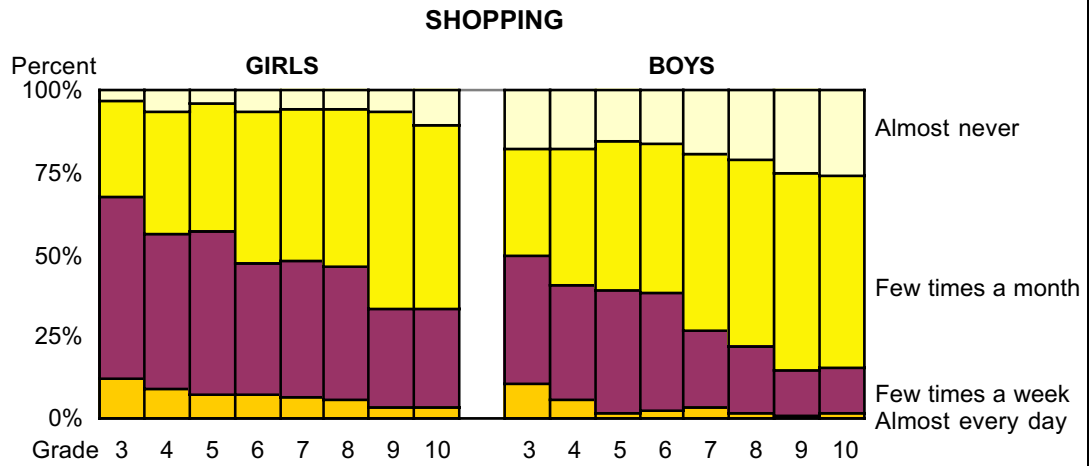


Figure 5. Kids' daily activities, part 2

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

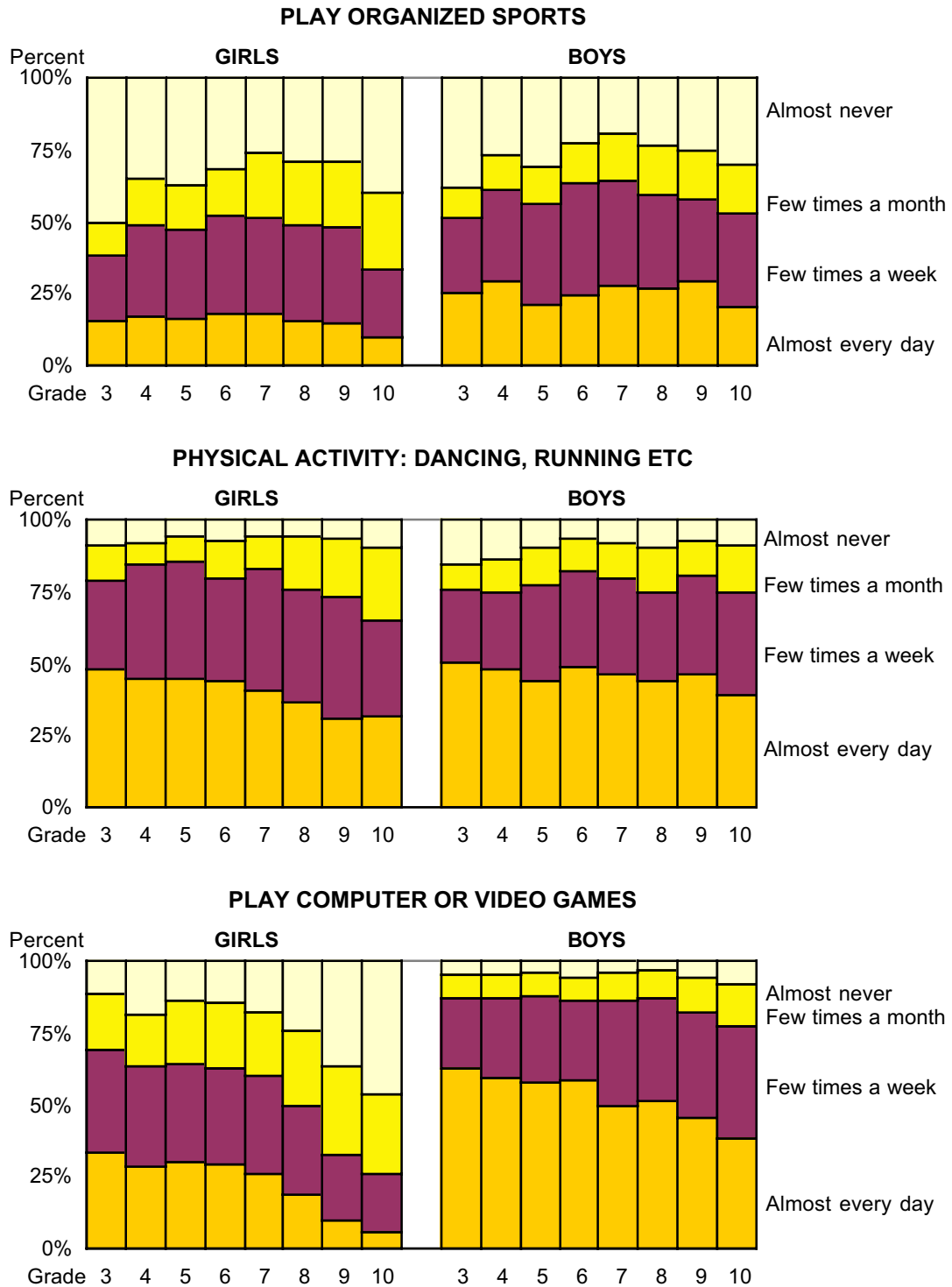


Figure 6. Kids' daily activities, part 3

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

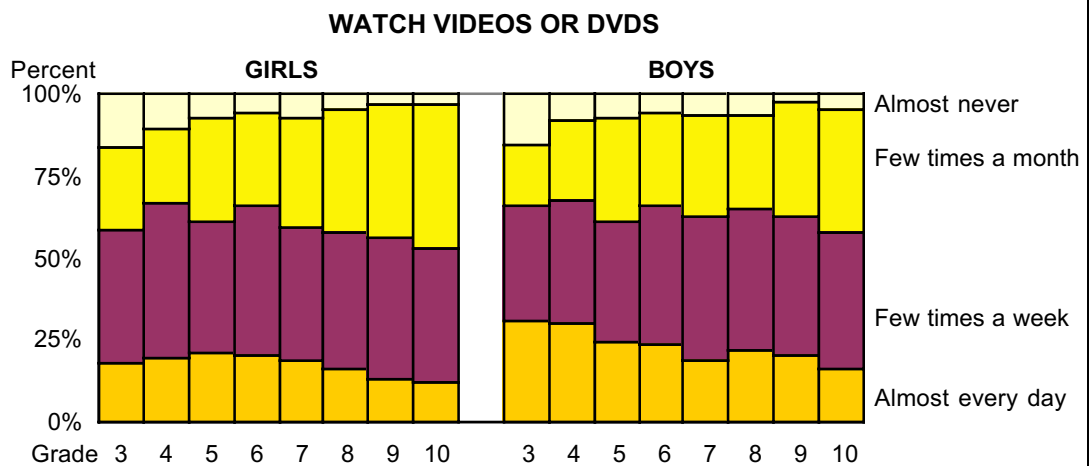
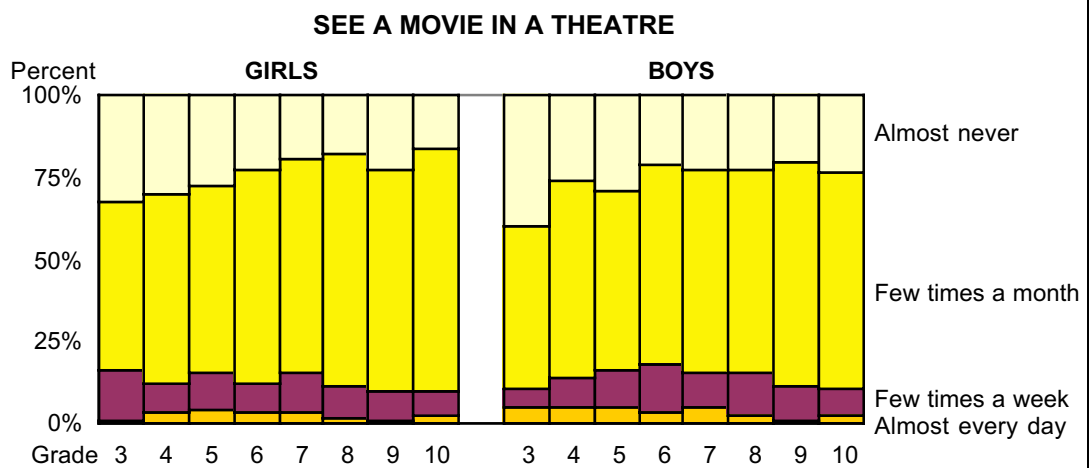
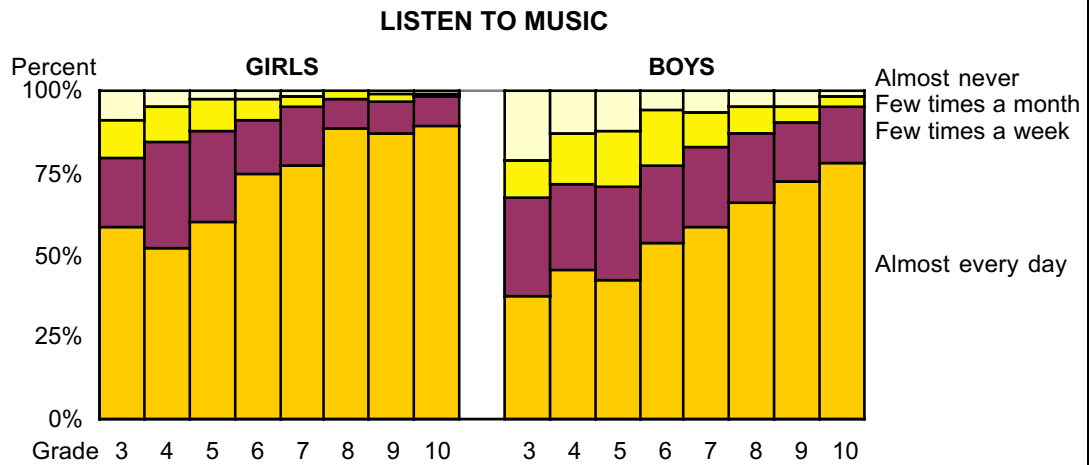


Figure 7. Kids' daily activities, part 4

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

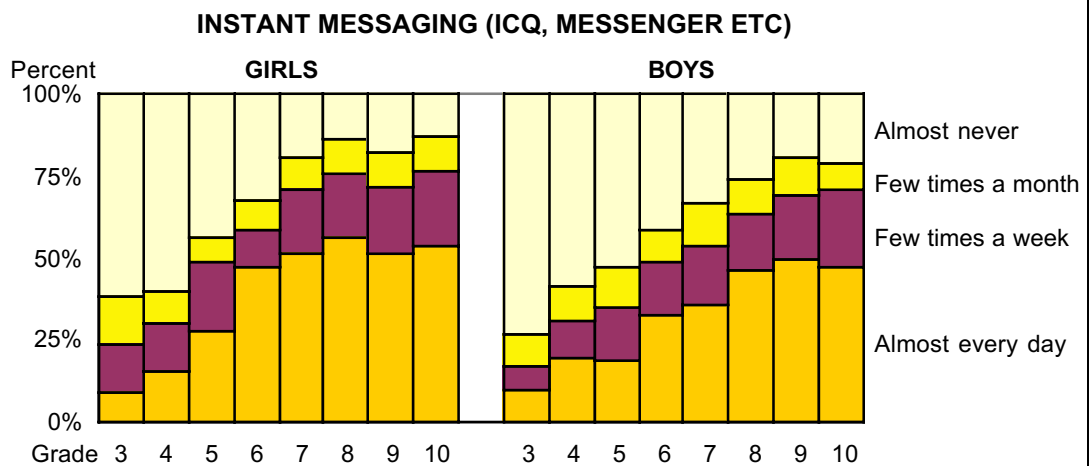
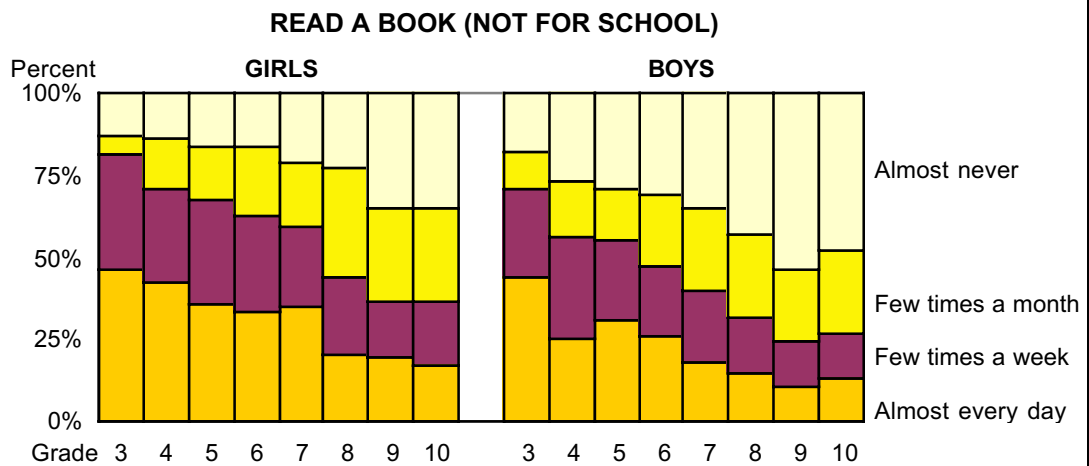
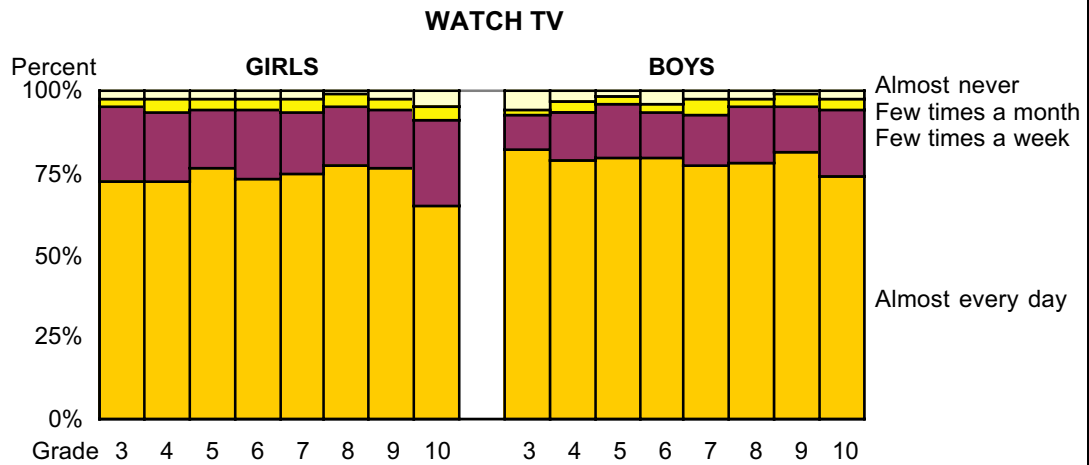
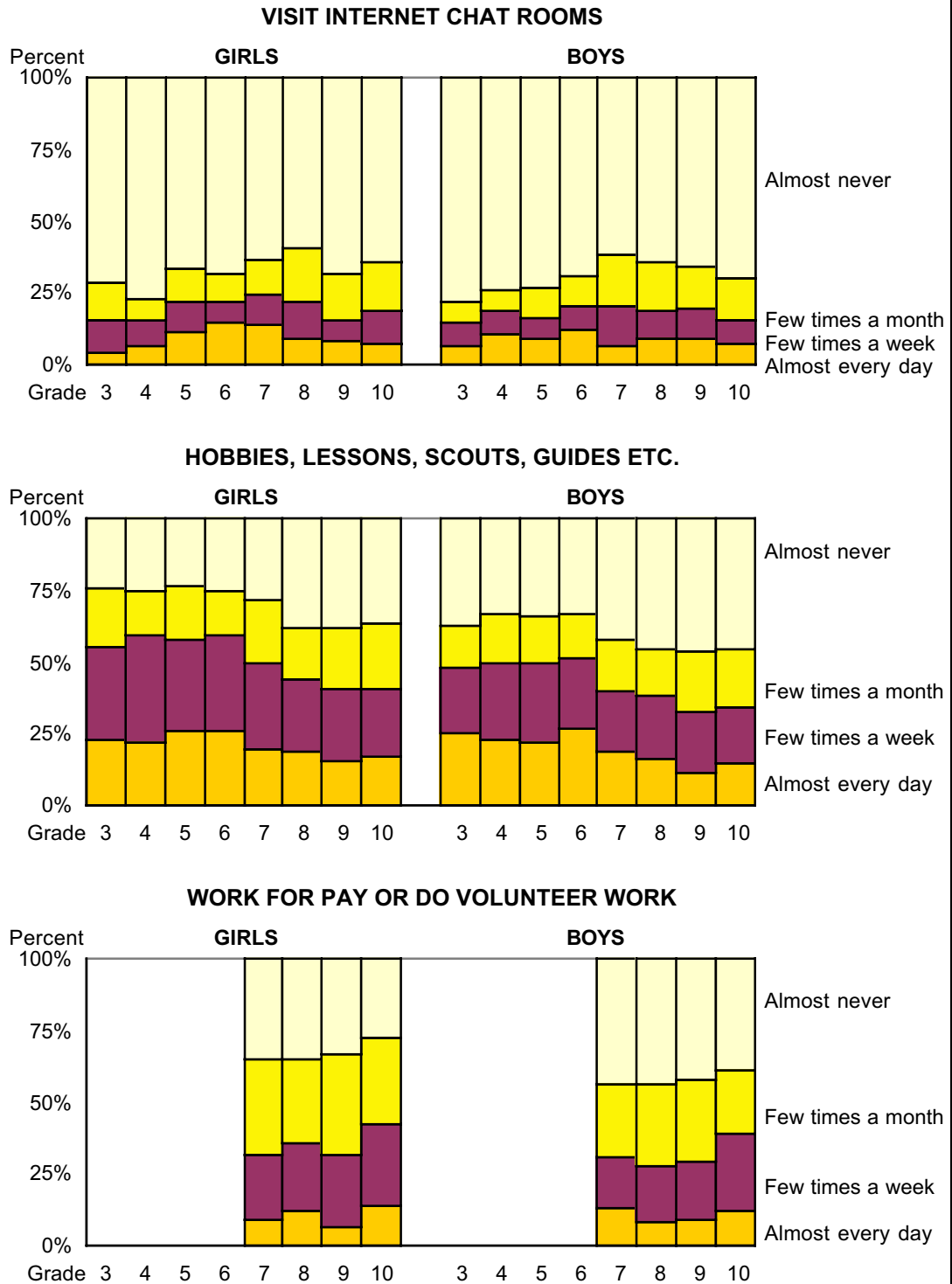


Figure 8. Kids' daily activities, part 5

Kids' Take on Media, 2003



Note: The question on work for pay and volunteer work did not appear in the Grade 3-6 survey.

5. TELEVISION

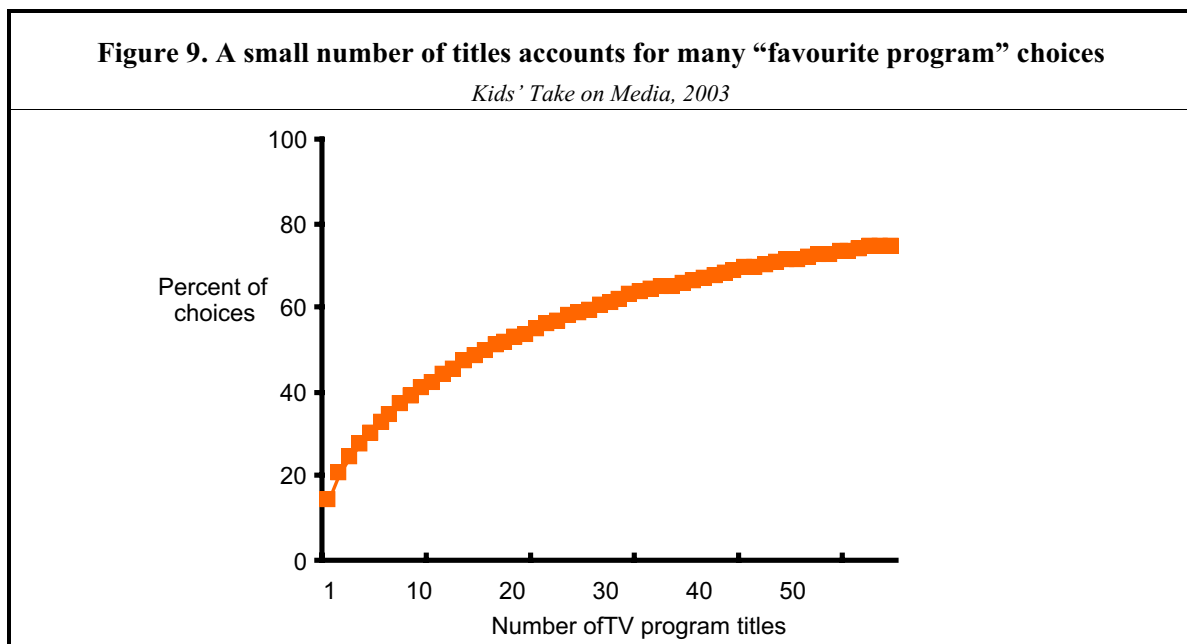
TV programs that kids like

Which television programs do children prefer and why? In a series of open-ended questions, the survey asked kids to name three shows they most liked and to identify their favourite one. This exercise turned up a huge number of television program titles, more than 500 in all, a fact which suggests that there is a large degree of diversity in what children watch and like on television. On the other hand, a very few titles account for a large proportion of favourite television shows, for example:

- 39 percent of all respondents listed *The Simpsons* as one of their top three programs (31 percent of French respondents; 42 percent of English respondents).
- 17 percent of all respondents listed *Friends* as one of their three shows (7 percent of French respondents; 20 percent of English respondents)
- 17 percent of French respondents listed *Star Académie*.

The five thousand respondents made some 15,202 favourite-program selections. Sixteen titles account for 50 percent of the total choices and 56 titles account for 75 percent of choices. The remaining titles, approximately 500 of them, account for the final 25 percent of selections.

Figure 9 charts this relationship. The first few titles (*The Simpsons*, *Friends*, etc.) contribute relatively large proportions of choices and each succeeding title contributes a slightly smaller increment. The smoothness of the curve suggests that there might be a mathematical equation that accurately describes it. (Indeed, there is: the data points appear in The Appendix for students who would like to estimate it!)



When an exact mathematical relationship exists between variables, it calls for an explanation. It may quantify some interesting facet of kid's culture. Figure 9 shows that there is an orderliness to the popularity of TV programs: one program is very popular, another is slightly less popular, and many others are successively less popular. Why should this be the case? It suggests that kids' entertainment choices form a very specific hierarchy.

Programs are presumably popular because they resonate with the collective sensibility of the audience. They address ideas and values that kids find attractive, and they provide a common frame of references for discussion among kids. The present results identify the extent to which kids' choices converge on a small set of popular titles. It suggests, with *The Simpsons* and *Friends*, at the top of the pyramid, that the mind of the 8 to 16 year old set is attuned to the humour inherent in personal relationships and to a search for more mature life models. One could clearly pursue this analysis at length.

The theory that is evolving here suggests that this curve is independent of time and place. It is not dependent on the particular programs that are current in the year 2003. A year or two from now, *The Simpsons* may have dropped from the lead, but there will be some other single program that defines kids' culture in its place. A few years ago *Friends*, which now sits in second place, may have been at a different point on the curve – perhaps *Seinfeld* was number two.

The curve defines, for better or for worse, the impact that a relatively small number of programs will have on the culture of the day – as mentioned earlier, 17 titles account for 50 percent of choices. Given that we have only one survey measure to go on, we cannot know whether the shape of the curve will vary if measured at some other time on some other groups of students. This survey does, however provide additional contexts for checking the generality of this relationship, and these are reported in the chapter on computer /video games and movies.

The top 20 TV programs

Favourite programs differ between older and younger children, between boys and girls, and among French and English viewers. There are also differences among Francophones who live inside and outside Quebec. The favourite programs identified by these different groups appear in Table 2 through Table 5.

In general, boys' top choices emphasize animated programs (some based on computer games), comedy and sports. In fact, for Anglophone boys in Grades 3-6, five out of their six favourite programs are animated. Girls' top choices tend to feature people in supposedly realistic situations and often focus on social relationships.

The first row of results in Table 2 shows that 25 percent of Anglophone girls in Grades 3-6 and 46 percent of Anglophone boys in Grades 3-6 chose *The Simpsons* as one of their three favourite shows. However, for girls, *The Simpsons* were only slightly more popular than *Lizzie McGuire*, a sitcom populated with people who are easy to identify with, in very recognizable situations. In fact, for both Francophone and Anglophone kids, from Grades 3 to 10, boys' rate of preference for *The Simpsons* is about twice as high as that of the girls.

Girls' choices	Percent of choices	Boys' choices	Percent of choices
The Simpsons	25	The Simpsons	46
Lizzie McGuire	23	Yu-Gi-Oh!	27
The Amanda Show	18	Sports	17
Friends	16	Spongebob Squarepants	10
All That	10	Dragonball Z	9
Fear Factor	9	Beyblade	9
Survivor	9	Fear Factor	8
Even Stevens	7	Friends	6
American Idol	6	That '70s Show	5
Spongebob Squarepants	6	The Amanda Show	5
That '70s Show	6	Pokémon	5
Boy Meets World	5	Even Stevens	5
Arthur	5	Family Guy	5
Braceface	4	King of the Hill	4
Yu-Gi-Oh!	4	Malcolm in the Middle	4
7th Heaven	4	South Park	4
Full House	3	Survivor	4
Totally Spies	3	Scooby Doo	4
Sports	3	All That	4
America's Funniest Videos	3	Real TV	4

Percentages add to more than 100, as respondents chose up to three TV programs.

Anglophone boys and girls in Grades 3 to 6 share only one program in common – *The Simpsons* – in their top five choices. The Francophone boys and girls in the younger grades show a much greater symmetry, sharing four out of five of their favourite programs. (See Table 6 and Table 7 for differences between Francophones living inside and outside Quebec).

Table 3. “Choose your three favourite TV programs”			
Grades 3 – 6: French			
<i>Kids’ Take on Media, 2003</i>			
Girls’ choices	Percent of choices	Boys’ choices	Percent of choices
Star Académie	27	The Simpsons	28
Radio-Enfer	17	Sports	20
The Simpsons	15	Radio-Enfer	19
Bob L’Éponge	13	Bob L’Éponge	16
Ramdam	13	Star Académie	15
Sabrina	12	Beyblade	14
Buffy The Vampire Slayer	8	Yu-Gi-Oh!	12
Gilmore Girls	6	Real TV	5
Lizzie McGuire	6	X-Men	5
Degrassi: The Next Generation	6	Big Wolf on Campus	4
Watatatow	6	Buffy The Vampire Slayer	4
Charmed	6	Jimmy Neutron	4
Real TV	5	Medabots	3
Friends	4	Ramdam	3
The Amanda Show	3	Jackie Chan	3
Totally Spies	3	Watatatow	3
Sports	3	Oggy et Les Cafards	3
Arthur	3	South Park	3
Fear Factor	3	The Amanda Show	2
Histoires De Filles	3	Fear Factor	2

Percentages add to more than 100, as respondents chose up to three TV programs.

In the older grades, Anglophone girls and boys show a greater similarity of choices, with three out of five of their favourite TV programs being the same. For the Francophone students in grades 7 to 10, only two out of five of their favourite shows are the same for the boys and the girls.

Table 4. “Choose your three favourite TV programs”

Grades 7–10: English

Kids’ Take on Media, 2003

Girls’ choices	Percent of choices	Boys’ choices	Percent of choices
Friends	42	The Simpsons	63
The Simpsons	31	Sports	17
That ’70s Show	17	Friends	16
American Idol	14	That ’70s Show	15
Gilmore Girls	12	Family Guy	13
Survivor	10	CSI	7
Will and Grace	10	South Park	7
CSI	8	Malcolm in the Middle	6
Soap Operas	8	King of the Hill	6
Fear Factor	7	Seinfeld	6
7th Heaven	6	Everybody Loves Raymond	5
8 Simple Rules for Dating My Daughter	6	Yu-Gi-Oh!	5
Lizzie McGuire	4	Real TV	4
Boston Public	4	Survivor	4
Smallville	4	Dragonball Z	4
Home Shows	3	Fear Factor	3
Sports	3	Smallville	3
Buffy The Vampire Slayer	3	Undergrads	3
Malcolm in the Middle	3	Star Trek	2
My Wife and Kids	3	American Idol	2

Percentages add to more than 100, as respondents chose up to three TV programs.

**Table 5. “Choose your three favourite TV programs”
Grades 7–10: French**

Kids’ Take on Media, 2003

Girls’ choices	Percent of choices	Boys’ choices	Percent of choices
Watatatow	27	The Simpsons	55
The Simpsons	22	Sports	26
Star Académie	22	Star Académie	8
Gilmore Girls	17	Km/H	7
Friends	16	Testosterone	6
Fortier	10	Watatatow	6
Dawson’s Creek	7	Radio-Enfer	6
Ramdam	7	Friends	5
American Idol	6	Fear Factor	5
Histoires De Filles	6	Survivor	5
Buffy The Vampire Slayer	5	That ’70s Show	4
That ’70s Show	5	Bob L’Éponge	4
Virginie	5	Fortier	4
Km/H	4	Fresh Prince of Belair	4
Roswell	4	South Park	4
Fear Factor	4	Real TV	4
Soap Operas	4	CSI	3
Degrassi: The Next Generation	4	Malcolm in the Middle	3
Les Poupées Russes	4	Yu-Gi-Oh!	3
Survivor	4	La Clique	3

Percentages add to more than 100, as respondents chose up to three TV programs.

Francophones living inside and outside Quebec

The Francophone sample outside Quebec is drawn from New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba and the Yukon. Many of these respondents live in areas that are primarily English-speaking, and some may have limited access to the range of French-language TV channels that are available in Quebec.

The next two tables show the top ten choices for older and younger Francophones living inside and outside Quebec.

There are clearly differences in TV viewing between those who live inside and outside Quebec. In both the younger and the older age groups, those who live in Quebec choose more Quebec-based programs than those who live outside Quebec. It seems likely that the cultural milieu in which one lives is at least partly behind this. *Watatatow*, for example, is a Radio-Canada program and is presumably available to almost all Francophone kids across the country.¹ If cultural milieu played no role, *Watatatow* should be chosen equally by those inside and outside Quebec – but it is not. It is the number two choice for those inside Quebec and number 17 for those outside Quebec

Other programs of French origin (*Radio Enfer*, *Ram Dam*, *Star Académie*) appear on private networks that may have more limited distribution outside Quebec, and comparisons are therefore less exact.

Table 6. “Choose your three favourite TV programs” Francophone respondents in Grades 3 – 6 <i>Kids’ Take on Media, 2003</i>			
Living in Quebec	Percent of choices	Living outside Quebec	Percent of choices
Radio Enfer	28	The Simpsons	25
Star Académie	25	Sports	16
The Simpsons	22	Yu-Gi-Oh	15
Bob L Éponge	18	Star Académie	14
Ram Dam	13	Bob L Éponge	12
Beyblade	10	Lizzie McGuire	8
Buffy The Vampire Slayer	9	Amanda Show	6
Sabrina	9	Beyblade	6
Real TV	7	Friends	5
Sports	7	Arthur	5

Percentages add to more than 100, as respondents chose up to three TV programs.

¹ The exception would be those who do not have either cable or satellite systems and who live outside urban areas with a Radio-Canada broadcast signal

**Table 7. “Choose your three favourite TV programs”
Francophone respondents in Grades 7 – 10**

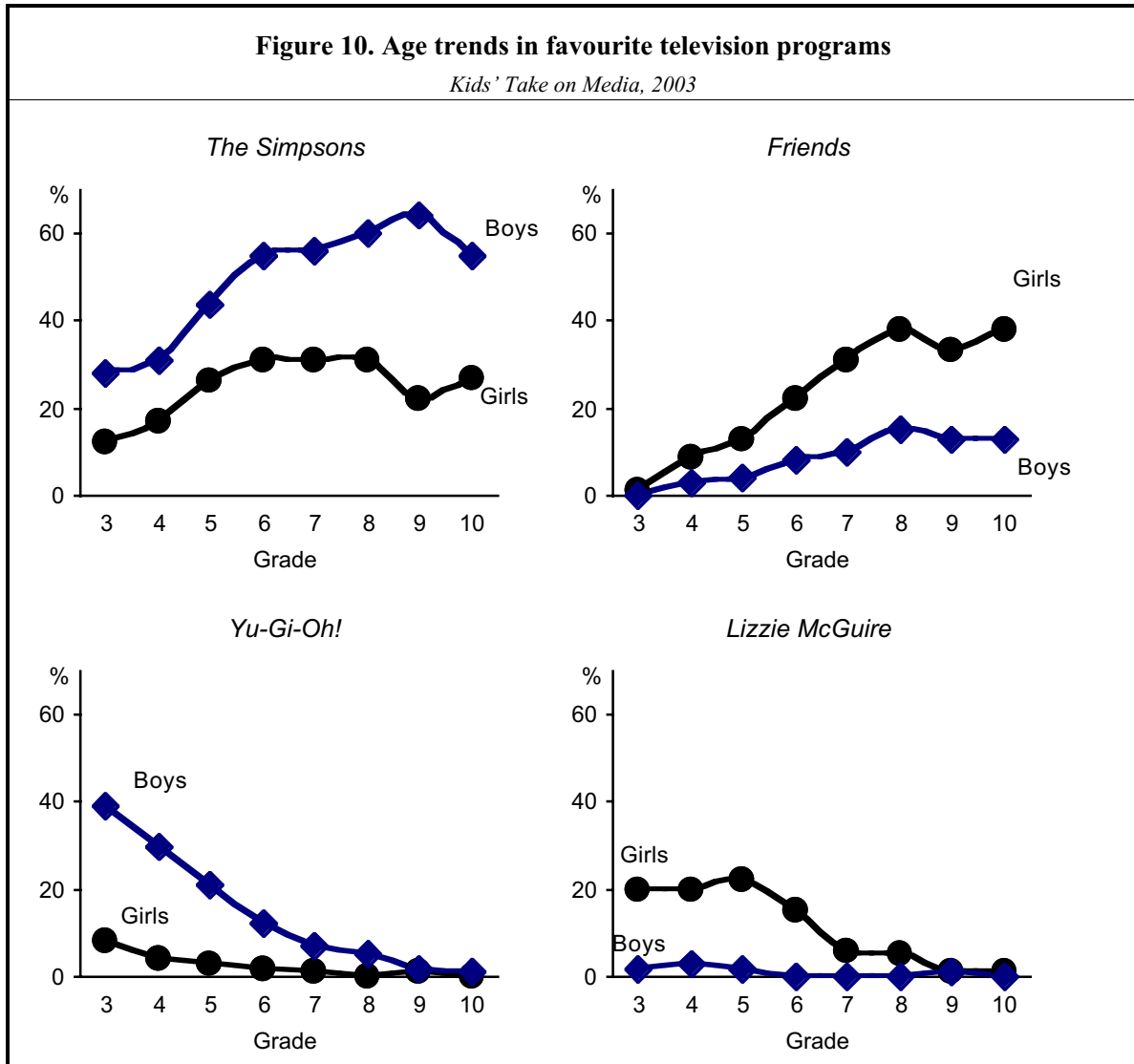
Kids’ Take on Media, 2003

Living in Quebec	Percent of choices	Living outside Quebec	Percent of choices
Simpsons	37	Simpsons	37
Watatatow (Radio-Canada)	29	Friends	23
Star Académie	17	Other Sports	14
Other Sports	13	Star Académie	13
Fortier	12	That 70s Show	11
Gilmore Girls	11	Survivor	9
Km/H	9	Gilmore Girls	8
Testosterone	7	Fear Factor	8
Histoire De Fille	7	American Idol	7
Dawson	6	Fresh Prince of Belair	6

Percentages add to more than 100, as respondents chose up to three TV programs.

Age trends in TV choices

Figure 10 shows age trends in choices for four of the most popular television programs. *The Simpsons* is the most-liked program among older boys and *Friends* is the most liked among older girls. *Yu-Gi-Oh!* and *Lizzie McGuire* are highly rated among younger boys and girls. English and French results are combined.



TV programs that kids don't like

In another open-ended question, respondents listed two programs that they disliked. Kids consistently dislike the same shows, regardless of grade, language or gender. The question did not specify that students focus on programs aimed at their age group, and universally, they were turned off by certain programs aimed at younger children. *Pokémon* appears in each of the eight groups of students shown in Table 8 and Table 9 and both *Barney* and *Teletubbies* are in six of the eight.

News appears in seven of the eight groups. The only age/sex category that did not list News was that of Francophone boys in Grades 7-10. For this group, News was the ninth most disliked program, cited by 6 percent of respondents.

The older teens, both girls and boys, put soap operas on their lists (*Les Feux De L'Amour* is *The Young and the Restless*), and Anglophone teens include talk shows.

Table 8. Most disliked television programs: English			
<i>Kids' Take on Media, 2003</i>			
Girls' choices	Percent of choices	Boys' choices	Percent of choices
Grades 3-6			
Barney	30	Barney	33
Teletubbies	17	Teletubbies	22
News	11	News	11
Pokémon	10	Pokémon	9
Yu-Gi-Oh!	9	Yu-Gi-Oh!	6
Grades 7-10			
News	13	Soap Operas	17
Soap Operas	11	Talk Shows	14
Talk Shows	10	News	12
Pokémon	8	Pokémon	11
Barney	7	Barney	10

Percentages can add to more than 100, as respondents chose up to two TV programs.

Table 9. Most disliked television programs: French*Kids' Take on Media, 2003*

Girls' choices	Percent of choices	Boys' choices	Percent of choices
Grades 3-6			
Teletubbies	22	Caillou	23
Caillou	20	Teletubbies	23
Pokémon	17	Pokémon	15
News	9	News	11
Barney	8	Barney	10
Grades 7-10			
Les Feux De L'Amour	12	Teletubbies	18
News	10	Caillou	11
Pokémon	7	Star Académie	11
Virginie	7	Pokémon	9
Teletubbies	6	Les Feux De L'Amour	9

Percentages can add to more than 100, as respondents chose up to two TV programs.

WHY DO KIDS LIKE AND DISLIKE TV PROGRAMS?

Attributes of favourite TV programs

Respondents rated their favourite TV program on a set of ten agree/disagree scales. Table 10 lists the mean score on each attribute for all programs combined. A score of 100 means that respondents “Strongly agree” that the program has the attribute in question. A score of 0 means “Strongly disagree”. The midpoint, 50, is a neutral rating meaning “Neither agree nor disagree”.

The key attributes of kids’ favourite TV programs appear to be “Exciting” and “Funny”. Equally important for girls is that the program is *not* violent: the score of 20 means that girls disagree with the assertion that their favourite program contains a lot of violence.

The largest gender difference is with regard to violence: both boys and girls disagree that their favourite programs have much violence, but girls disagree more emphatically. They differ as well in response to the statement, “Characters do things I could never do in real life”. Boys’ favourite programs tend to have characters like this while girls’ programs tend not to.

Attribute	Mean agreement (0 – 100)	
	Girls	Boys
It’s exciting	74	76
It’s funny	74	73
It makes me forget about my problems	61	62
My parents like this program too *	63	52
The characters do things I could never do in real life *	50	62
It’s relaxing	53	55
I watch it for hours - I can’t stop	51	54
I learn things I didn’t know before	47	46
It makes me think	46	42
It has lots of violence *	20	38

* Significant gender difference

Note: A score of 0 means “Strongly disagree” and 100 means “Strongly agree”. The midpoint, 50, is “Neither agree nor disagree”.

TV program clusters

Table 10 combines results for all programs, and this disguises the differences among them. Even though favourite programs in general rate high on the “*Funny*” dimension, many of the favourite programs in the Table 2 through Table 7 are not particularly funny. Sports programs, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Survivor* may have their funny moments, but humour is not a defining feature.

This section of the report separates the most popular programs into groups on the basis of their ratings on the ten attributes. It is done through a statistical technique called clustering; a cluster contains programs that respondents rate in a similar manner across all ten attributes.

The cluster analysis demonstrates that kids like different kinds of programs for different reasons, and it proposes a set of eight English clusters and five French clusters.

Often, the programs in a cluster seem to belong together, for example, *Gilmore Girls* and *7th Heaven*, or *Dragonball Z* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* or *Malcolm in the Middle* and *The Simpsons*. It seems likely that people who liked one program in the set might also like others. Because the sorting into clusters is a mathematical process, it is possible for programs that have no conceptual similarity to be placed in the same group. Thus, sports programs cluster with *Malcolm in the Middle* and *The Simpsons*. Is this just coincidence, or is there some underlying integrity to this group? The question cannot be decided with the present results and remains open to further study.

There are eight such clusters among the English programs, and their profiles appear in Figure 11. The vertical line in each chart represents the mean score for all programs, and the bars show how much the programs in the cluster differ from the mean.

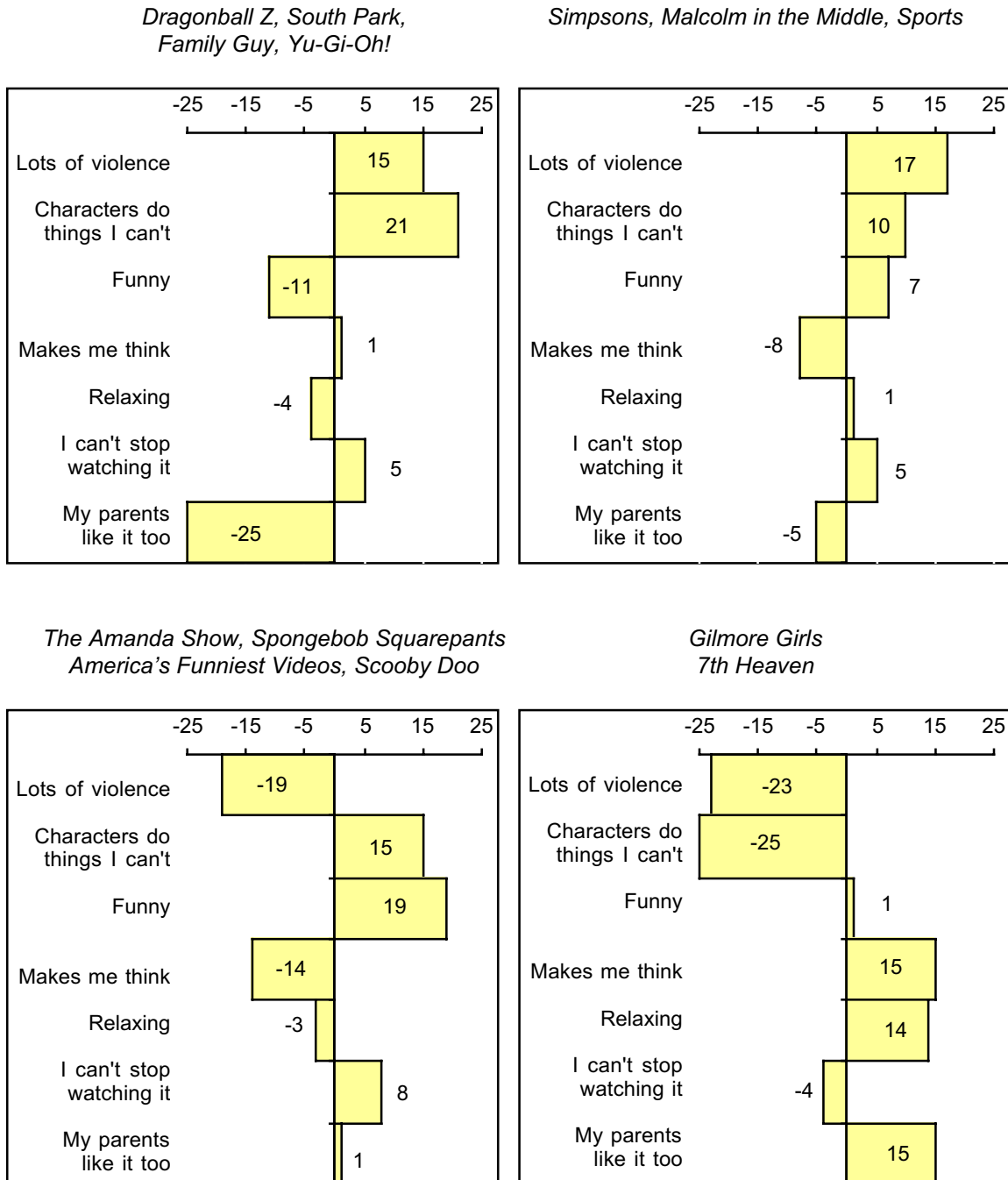
For example, programs in the cluster containing *Dragonball Z* and *South Park* rate 15 points out of 100 higher than average with respect to “*Lots of violence*” and 11 points lower than the average with respect to “*Funny*”. (Although all ten attributes were used to cluster the programs, Figure 11 shows only the seven that most strongly differentiate the programs).

The French and English clusters are different because respondents rated different programs. Nonetheless, a few parallels are evident. *The Simpsons* and *Sports Programs* cluster together in both language groups, so there may be something more than coincidence to this seemingly strange pairing. The profile of this cluster is similar in both languages – it has higher than average ratings on *Violence*, *Characters do things I can’t do in real life*, and *Funny*, and lower than average ratings on *Makes me think*.

Characters do things I can’t do in real life indicates whether the program tends toward reality or fantasy. For example, the *Dragonball Z* cluster has a positive score on this dimension, indicating that characters can do unusual things. The *Gilmore Girls* cluster has a negative score: those who chose these programs as favourites perceive the characters as realistic.

Across the 13 different clusters, the majority of favourite programs show a negative value for violence. On the other hand, the shows that Anglophone boys often chose as among their favourites -- *Dragonball Z*, *South Park*, *Family Guy*, *Yu-Gi-O* h-- are the ones that their parents appear to like least, according to the clusters.

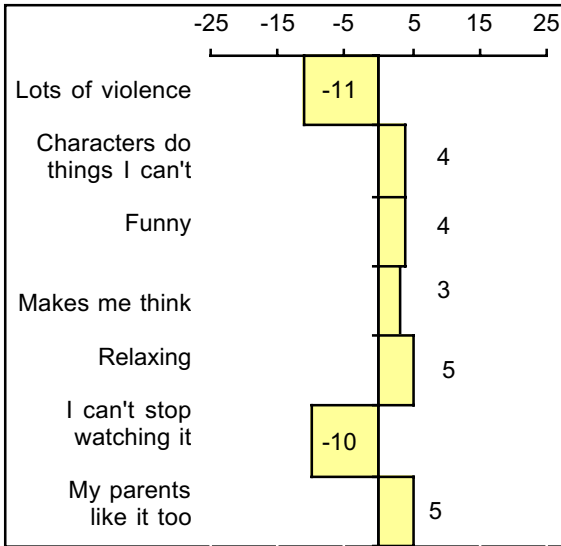
Figure 11. Television program clusters: English
Kids' Take on Media, 2003



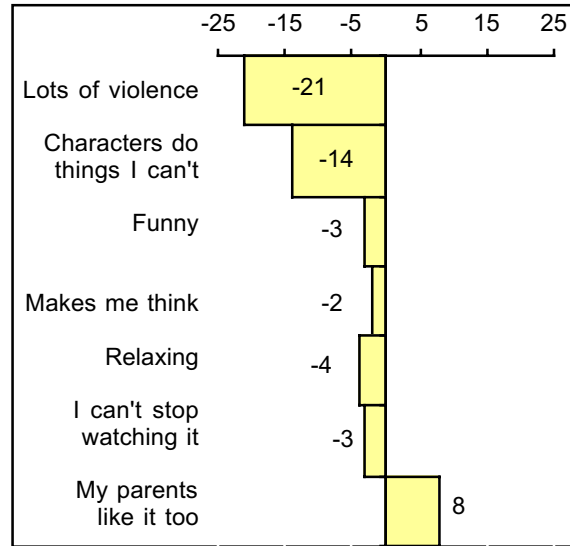
Television program clusters: English (continued)

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

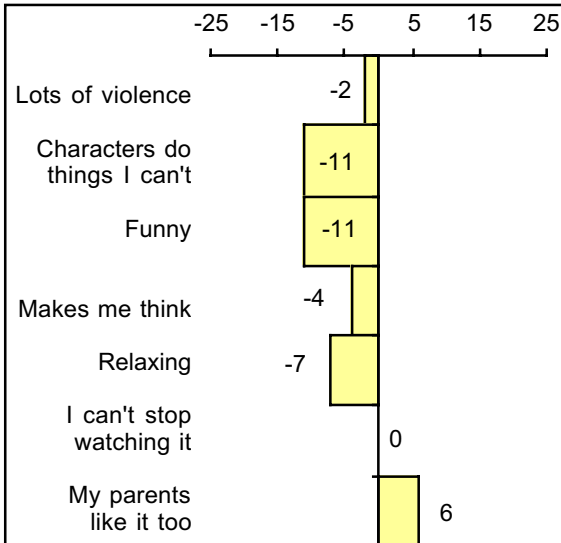
*Smallville, Even Stevens
Will and Grace*



*Lizzy McGuire, American Idol
Boy Meets World, Survivor, All That*



*Soap Operas, Real TV
8 Simple Rules for Dating My Daughter*



*Friends That '70s Show
CSI, Buffy The Vampire Slayer Fear Factor*

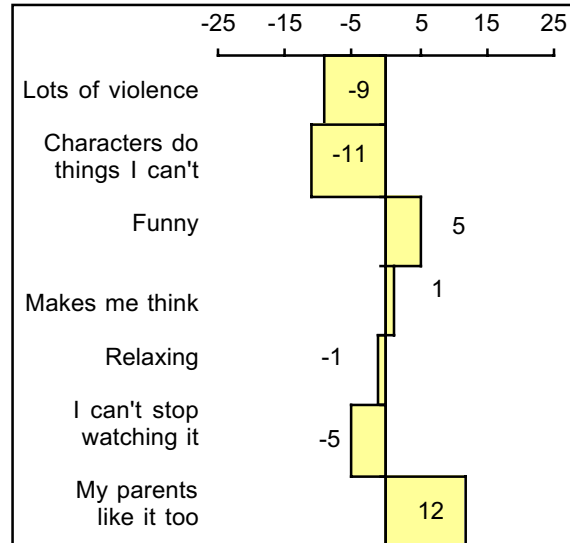
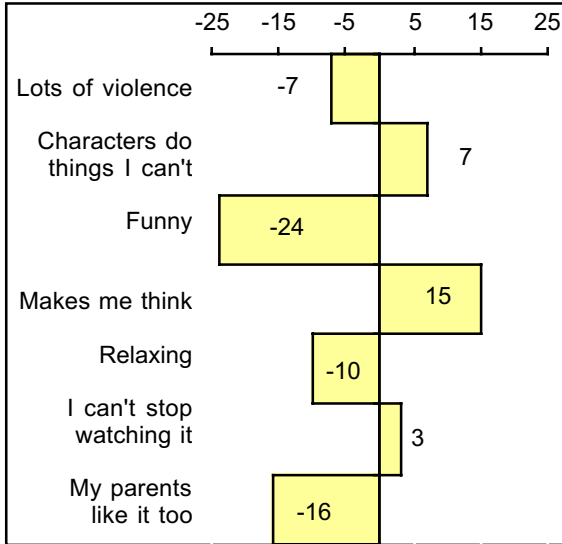
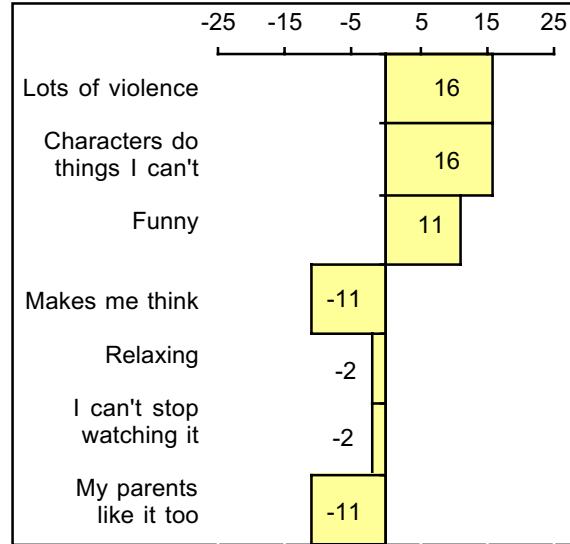


Figure 12. Television program clusters: French
Kids' Take on Media, 2003

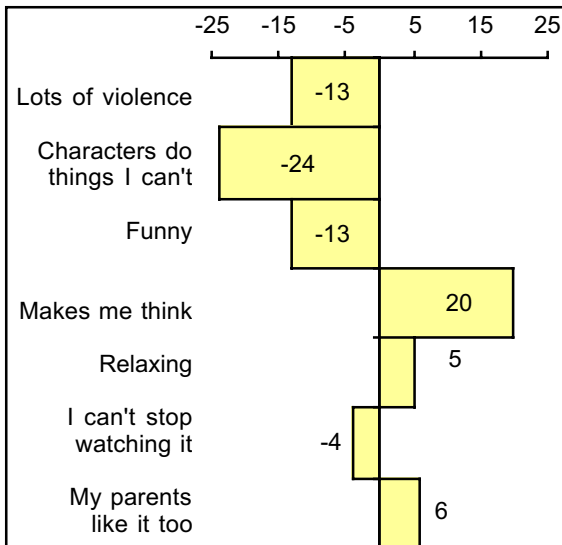
Beyblade, Yu-Gi-Oh!



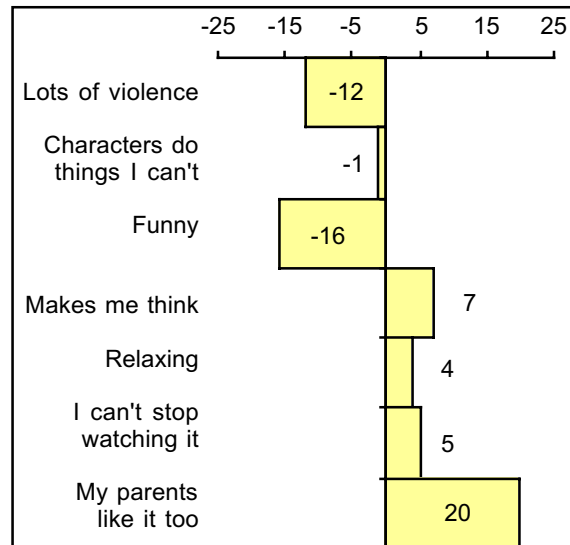
Simpsons, Bob l'Éponge, Sports



Ramdam, Watatatow



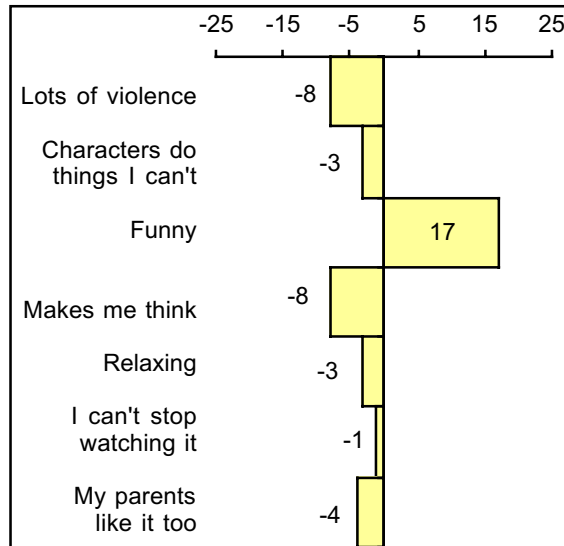
*Fortier, Star Académie
 Gilmore Girls*



Television program clusters: French (continued)

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

*Radio-Enfer, Friends
Buffy the Vampire Slayer*



TELEVISION NEWS

Even though respondents identify the news as one of their most disliked programs, children of all ages watch it. The proportion who watch “almost every day” is relatively steady across grades, varying between 20 and 24 percent. The proportion who never watch the news decreases with age, from 28 percent in Grade 3 to 13 percent in Grade 10.

Figure 13 and Figure 14 compare kids who watch news two or more times a week with those who watch less than this. The greatest contrast between these groups is on the basis of interest: Those who do not watch news consider it boring while those who do watch, not surprisingly, disagree with the suggestion that it is boring.

A large majority of kids agree that the news makes them better informed. This includes 69 percent of those who don’t watch very often, and 89 percent of the more frequent news viewers.

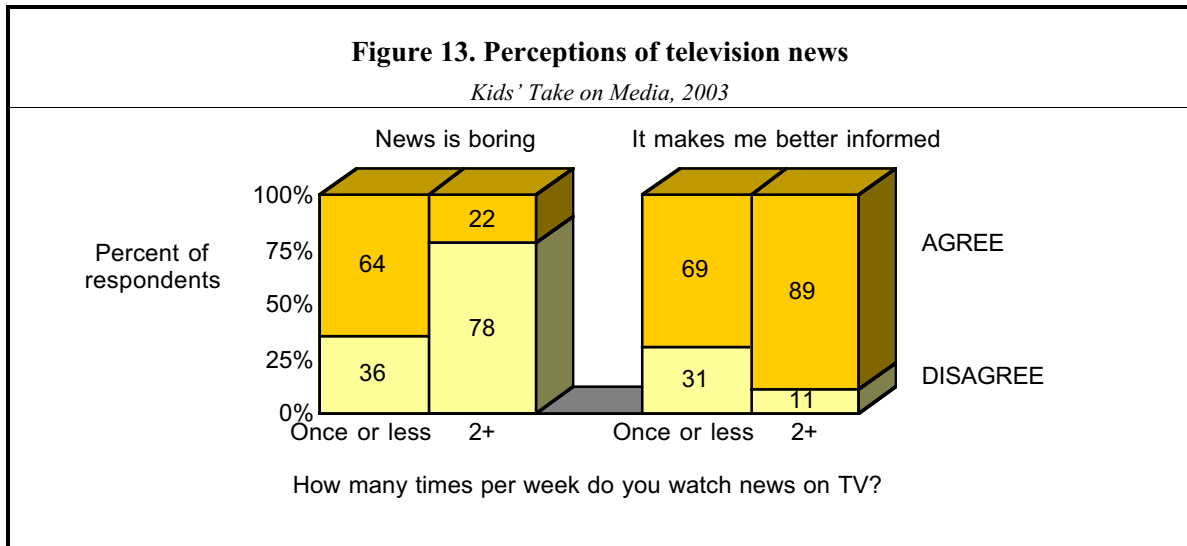
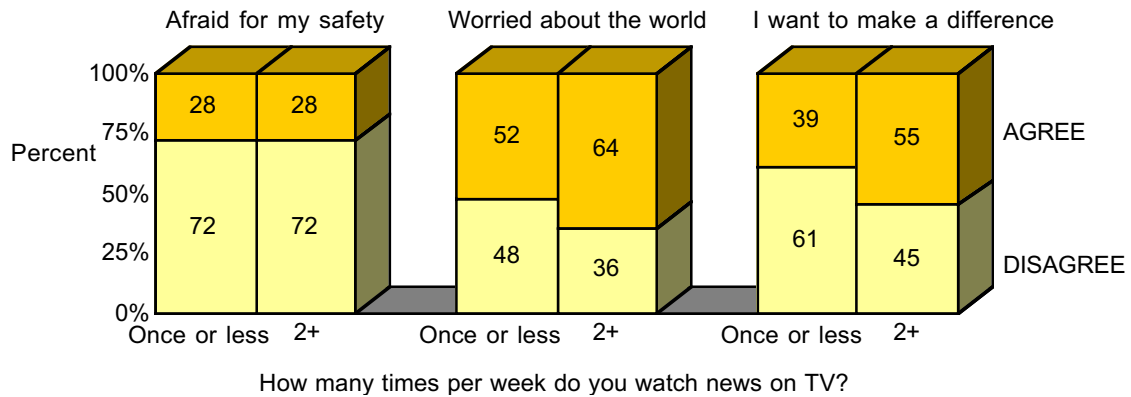


Figure 14. Perceptions of television news

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

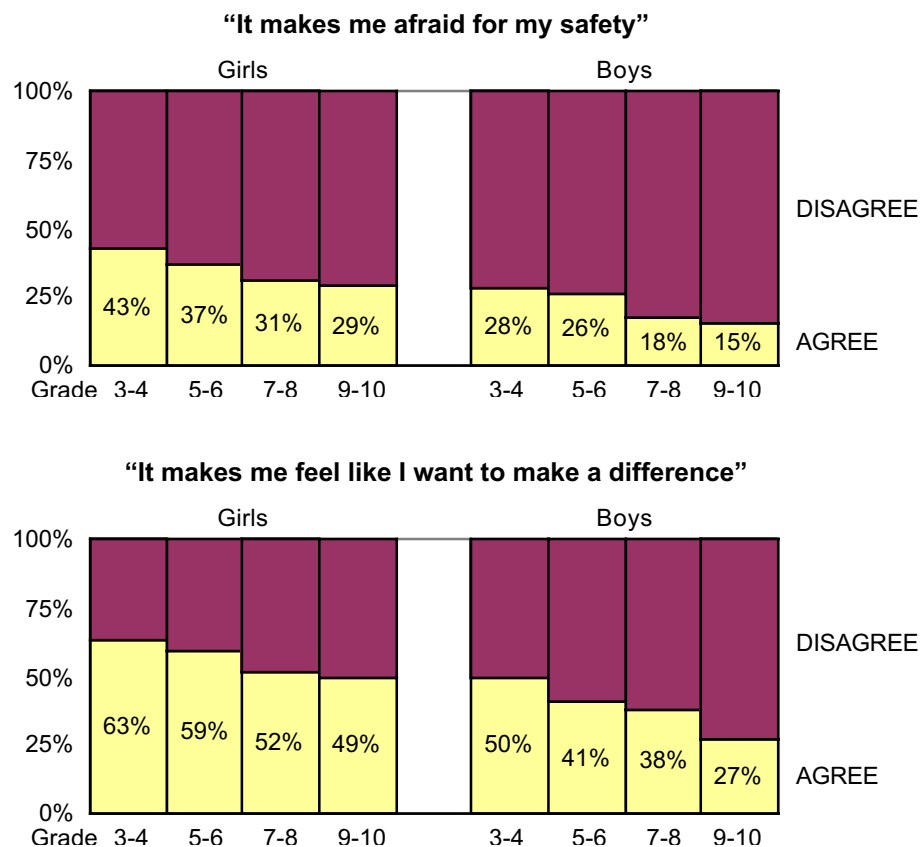


Frequent news watchers are more concerned than others about the larger world: 64 percent say that watching the news makes them worry about what goes on in the world, compared to 52 percent of infrequent news watchers. But while they may be worried, the frequent news watchers also feel more motivated to do something about it: 55 percent say that the news makes them feel like they want to make a difference compared to 39 percent of infrequent news watchers.

It is important to note how the preceding views change on the basis of age and gender. Children’s immediate personal connection to the news moderates with age. In Grades 3 and four, 43 percent of girls and 28 percent of boys say they feel afraid for their safety, as a result of watching the news. By the time they reach Grade 10, that figure has fallen to 29 percent for girls and 15 percent for boys. Though they become less afraid as they grow older, they are also less likely to say that they can make a difference (Figure 15)

Figure 15. Attitudes to the news change with age

Kids’ Take on Media, 2003



6. CHILDREN'S VOICES ON TELEVISION

Survey respondents were asked to:

- *Write two things you like about TV and*
- *Write two things you don't like about TV.*

Some examples of their responses, in their own words, are shown below. They were selected to illustrate the breadth of the commentary made by participants from Nunavut to Labrador, Montreal to Red Deer and from the many large and small communities in between.

Things I like about TV... English voices: Grades 3 - 6

It occupies me when I am bored. (Boy, Age 8,, Bishops Falls, Newfoundland and Labrador.)

I like TV because I can learn what is happening in the world. (Girl, Age 11, Vancouver, British Columbia.)

I do not know what I would do without it. (Boy, Age 9, Moncton, New Brunswick.)

I like TV because it allows me to forget my problems. (Boy, Age 12, Collingwood, Ontario.)

The shows that I like make me feel that anything is possible. (Girl, Age 11, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.)

It is something to do in my spare time. (Girl, Age 9, Red Deer, Alberta.)

Some shows build up your self esteem. (Girl, Age 11, Sudbury, Ontario.)

It motivates me. (Girl, Age 8, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.)

I forget where I am when I am watching TV. That's cool. (Girl, Age 11, Tignish, Prince Edward Island.)

It's not boring, like cleaning my room. (Girl, Age 9, Abbotsford, British Columbia.)

Things I don't like about TV... English voices: Grades 3 - 6

There is too much violence. (Girl, Age 12, Cornwall, Ontario.)

Some TV shows teach kids how to hit and fight. (Girl, Age 10, Calgary, Alberta.)

Sometimes you get interested and you can't do what you are asked to do. (Girl, Age 10, Margaretville, Nova Scotia.)

You don't need to see some stuff sometimes. (Boy, Age 9, Barrie, Ontario.)

There are too many commercials. (Boy, Age 12, Nelson, British Columbia.)

Sometimes it scares me. (Boy, Age 9, Bishop's Falls, Newfoundland and Labrador.)

It makes you into a zombie. (Boy, Age 10, Vancouver, British Columbia.)

It's addicting. (Boy, Age 11, Sarnia, Ontario.)

It talks about stuff that I should not know about. (Girl, Age 10, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.)

There are too many baby shows. (Boy, Age 12, Red Deer, Alberta.)

It can get really boring. (Girl, Age 11, Woodstock, Ontario.)

Some things are inappropriate and they are on at the time when little kids are watching. (Girl, Age 12, Vancouver, British Columbia.)

Things I like about TV... French voices: Grades 3 - 6

Quand on n'a pas besoin de se lever pour changer les postes. (Boy, Age 11, St. Léolin, New Brunswick.)

Il ouvre mon imagination pour écrire à l'école. (Girl, Age 11, Whitehorse, Yukon.)

Ça occupe ma petite soeur. (Girl, Age 8, Toronto, Ontario.)

Quand il pleut, je regarde la télévision. (Boy Age 10, Chicoutimi, Québec.)

Tu peux la regarder au lieu de faire tes devoirs. (Girl, Age 9, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory.)

C'est quelque chose que tu peux faire quand tu n'as rien à faire. (Boy, Age 12, Winnipeg, Manitoba.)

Quand il y a une émission que tu n'aimes pas, on n'est pas obligé de la regarder. (Boy, Age 11, St. Léolin, New Brunswick.)

On peut écouter des émissions avec des problèmes d'ados, ça nous donne un avant-goût. (Girl, Age 11, Chicoutimi, Québec.)

Things I don't like about TV... French voices: Grades 3 - 6

À la place de jouer dehors on regarde la télévision. (Girl, Age 10, St. Léolin, New Brunswick.)

Des fois il y a des choses horribles. (Girl Age 12, Winnipeg, Manitoba.)

Émissions qui sont niaiseuses (non drôles, ne nous apprennent rien.) (Boy, Age 10, Chicoutimi, Québec.)

Les films qui n'ont pas assez d'action. (Boy, age not stated, Grade 3, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory.)

Les gens maltraités. (Girl, Age 11, Trois-Rivières, Québec.)

Je n'aime pas du sang. (Girl, Age 8, Toronto, Ontario.)

Tu peux briser tes yeux. (Girl, Age 11, Trois-Rivières, Québec.)

Ça me prend du temps. (Boy, Age 10, Chicoutimi, Québec.)

Things I like about TV... English voices: Grades 7 - 10

I like watching funny shows on TV because they always cheer me up. (Girl, Age 15, Peterborough, Ontario.)

It keeps you updated on things that may be happening, even if you are thousands of miles away. (Boy, Age 15, Cote Saint Luc, Quebec.)

It makes me relax. (Boy, Age 17, Rankin Inlet, Nunavut.)

Watching TV lets me forget about my problems. (Girl, Age 15, Westmount Quebec.)

It's entertaining, so it keeps me occupied when I'm bored. (Boy, Age 16,, Penticton, British Columbia.)

The news makes you more aware of what's going on in the world. (Girl, Age 16, Richmond Hill, Ontario.)

Some of the shows are funny and I find them enjoyable. (Girl, Age 12,, Edmonton, Alberta.)

It has inspired me to become a Paleontologist ("Discovery Channel"). (Boy, Age 13, Tillsonburg, Ontario.)

TV also allows you to escape. (Boy, Age 12,, Sackville, Nova Scotia.)

Sometimes it is informative and educational. (Girl, Age 14,, Cambridge Ontario.)

When you have nothing to do you can always turn on the TV. I don't know what I would do without TV. (Boy, Age 15, Montreal Quebec.)

TV is on twenty four, seven. (Boy, Age 13,, Grand Falls, Newfoundland and Labrador.)

It passes the time. (Girl, Age 16, Thunder Bay, Ontario.)

It's entertaining and I laugh at shows. It puts me in a good mood. (Boy, Age 18, Espanola, Ontario)

Things I don't like about TV... English voices: Grades 7 - 10

It can be scary... it can be gory, bloody etc. (Girl, Age 14, Summerside, Prince Edward Island.)

The way it takes time away from family time together. (Girl, Age 15, Kingston, Ontario.)

Stereotyping. (Girl, Age 13, Sackville, New Brunswick.)

It makes people lazy. (Boy, Age 13, Red Deer, Alberta.)

It can be boring. (Girl, Age 13, Hantsport, Nova Scotia.)

There are too many commercials. (Boy, Age 13, South Slovan, British Columbia)

It contributes violent attitudes to society. (Boy, Age 16, Summerland, British Columbia.)

When you are watching it you are not doing anything for your body (physical activity.).
(Boy, Age 14, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.)

You sort of get addicted to it. (Boy, Age 12, Elmsdale, Prince Edward Island.)

I don't like the violence that is on a lot of TV shows. (Girl, Age 12, Calgary, Alberta.)

The news is boring. (Boy, Age 16, Newmarket, Ontario.)

How disgusting and mean some shows are. They portray sexism and lots of violence.
(Girl, Age 14, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.)

Some people imitate the violence they see on TV. (Girl, Age 12, Sarnia, Ontario.)

Things I like about TV... French voices: Grades 7 - 10

Quand on n'a rien à faire on regarde la télévision. Ça me fait quelque chose à faire.
(Girl, Age 12, St. Léolin, New Brunswick.)

On peut se divertir en regardant des histoires fictives ou réelles. (Girl, Age 15, Anse St. Jean, Québec.)

La télévision m'informe sur les choses qui se passent à l'entour de moi ou dans ma communauté. (Boy, Age 12, Winnipeg, Manitoba.)

Ça m'amuse car plusieurs des émissions que j'aime sont drôles. (Girl, Age 13, Whitehorse, Yukon.)

Elle nous fait rêver et travailler notre imagination. (Girl, Age 13, Gatineau, Québec.)

Nous nous amusons et quand on ne veut plus regarder la télévision on n'a qu'à l'éteindre. (Boy Age 14, Gatineau, Québec.)

Lorsque les situations sont comiques ou intrigantes et lorsqu'elles sont réelles. Ça détend. (Girl, Age 14, Rimouski, Québec.)

Elle me soulage. (Boy, Age 13, Rivière de Portage, New Brunswick.)

Aide à me relaxer après un long travail. (Boy, Age 15, Gatineau, Québec.)

Parfois il y a des situations semblables à celles que tu as déjà vécues. (Girl, Age 14, Neguac, New Brunswick.)

Things I don't like about TV... French voices: Grades 7 - 10

Ça fait mal aux yeux. (Girl, Age 14, St. Léolin, New Brunswick.)

Il y a trop de nouvelles, une fois par jour c'est assez. (Girl, Age 13, Rimouski, Québec.)

Ce que je n'aime pas de la télé, ce sont les bulletins de nouvelles, ils nous montrent seulement des mauvaises nouvelles et des horreurs d'un peu partout sur la terre. (Girl, Age 13, St. Leolin, New Brunswick.)

Ils parlent toujours de la guerre. (Boy, Age 14, Rivière-du-loup, Québec.)

On peut passer beaucoup de temps devant sans s'en rendre compte. (Boy, Age 16, Anse St. Jean, Québec.)

Trop de publicité. (Boy, Age 13, Winnipeg, Manitoba.)

Les jeunes enfants peuvent écouter des émissions trop violentes pour eux. (Boy, Age 13, Gatineau, Québec.)

Quand un gars se fait tirer huit balles et qu'il n'est pas mort et qu'il continue à se battre. (Girl, Age 15, Gatineau, Québec.)

Trop plate, à rester assis à ne rien faire, de voir des émissions qui sont la plupart du temps pas vrai. (Girl, Age 13, Tecumseh, Ontario.)

Les bonnes émissions passent toujours et on n'a pas le temps de les écouter à cause des devoirs. (Girl, Age 15, Rimouski, Québec.)

7. COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES

In another series of open-ended questions, respondents listed their three favourite computer or video games, producing more than 600 different titles. Some respondents were very explicit in referencing games, giving full titles and version numbers, while others were less so, writing answers such as “hockey” or “sports” or “Internet games”. The following rules were applied when analyzing responses:

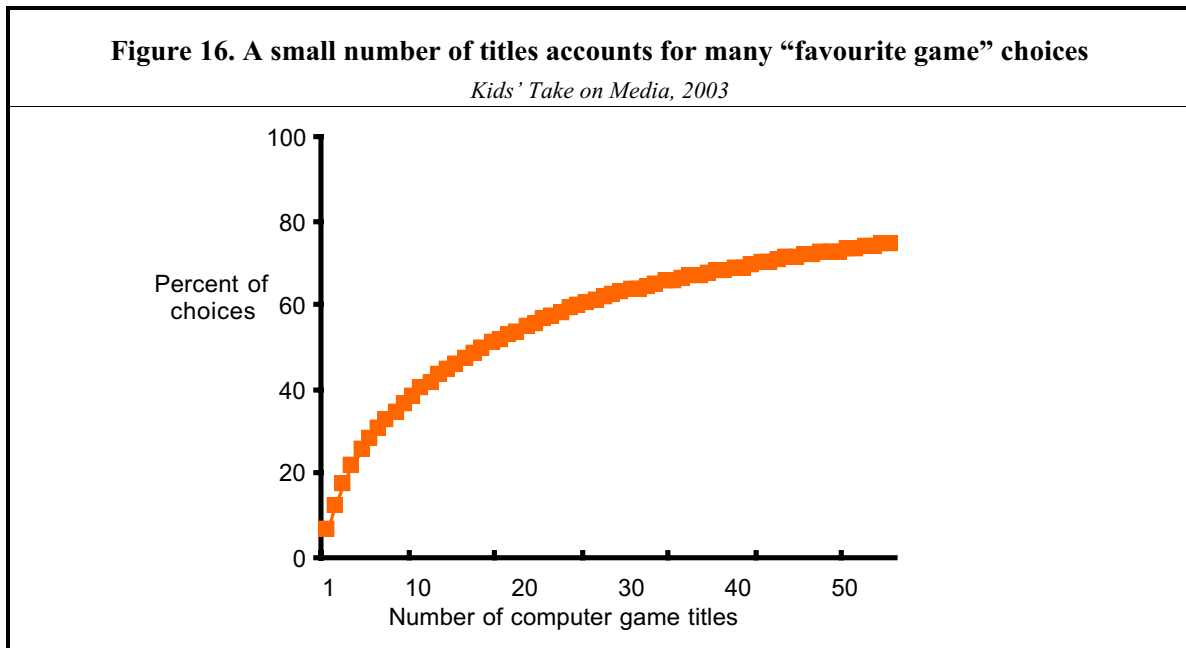
- The many different sports games comprise 19 percent of all choices. The eight most popular sports are reported separately, and the remainder appear as “Miscellaneous sports” (see Table 11).
- All versions of a game are combined, e.g. all *Mario* games, all *James Bond* games.
- Some games are played either largely or exclusively on the Internet, for example *The Sims* and *Neopet*. These popular titles are reported separately, but there is also a collective title, *Other Internet Games*, to describe responses such as “solitaire on the Internet” or the non-specific, “Internet games”.

Attribute	Percent of All games	Percent of sports games
Racing	6	31
Hockey	5	26
Skateboarding	3	15
Basketball	1	6
Soccer	1	4
Football	1	4
Snowboarding	1	2
Golf	1	2
Miscellaneous sports	1	10
Total	19.1	100

The pattern of results is similar to television, in that kids have a wide range of favourite games, with a small number accounting for most of their choices. The five thousand respondents made 13,352 choices for favourite games, and 896 of them, or 7 percent, were *Mario* games (the first data point in the Figure 16). Next most popular overall are *Grand Theft Auto* and racing games, which each represent 6 percent of the total number of choices. *The Sims* and hockey follow; these five games represent one-quarter of the total favourite-game choices.

It takes another 16 games to reach half of all choices, and another 64 games to make three-quarters of the total. The final one-quarter of choices includes more than 500 additional games.

The trend line for computer games is slightly lower and flatter than that for television titles; in other words it takes more games than it does TV programs to reach any given percentage of choices. Kids television viewing is more sharply focused on a small number of titles than is their use of computer and video games. The Appendix contains the actual data for those who would like to quantify the difference between media.



FAVOURITE GAMES

In Table 12, the top line shows that 24 percent of girls in Grades 3 to 6 chose a *Mario* game as one of their three choices, while 19 percent of boys chose a hockey game.

Of the favourite games chosen by boys in Grades 3 to 6, eight are suitable for ages 6 and up, and six are rated for teens (suitable for persons aged 13 and up, since they may contain violent content, mild or strong language and or suggestive themes.) Three favourites – *Grand Theft Auto*, *Diablo*, *Halo* – are rated “mature”² One of the top choices for both Francophone and Anglophone boys in Grades 3-6 is *Grand Theft Auto*, an ultra-violent action game for mature audiences, which involves murder, bludgeoning and prostitution. *Grand Theft Auto* was banned in Australia until some of the more extreme sexual content was removed.

Girls' choices	Percent of choices	Boys' choices	Percent of choices
Mario	24	Hockey	19
The Sims	15	Racing	18
Harry Potter	9	Grand Theft Auto (M)	16
Educational	8	Mario	16
Racing	8	Skateboarding	10
Miscellaneous Internet Games	6	James Bond	10
Solitaire	6	Miscellaneous Sports	6
Neopet	5	Zelda	6
Roller Coaster Tycoon	5	The Sims	5
Hockey	4	Harry Potter	4
Crash Bandicoot	4	Pokémon	4
Miscellaneous Sports	4	Diablo (M)	4
Zelda	4	Starcraft	4
Spyro	4	War	4
Grand Theft Auto (M)	3	Yu-Gi-Oh!	3
Donkey Kong	3	Backyard Basketball	3
Pokémon	3	Miscellaneous Internet Games	3
Skateboarding	3	Final Fantasy	3
Clue	3	Halo (M)	3
Life	3	Lord Of The Rings	3

Percentages add to more than 100, as respondents chose up to three TV programs.

² “Content suitable for those over 17; may contain mature sexual themes or more intense violence and language”. Ratings are those of the Entertainment Software Ratings Board.

For boys, there is a strong link between their favourite computer and video games and television shows and movies. Some crossover titles include *James Bond*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Spiderman*, and *Yu-Gi-Oh!*

While *Mario* is tops with young girls, the three Internet tiles (*The Sims*, *Neopet* and *Miscellaneous Internet Games*) combined are even more popular. These games offer both social interaction and “story”. *Grand Theft Auto* also appears in the Top Twenty list for Anglophone girls in Grades 3 to 6, though only 3 percent of girls chose it.

Table 13. Favourite computer games in Grades 3 – 6: French

Kids’ Take on Media, 2003

Girls’ choices	Percent of choices	Boys’ choices	Percent of choices
Mario	23	Racing	22
Miscellaneous Internet Games	12	Hockey	20
Racing	11	Mario	15
The Sims	10	Grand Theft Auto (M)	12
Harry Potter	6	Miscellaneous Internet Games	8
Donkey Kong	4	Driver	7
Zelda	4	Miscellaneous Sports	7
Hockey	4	Age of Empires	7
Miscellaneous Sports	4	Zelda	7
Solitaire	4	Diablo (M)	6
Crash Bandicoot	4	The Sims	6
Neopet	4	Skateboarding	6
Spyro	4	Harry Potter	6
Driver	3	Starcraft	5
PacMan	3	James Bond	4
Monopoly	3	Roller Coaster Tycoon	3
Educational	3	Red Alert	3
Adibou	2	Star Wars	3
Rayman	2	Warcraft	3
Bubble Trouble	2	Soccer	3

Percentages add to more than 100, as respondents chose up to three TV programs.

For boys in Grades 7 to 10, television or movie-themed games are not as dominant; the main focus is on action/fantasy/strategy and role-playing games. Several games are rated as “mature”, and most of these (*CounterStrike*, *Halo*, *Medal of Honour* and *Splinter Cell*) are first-person shooter games, where the player assumes the perspective of the person holding the weapon. (Many of the third-person action games include a fair amount of gore and violence). For Anglophone boys in the Grade 7-10 category, *Grand Theft Auto* is the run-away favourite title, being chosen by one-third of the respondents in this group. It is much less popular among Francophone boys, for whom hockey rates number one.

Table 14. Favourite computer games in Grades 7 – 10: English

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

Girls' choices	Percent of choices	Boys' choices	Percent of choices
The Sims	20.	Grand Theft Auto (M)	34
Mario	19	Hockey	18
Racing	9	Racing	18
Solitaire	9	Counter Strike (M)	9
Grand Theft Auto (M)	8	Diablo (M)	8
Roller Coaster Tycoon	7	Skateboarding	8
Skateboarding	6	Starcraft	8
Crash Bandicoot	4	Backyard Basketball	7
Donkey Kong	3	Halo (M)	7
Zelda	3	Mario	7
Spyro	3	The Sims	7
James Bond	3	James Bond	6
Hockey	3	Final Fantasy	5
Harry Potter	3	Warcraft	5
Miscellaneous Sports	2	Miscellaneous Sports	4
Pinball	2	Age of Empires	4
Tetris	2	Zelda	4
PacMan	2	Football	4
Tomb Raider	2	Soccer	4
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire	2	Medal of Honour (M)	3

Percentages add to more than 100, as respondents chose up to three TV programs.

Among older girls, Anglophones and Francophones make very similar choices – their first four picks are identical. *Grand Theft Auto* is more popular among older Anglophone girls than among the younger ones, but it has a rather small following among the older Francophone girls. Traditional and “classic” games such as *Tetris*, *Donkey Kong* and *Zelda* still retain some popularity with girls in this age group.

Table 15. Favourite computer games in Grades 7 – 10: French

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

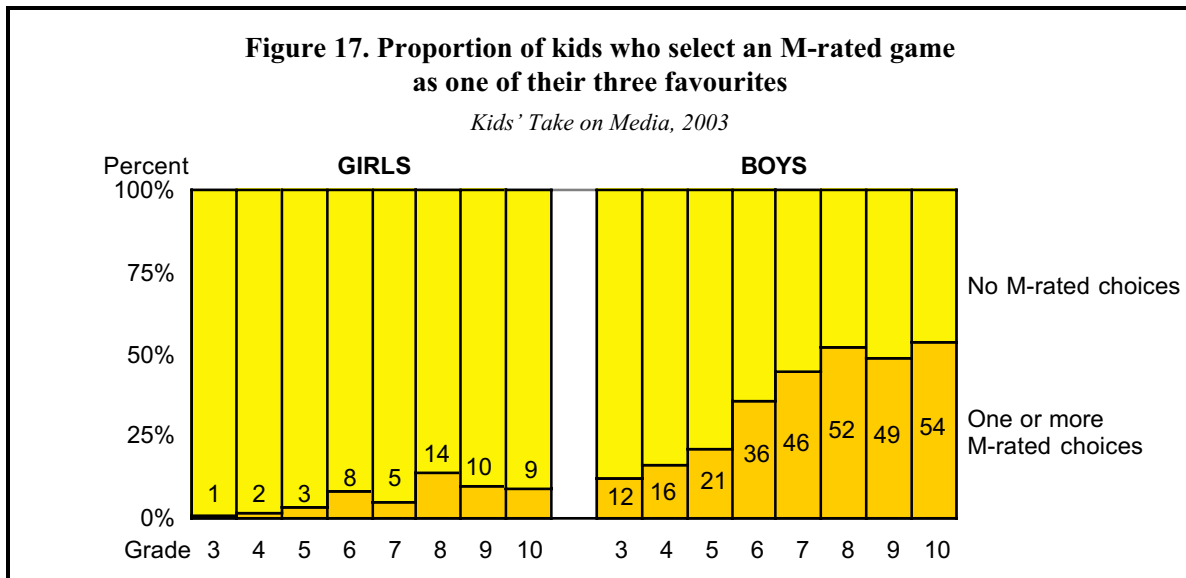
Girls' choices	Percent of choices	Boys' choices	Percent of choices
The Sims	24	Hockey	23
Mario	13	Racing	22
Racing	11	Grand Theft Auto (M)	20
Solitaire	10	Diablo (M)	13
Miscellaneous Internet Games	5	Skateboarding	10
Hockey	5	Miscellaneous Sports	8
Roller Coaster Tycoon	4	Counter Strike (M)	7
Skateboarding	4	Halo (M)	7
Harry Potter	4	Starcraft	7
Diablo (M)	3	Medal of Honour (M)	6
Donkey Kong	3	Warcraft	6
Miscellaneous Sports	3	Final Fantasy	5
James Bond	3	Age of Empires	4
Crash Bandicoot	2	The Sims	4
Zelda	2	Splinter Cell (M)	4
Tetris	2	Football	4
Sim City	2	Zelda	4
Grand Theft Auto (M)	2	Driver	3
Final Fantasy	2	War	3
Pool	2	Pool	3

Percentages add to more than 100, as respondents chose up to three TV programs.

Popularity of M-rated games

Figure 17 shows the proportion of girls and boys in each grade who put one or more M-rated games in their top-three list.

M-rated games never really catch on among girls. Among boys, however, there is a steady increase in use up to grade 8, where their popularity appears to plateau.



One might ask whether there is a subculture that seeks out M-rated games. If there is a group of such individuals, Figure 17 suggests it would be found among the Grade 7–10 boys. Exactly 50 percent of the 1,400 boys in this group had no M-rated games among their top three selections. The 50 percent who did choose M-rated games breaks down as follows:

- 37 percent chose one M-rated game among their top three
- 12 percent chose two M-rated games
- 1 percent listed M-rated games for all three choices.

This one percent represents a total of 16 boys in the total sample of 5,500. So if there is a segment of the population that gravitates to M-rated games, it is a very small one.

Attributes of favourite computer and video games

Respondents rated their favourite computer game using the same set of attributes used for television programs, plus one additional item to address the competitive nature of many games, *I like beating other players, or my best score*.

Boys are generally more enthusiastic about their favourite games than girls, giving higher marks on almost all dimensions.

Exciting is the primary quality of good games, followed by a competitive element, *I like beating other players, or my best score*. These are the two leading attributes for both boys and girls, however girls' ratings are well below those of boys.

Exciting was also the highest-rated attribute for TV programs, but *Funny* was in second place for television programs. Computer games, unlike television, are not particularly funny, scoring in the 40s on this dimension, slightly to the “disagree” or “unfunny” side of neutral.

For boys, favourite TV shows and computer games also differ with respect to violence. Boys rate their TV shows as having rather little violence (38 out of 100) but their computer games have considerably more violence (62 out of 100).

For girls, favourite TV shows and favourite computer games are both low on violence (20 and 27 out of 100 respectively).

Table 16. Attributes of favourite computer games

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

Attribute	Mean agreement (0 – 100)	
	Girls	Boys
It's exciting *	78	89
I like beating other players, or my best score *	60	77
The characters do things I could never do in real life *	55	68
It makes me forget about my problems *	52	65
I play it for hours – I can't stop *	47	61
It makes me think	47	53
It's relaxing	48	52
It's funny	49	46
It has a lot of violence *	27	62
I think about my game even when I'm not playing it *	34	53
My parents like this game too *	43	33
I learn things I didn't know before *	31	41

- Significant gender difference.

Note: A score of 0 means “Strongly disagree” and 100 means “Strongly agree”. The midpoint, 50, is “Neither agree nor disagree”.

Game clusters

Groups of games were created using the clustering procedure that was used for television programs. English and French data are combined, as students in each language group have access to the same games. Each cluster includes programs that are similar with respect to their ratings on the attributes in Table 16.

Using the 27 most popular games, the analysis created six clusters. Each cluster appears to have an intuitive integrity.

Comparing clusters reveals interesting similarities and differences. For example, fantasy games differ from the shoot-em and mayhem group by being considerably less violent, less competitive, and demanding more thought.

The cluster containing *Roller Coaster Tycoon* and *The Sims* is similar to the educational cluster, with the educational games being less compelling, not as funny and forcing kids to think harder.

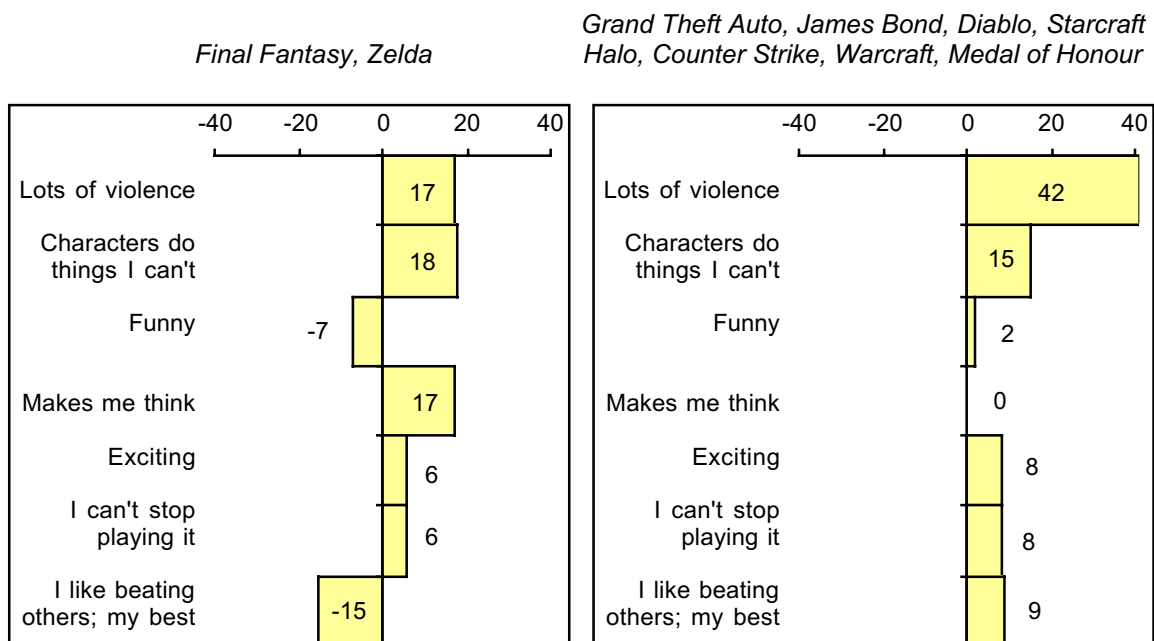
Sports games and the Mario-type games are very close to the average on most dimensions, as would be expected for these mass-appeal forms of entertainment.

As with the TV clusters, the game clusters suggest what kids find attractive in one genre of games versus another. Here too, boys seem to be attracted to attributes of fantasy, to characters who do things they can't, and to violence.

The vertical line in each chart represents the mean score for all programs, and the bars show how much the programs in the cluster differ from the mean.

Figure 18. Computer game clusters

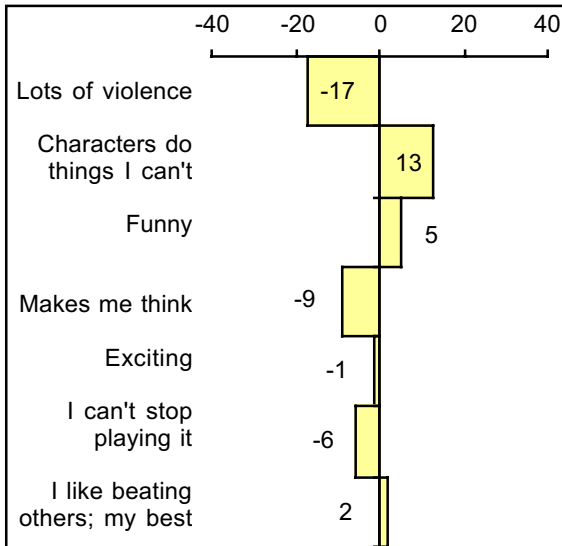
Kids' Take on Media, 2003



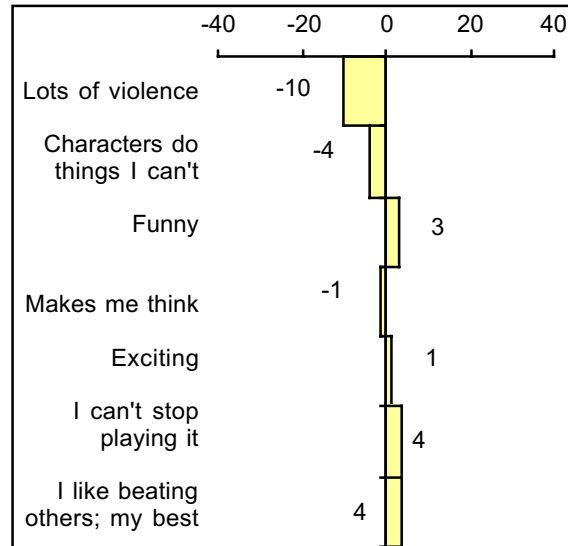
Computer game clusters, continued

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

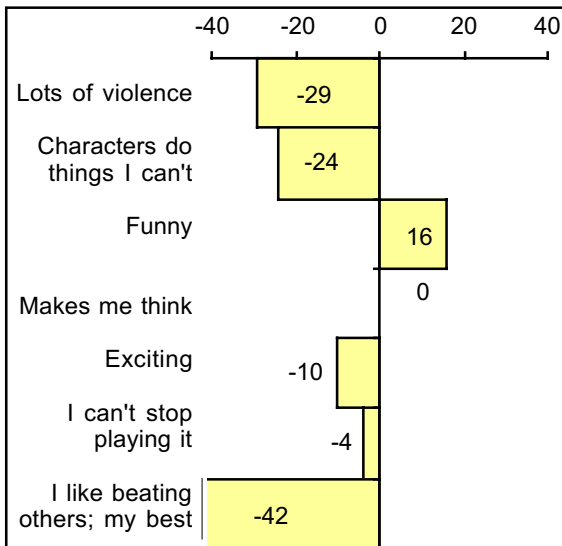
*Mario, Donkey Kong, Crash Bandicoot
Spyro, Harry Potter*



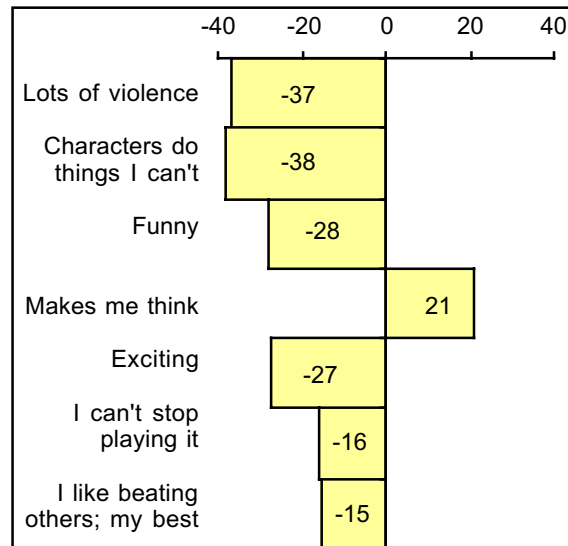
Sports, Pokémon, Yu-Gi-Oh!



Roller Coaster Tycoon, The Sims



Educational games, Solitaire



GAMES THAT KIDS DON'T LIKE

Respondents were asked to name two games that they do not like playing, and to indicate what was wrong with these games. Table 17 documents the reasons that kids dislike the games in question. Lack of speed and action are the main points on which games fail. In addition, 60 percent of girls mentioned too much violence as a reason for disliking the game, while 33 percent of boys were put off by the level of violence in the game.

Attribute	Percent in agreement	
	Girls	Boys
Too boring	96	97
Not enough action *	84	96
Too slow	87	91
Too easy	81	89
Graphics are not good *	70	87
Too difficult *	61	46
Too violent *	60	33

* Significant differences between girls and boys.

The disliked games appear in Table 18 and include a fair cross section of the different games types – fantasy, shoot-em, strategy, and light entertainment.

The disliked games titles overlap to some degree with the disliked TV titles. *Barney* and *Pokémon* are there, as are several other games that some respondents would consider too juvenile.

The most popular games – *Mario*, *The Sims*, hockey, racing and *Grand Theft Auto* – all appear as most-disliked games too. Their popularity is not universal.

Table 18. Computer and video games that kids dislike

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

Girls' choices	Percent of choices	Boys' choices	Percent of choices
Barbie	6	Barbie	7
Miscellaneous Sports	5	The Sims	7
Mario	5	Pokémon	7
Racing	4	Mario	6
Hockey	4	Racing	5
Solitaire	4	Miscellaneous Sports	4
Pokémon	3	Educational games	4
Educational games	3	Golf	3
War	3	Solitaire	3
James Bond	3	Hockey	3
The Sims	3	Barney	2
Zelda	2	Diablo (M)	2
Golf	2	Tetris	2
Diablo (M)	2	Zelda	2
Grand Theft Auto (M)	2	Grand Theft Auto (M)	2

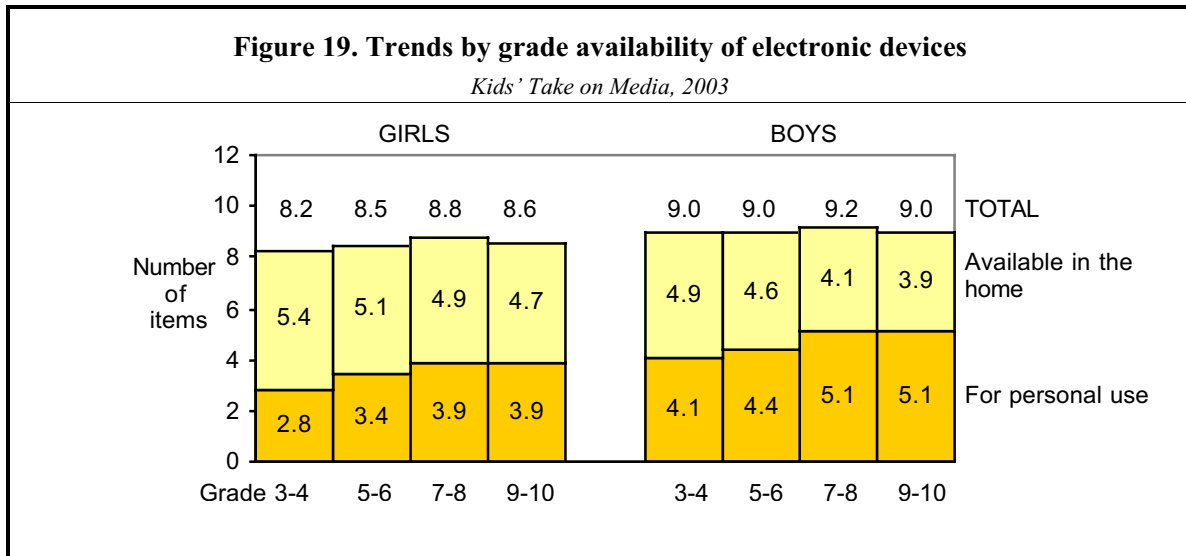
8. MEDIA IN THE HOME

Table 19 lists thirteen common electronic devices, showing how many kids have them. It distinguishes between items that the child considers personal property and items that are available in the home for family use, or not in the home at all. The radio is the leading item by a fairly wide margin. However, nearly half of all Canadian children (48percent) now have a TV for their own personal use, 43 percent of those in Grades 3 to 6 and 53 percent in Grades 7 to 10. And 19 percent of students in Grades 3 to 6 and 32 percent of students in Grades 7 to 10 have a computer with an Internet connection for their own personal use.

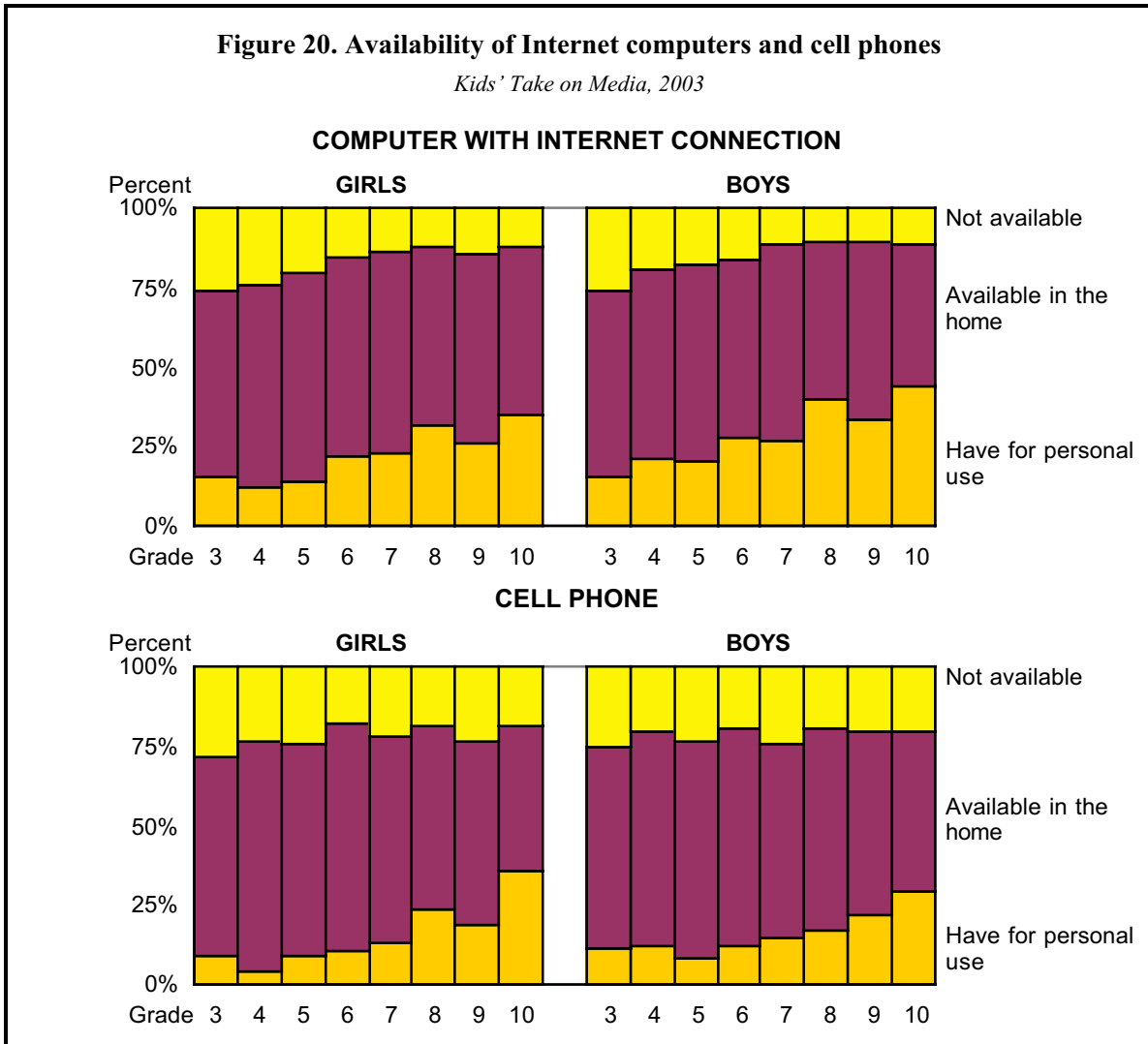
Ten percent of children in Grades 3 to 6 have a cell phone for their own personal use. By Grade 10, that number has risen to 22 percent. Sixty-two percent of the children surveyed said their family had a cell phone.

Item	Percent of respondents		
	For personal use	In the home, but not for personal use	Not in the home
Radio	78	20	2
Nintendo or Play Station or X-Box	53	26	21
TV	48	51	1
GameBoy	47	15	39
Regular telephone	42	55	3
Walkie-talkie	36	20	44
VCR	35	62	4
Computer that has Internet	26	58	16
DVD player	19	46	35
Cell phone	16	62	22
Computer that does not have Internet	14	21	64
Palm Pilot, Blackberry, etc	11	19	71
Pager	5	27	68

The total number of electronic devices available to children stays relatively constant across grades – about 8.5 on average for girls and 9.1 for boys. The proportion of these items that the child claims as his or her own does change: as they grow older both boys and girls have more things for their own personal use, rather than as common household property.



Most of the 13 items show only slight change in availability from Grades 3 to 10. Two exceptions are computers connected to the Internet and cell phones (Figure 20). By Grade 10, approximately one-third report having their own computer while one-quarter have their own cell phone.



9. MEDIA USE IN THE HOME

The media of primary interest in this study are television, videos and computer games. Kids use these primarily in their own homes and in the homes of friends. Parents attempt to influence, with varying degrees of success, what their children watch and how much, as well as what they do on the computer and how much time they spend.

Figure 21 to Figure 23 demonstrate the lessening intervention as kids grow older. A large number of children claim to have experienced no parental guidance on what they can watch, what they can play, or for how long. In Grades 3 to 6, roughly 30 percent of kids claim that they never have any adult input about what TV shows they can watch and by Grade 6, 50 percent report no adult input as to how long they can watch. By Grade 8, the figures for those who experience no parental supervision of their TV viewing rises to approximately 60 percent. On the other hand, close to 90 percent of children report that they watch TV with their family either “most of the time” or “sometimes”, and this pattern remains fairly constant from Grade 3 to Grade 10.

When it comes to computer and video game use in the home, the landscape looks very different. While watching TV is still a communal activity (since parents also watch sometimes or most of the time), game-playing seems to be more solitary. Even for children in Grades 3 and 4, the top figure for parental involvement of any kind never rises above 50 percent. By the time students reach Grade 7, almost 75 percent of adults never tell children what video or computer games they can or cannot play. (Parents might have a somewhat different perspective on amount of supervision provided, but unfortunately, the survey could not test this.)

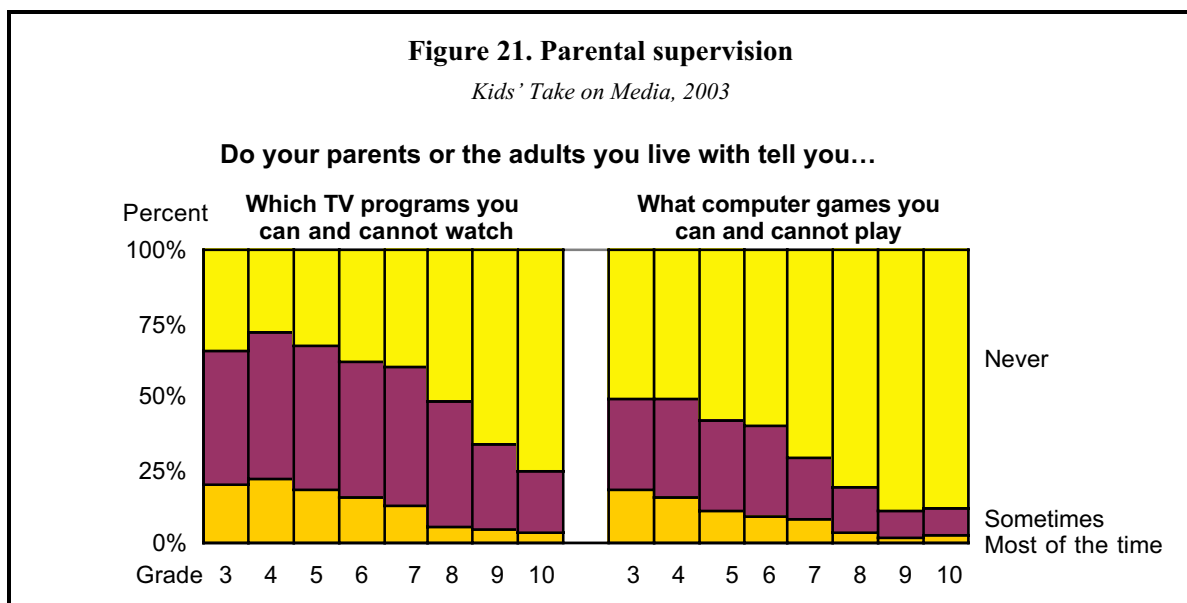
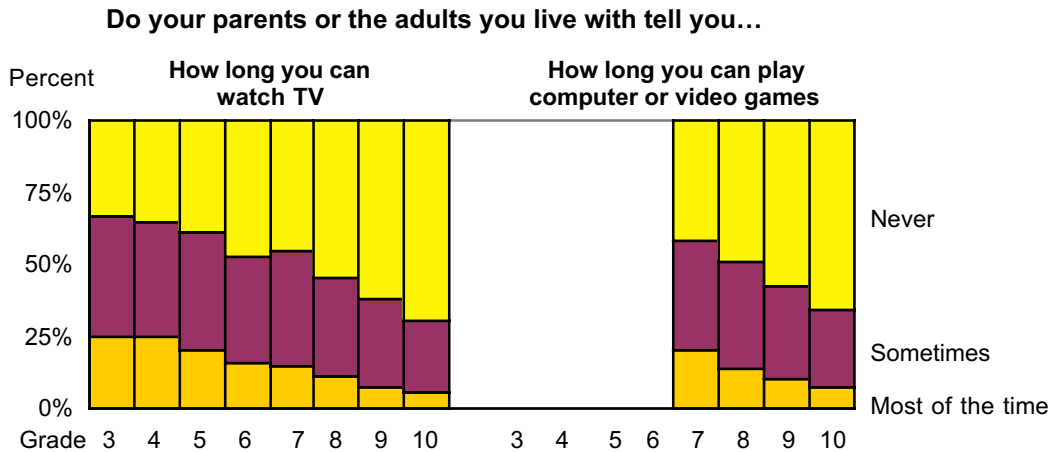


Figure 22. Parental supervision

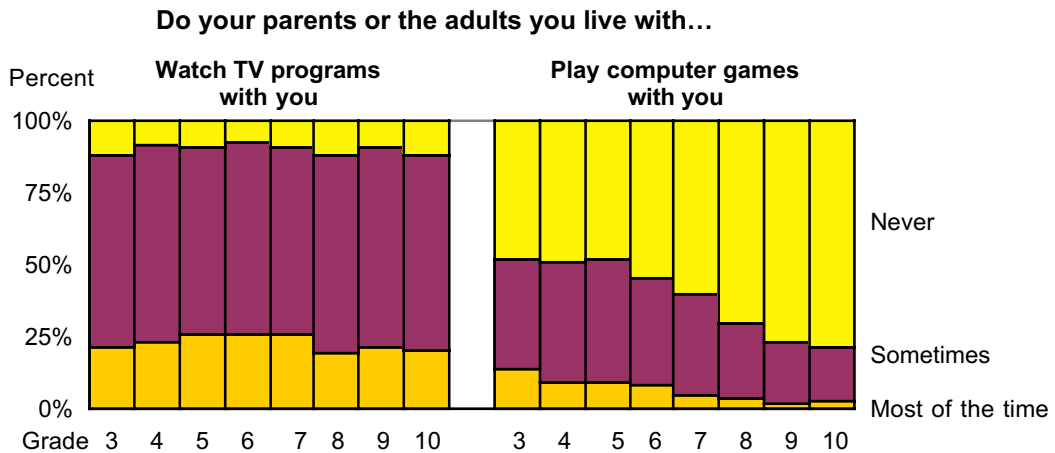
Kids' Take on Media, 2003



Note: The question on computer/video games did not appear on the Grade 3-6 survey

Figure 23. Parental supervision

Kids' Take on Media, 2003



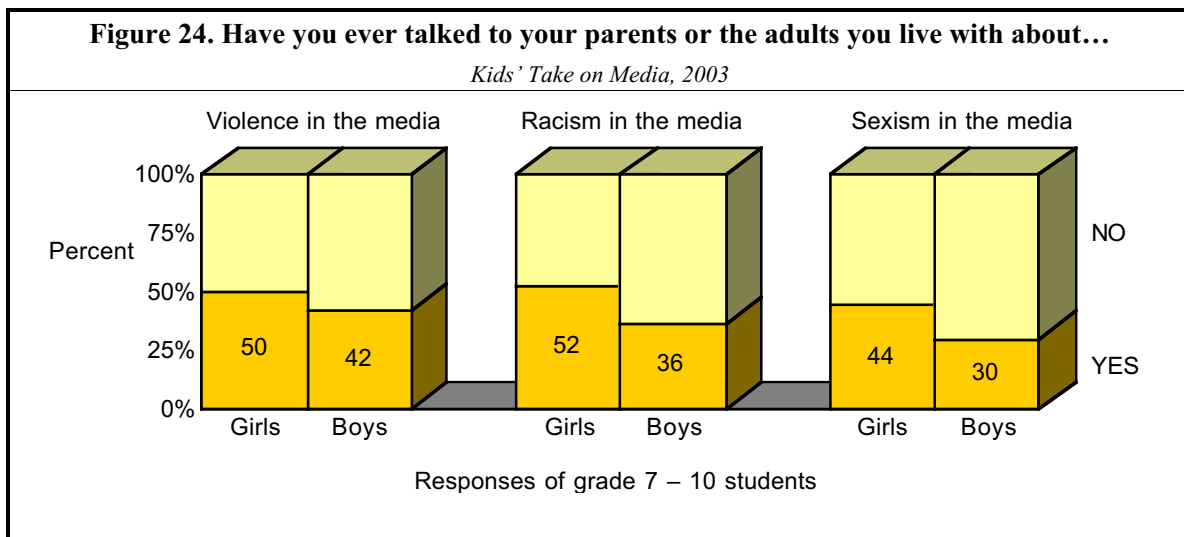
Discussion of racism, sexism and violence

The survey asked the Grade 7 to 10 children whether they had ever talked to their parents or other adults in their home about violence, racism or sexism in the media. Slightly less than one-half of the respondents recalled discussing each issue.

One might expect that, if one of these topics was a subject of discussion in the home, then the others would likely be discussed as well. This is sometimes but not always the case. Overall:

- 25 percent of respondents recall discussing all three topics
- 16 percent recall discussing two topics
- 18 percent recall discussing one topic
- 41 percent recall no discussion of any topic.

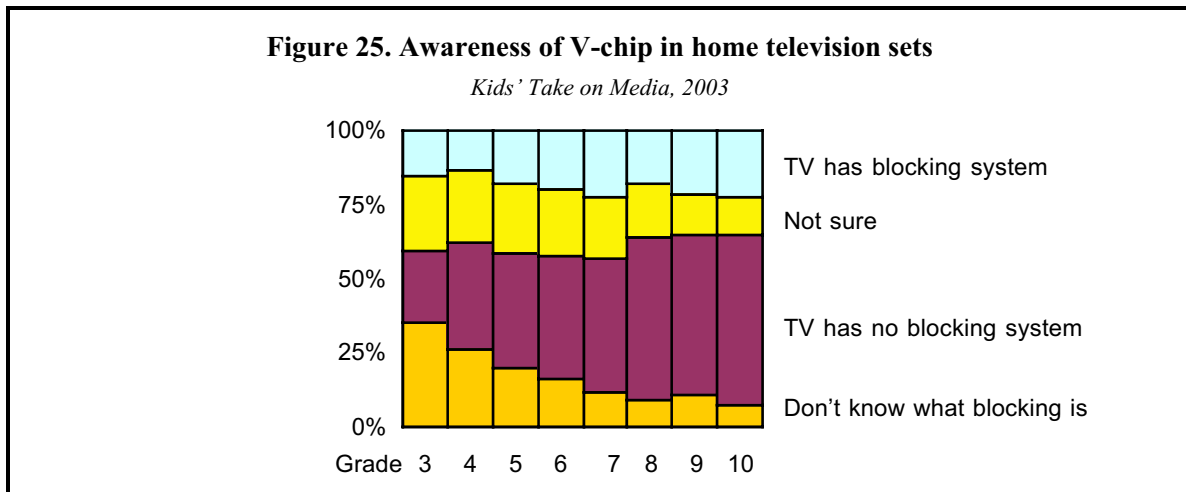
There is no meaningful change in these results by grade, but more girls than boys recall discussion of each topic. This gender difference could mean several things: girls may be more open to discussion of these issues and therefore more likely to engage their parents in discussion of them, or perhaps boys do not pay as much attention when parents raise these issues. Also, because parents like the programs girls prefer more than the programs boys prefer, there may be more opportunities for discussion between girls and their parents.



Use of the V-chip

The V-chip is a feature that allows parents to block certain television channels or programs that they do not wish children to see. Overall, 19 percent of children state that their TV set possesses such a capability (though their parents may not use it.). This proportion does not change greatly with age.

Sixty percent of Grade 3 children are uncertain of the status of their TV set. Either they do not know what a V-chip is, or they do not know if their parents use it. This uncertainty drops steadily so that by Grade 10, just one child in five voices the same lack of certainty.



Not surprisingly, use of the blocking feature declines as children grow older. Considering only those respondents who know that their sets have a V-chip: in Grades 3 and 4, two-thirds of these children say that the V-chip is used, but by Grades 9-10, just one-third say that the V-chip is used.

RESTRICTED AND MATURE ENTERTAINMENT

The survey explored children’s use of movies and games that are designated for older teens and adults. Because movie designations are age-related, survey questions were phrased slightly differently for the Grade 3–6 and Grade 7–10 groups and results are therefore reported separately.

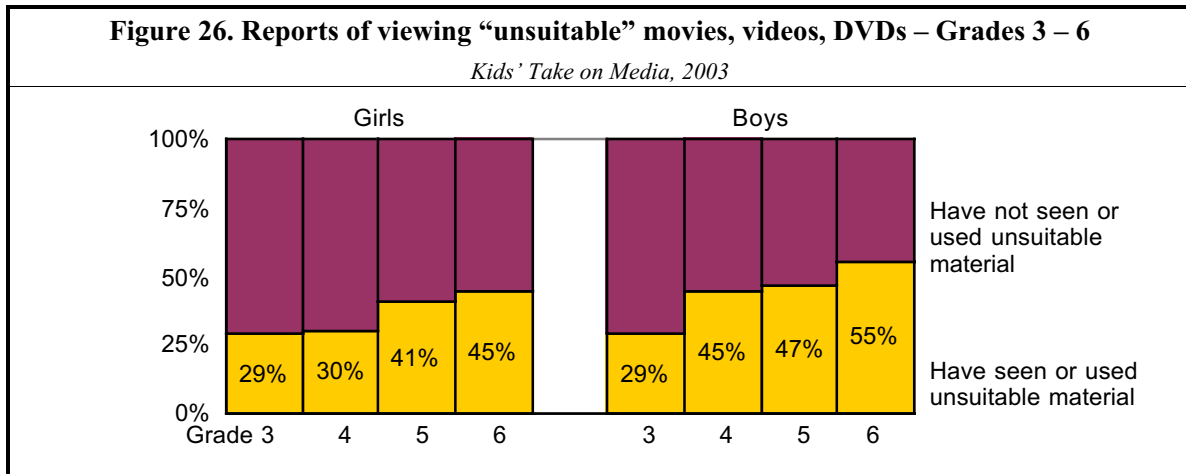
Grades 3–6: “Unsuitable” movies and games

The core questions read as follows:

Have you ever seen a movie or video that was rated NOT SUITABLE for kids your age, e.g. PG13, 14A or R?

Have you ever played a computer/video game rated NOT SUITABLE for children your age. e.g. Rated M for Mature?

The majority of respondents in this age category have not used either movies or computer games that they know to be “unsuitable”. The use of unsuitable movies and games both increase from Grade 3 to Grade 6 (Figure 26). The proportion increases with age, however, so that by Grade 6, half of all kids surveyed have seen an unsuitable movie, video or DVD.



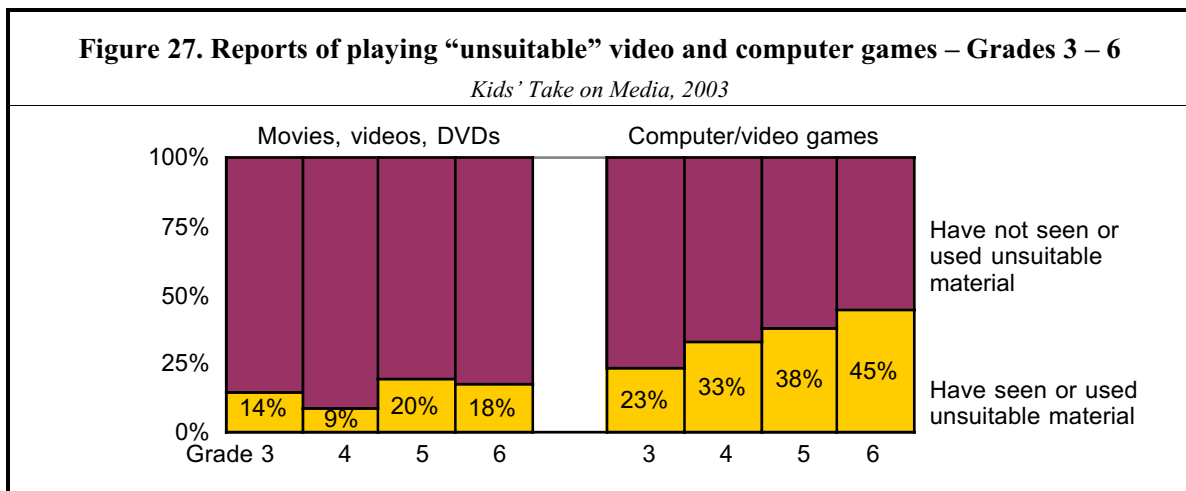
Boys are more likely to have used both unsuitable movies and unsuitable computer games. In the case of computer games, this result follows somewhat from the fact that boys spend more time playing computer games than girls. Overall, 37 percent of boys and 14 percent of girls report playing such games.

The fact that boys are more likely to watch unsuitable movies than girls may occur because boys are attracted to action movies: many of these are rated for older age groups because of their language and violence. The gender difference with respect to unsuitable movies and videos is 10

percentage points. Across the four grades, 37 percent of girls and 47 percent of boys report watching “unsuitable” material.

Kids do not automatically assume that an “unsuitable” rating means that their parents would disapprove of the movie or game. When asked, “What would your parents say” if you watched an unsuitable movie, two-thirds of respondents say that it would depend what the movie was. One-fifth believe that their parents wouldn’t mind, and only one in seven stated categorically that their parents would be upset.

The situation regarding computer games is similar. Just over half stated that their parents would respond to the use of M-rated computer games on an individual basis; 30 percent said their parents would not mind them playing such games, and 18 percent thought their parents would be upset.

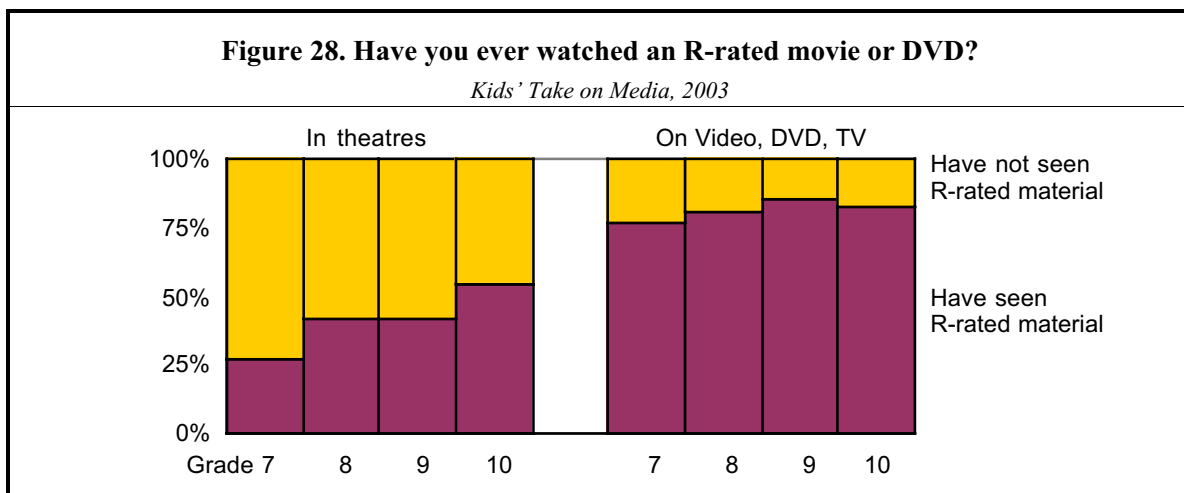


Grades 7 – 10: R-rated material

An R-rating on a movie is no particular barrier to the Grade 7 – 10 group. Even in Grades 7 and 8, more than one-quarter say that they have seen R-rated movies in a theatre, and more than three-quarters state that they have watched them on video or DVD.

There is wide variation in the numbers of children who report seeing R-rated movies in theatres across the country, likely because movie ratings are a provincial matter. The number and type of movies that are restricted, the ages at which children are allowed to watch them, and enforcement policies that are in effect may all affect the present survey results. Consider the three largest provinces, where the sample size allows a reasonably accurate provincial measure: the proportion of Grade 7–10 kids who have seen restricted movies in a theatre ranges from 24 percent in Quebec to 44 percent in Ontario to 57 percent in BC. This is one of a very few instances in this survey where large geographic differences occur.

The experience of watching an R-rated movie in a theatre becomes more common with age, from 27 percent in Grade 7 to 54 percent in Grade 10 (Figure 28). Boys are more likely to see R-rated movies in theatres: the gender difference is about ten percentage points.

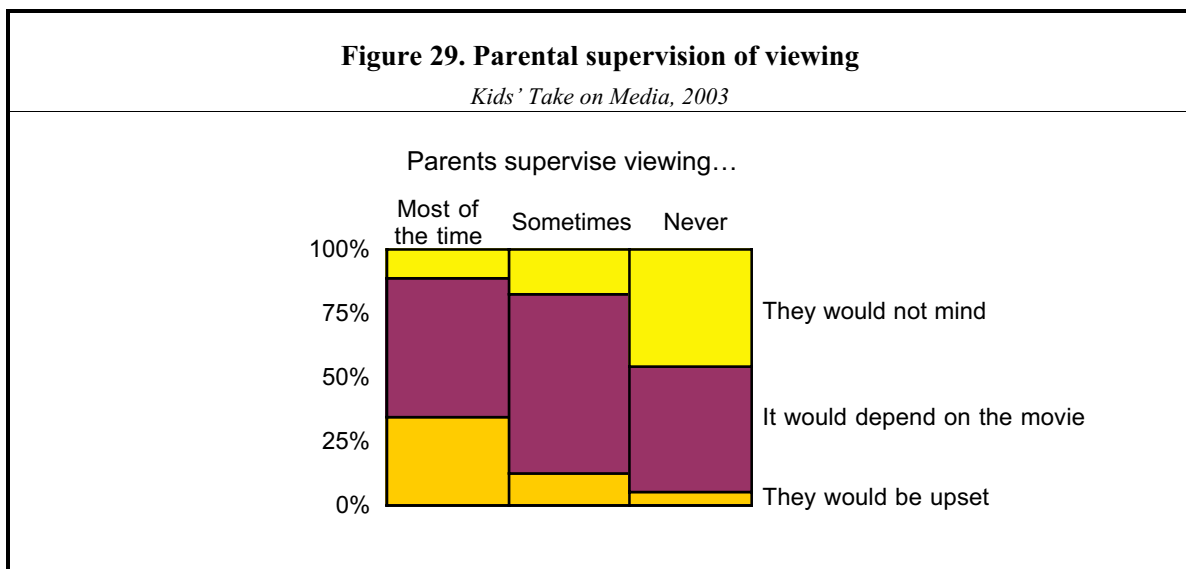


The use of videos and DVDs cannot be as closely regulated and enforced as theatre attendance, and there is less provincial variation in the proportion of respondents who report having seen restricted videos. For the three largest provinces, the range among Grades 7 to 10 students is from 74 percent in Quebec to 84 percent in BC and Ontario.

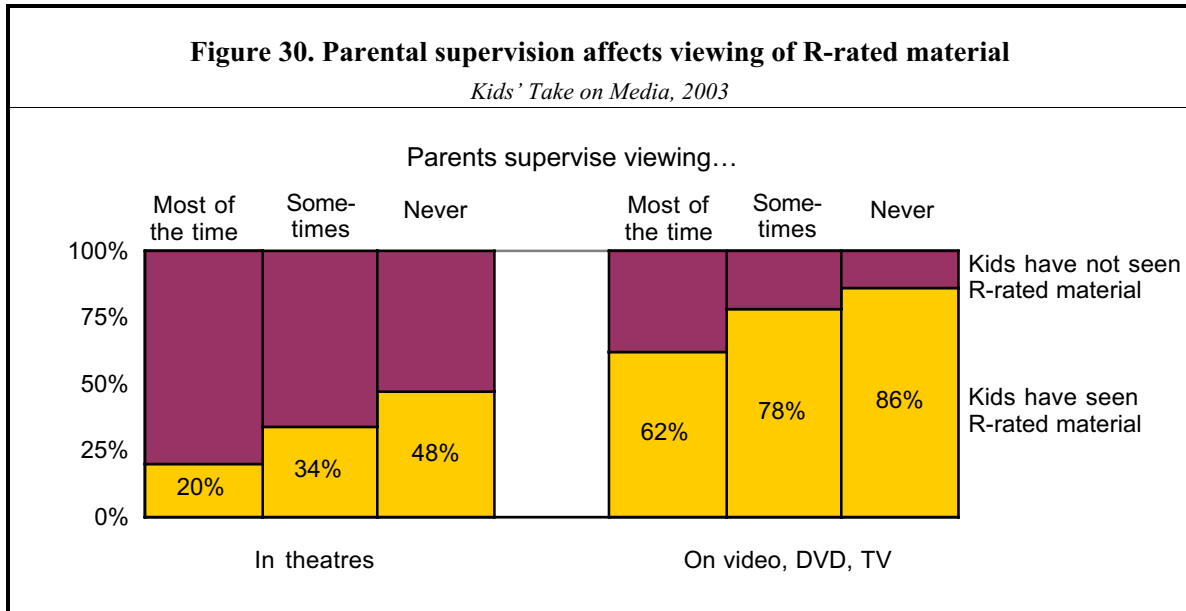
There is some slight increase in viewing with age: in Grade 7, 76 percent of students have watched this type of material, while in Grade 10, 83 percent of students have. For the most part, children do not rent these movies directly. In Grade 7, about one-quarter of children have personally rented an R-rated video, and this proportion increases to about one-half of respondents by Grade 10. Many of the R-rated movies that children watch are, apparently, already in the home or have been rented by older siblings, friends or parents.

What do parents think about their children watching R-rated material? Nine percent of kids say that their parents would be upset knowing that the child was watching a restricted movie, 34 percent of kids believe their parents would not mind, and the remaining 56 percent say that it would depend on the specific movie in question.

Some parents exert more control over their children’s viewing behaviour than others – 12 percent in the Grade 7-10 group tell their children what they can or cannot watch “most of the time” and 41 percent do this “sometimes” (see Figure 21). When parents supervise television viewing, children are more likely to say that their parents would object to them watching restricted material (Figure 29).



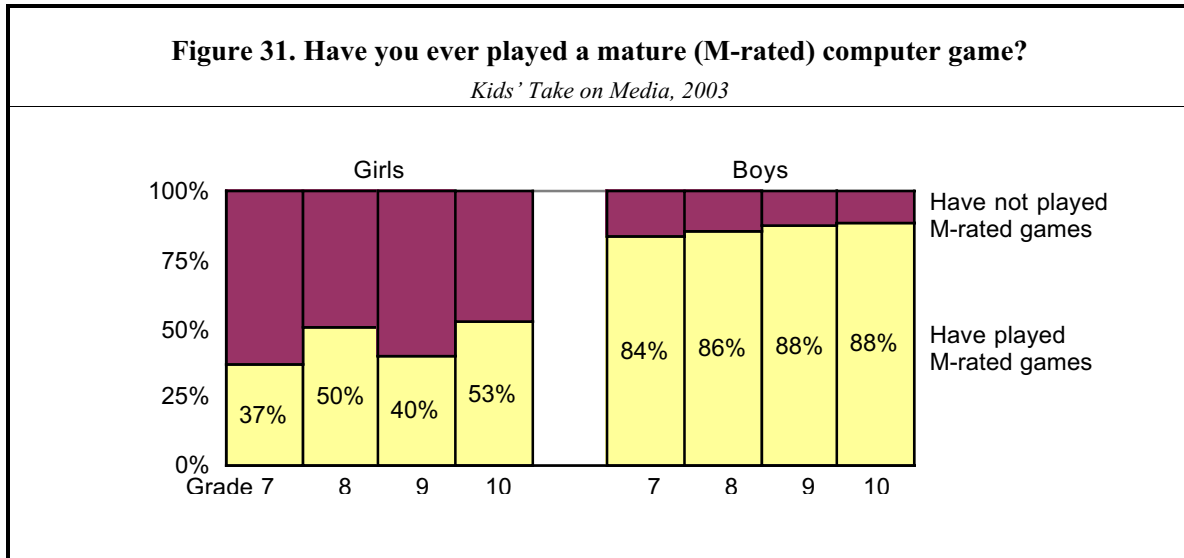
In a similar vein, parental supervision of television means that children are less likely to have seen restricted material. Figure 30 shows that, both in theatres and in the home setting, parental supervision leads to markedly less viewing of restricted material.



Mature computer and video games

Thirteen percent of respondents in Grades 7-10 say that they never play computer or video games. The results in this section are based on the 87 percent who do play computer/video games.

Boys generally play more computer games than girls, and not surprisingly they encounter more M-rated games (Figure 31). The overall proportion of boys who have played M-rated games is 87 percent – double the 44 percent of girls who have played.



Parental supervision of computer games has a small effect on behaviour. Boys whose parents take no part in indicating what games they can or cannot play are in the majority, and 88 percent of this group have used mature games. Boys whose parents do supervise the games they play are a minority, and 82 percent have played mature games. This result could be taken to mean that parental supervision is ineffective, but that is not necessarily the case. Parental supervision can take the form of promoting games that they approve. In addition, even parents who supervise their children closely may not disallow all M-rated games.

Boys are also more likely to rent mature games themselves – 57 percent of boys and 14 percent of girls have rented M-rated games.

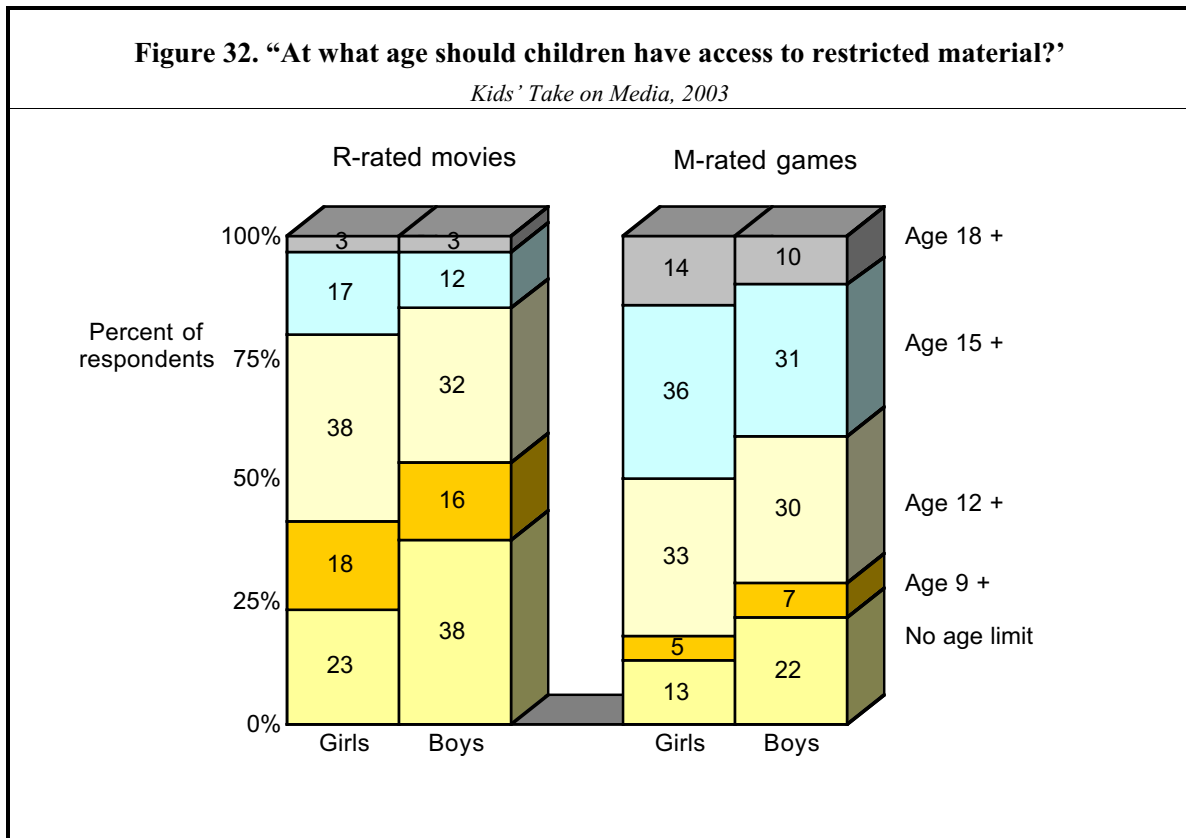
Access to restricted movies and mature games

The Grade 7 to 10 survey asked the question: *At what age should people be allowed to watch R-rated movies and M-rated games?*

The young people surveyed believe that age limits on M-rated games should be considerably more restrictive than age limits on R-rated movies (Figure 32). Combining responses of both boys and girls, 30 percent say that there should be no age restrictions whatsoever for films. On the other hand, only 17 percent favour no age limit on M-rated games.

About 75 percent of students say R-movies should be open to kids ages 12 and up, but only 50 percent say the same about M-rated games.

Boys are slightly more liberal than girls in their attitudes to both R-rated movies and M-rated games.



10. FEEL-GOOD AND FRIGHTENING TV PROGRAMS AND MOVIES

Students were asked:

Have you ever seen a movie or TV show that made you feel really good?

Have you ever been really frightened by a movie or TV show – so that it disturbed you for days or weeks after?

In answer to these open-ended questions, students supplied titles that fit the criteria. Overall, 61 percent of respondents could recall a feel-good title, while just 50 percent would admit to having seen a TV program or movie that was really frightening.

Figure 33 shows that there is greater consensus on frightening movies than on feel-good movies. Just two titles (*The Ring/Le cercle* and *Signs*) account for 29 percent of all the frightening choices, while it takes 15 feel-good titles to reach this mark. Ten frightening titles account for half of all the frightening choices, while 41 titles are required to account for half the feel-good movies. The Appendix again has numeric details.

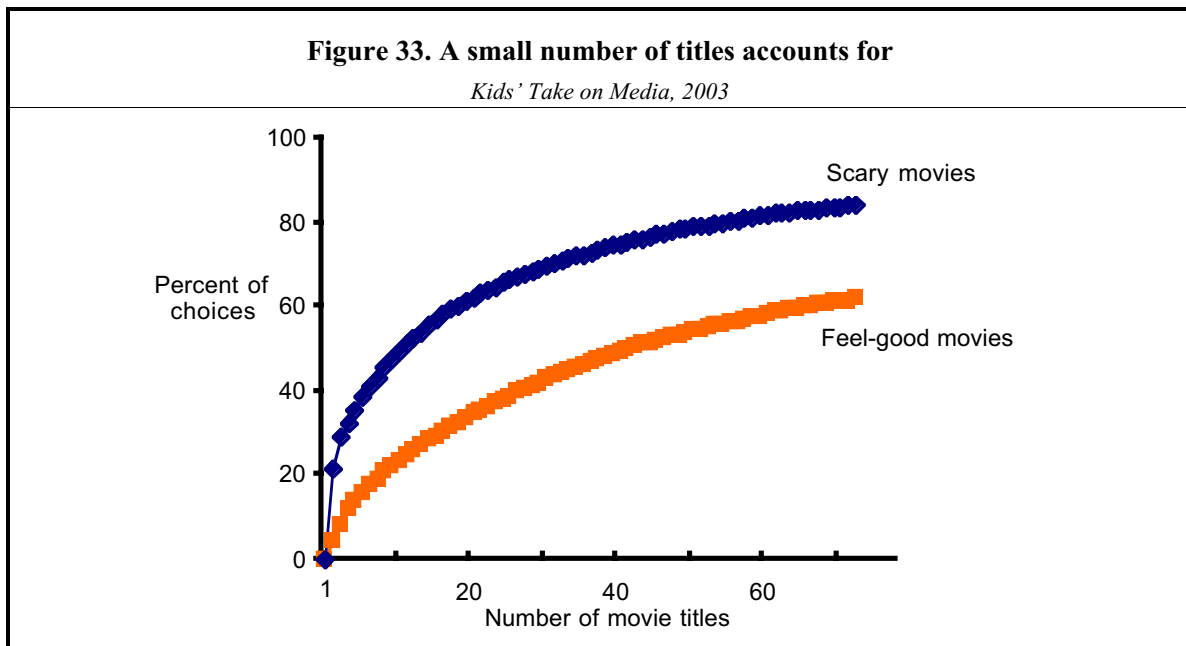


Table 20 shows the top 20 choices for both feel-good movies and frightening movies, based on all respondents. Following tables give detail by language, gender and age group. These tables show the top ten picks for each group of respondents.

Scanning the most popular titles, the primary qualities of feel-good shows seem to be heroism and overcoming odds. The girls' choices tend to the romantic, while boys' choices emphasize adventure.

Among the frightening movies, there is a clear consensus that *The Ring / Le Cercle* is the most frightening thing to come along in some time, rating far above classics such as the *Halloween* series and *The Exorcist* and *Halloween*.

Two titles appear in both the feel-good and frightening lists – the *Harry Potter* series and *The Lord of the Rings* movies. These films have both heroic and romantic elements.

Table 20. Feel-good and frightening TV shows and movies: All respondents			
<i>Kids' Take on Media, 2003</i>			
Feel-good choices	Percent of choices	Scary choices	Percent of choices
A Walk To Remember	4.5	The Ring	21.7
Harry Potter Series	4.3	Signs	7.1
Lord Of The Rings Series	3.7	Scream	3.9
Sweet Home Alabama	2.0	Halloween	3.3
The Simpsons	1.9	Exorcist	3.1
Friends	1.6	Jeepers Creepers	2.6
How To Lose A Guy In XXX	1.6	13 Ghosts	2.5
Sports Videos	1.6	It	2.1
Fast And The Furious	1.5	Sixth Sense	2.1
Lilo And Stitch	1.2	Darkness Falls	2.0
What A Girl Wants	1.2	Mummy	2.0
8 Mile	1.2	Fear Dot Com	1.7
Agent Cody Banks	1.1	Scary Movie	1.6
Lizzie Mcguire	1.1	Chucky	1.5
My Big Fat Greek Wed	1.1	Lord Of The Rings Series	1.4
Tuck Everlasting	1.1	Goosebumps	1.3
I Am Sam	1.1	Jurasic Park	1.2
Jackass	1.0	Harry Potter Series	1.1
Spiderman	1.0	Resident Evil	1.0
		Candyman	.9

Unlike TV programs and computer games, respondents chose just one feel-good title and one scary title. Percentages in each column therefore add to 100 across all the suggested titles, however only 20 of the approximately 500 titles suggested appear in this table.

Movie titles are often not literal translations, for example *Morts de Peur* and *Jeepers Creepers*, Although Francophone respondents frequently used French movie titles, the following tables use the English equivalents to enable easier comparison across groups of kids.

In the breakdowns by age, gender and language that follow, the titles that appear are almost without exception drawn from the top-20 list in Table 20.

The top two titles in the feel-good category, *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings*, appear in almost every subgroup – boys and girls, English and French, older and younger. Likewise, the top scary titles, *The Ring* and *Signs* are universal in their impact.

Beyond these few titles there is some differentiation in the feel-good category on the basis of gender. *A Walk to Remember* and *Sweet Home Alabama* are girls’ movies; *XXX* and *8 Mile* appeal to boys.

Table 21. Feel-good TV shows and movies: Grades 3 – 6 English

Kids’ Take on Media, 2003

Girls’ choices	Percent	Boys’ choices	Percent
Harry Potter	6.3	Harry Potter	6.4
Lizzie McGuire	3.8	Lord Of The Rings	4.6
Sweet Home Alabama	3.5	Yu-Gi-Oh!	3.7
What A Girl Wants	3.5	The Simpsons	3.4
Tuck Everlasting	3.1	Spiderman	3.0
A Walk To Remember	2.9	XXX	2.1
Friends	2.3	Sports Videos	2.1
Lilo And Stitch	2.3	Master Of Disguise	1.8

Table 22. Feel-good TV shows and movies: Grades 7–10 English

Kids’ Take on Media, 2003

Girls’ choices	Percent	Boys’ choices	Percent
A Walk To Remember	9.6	Lord Of The Rings	4.7
How To Lose A Guy In Ten Days	5.1	The Simpsons	3.6
Lord Of The Rings	4.7	Sports Videos	3.6
Sweet Home Alabama	3.6	The Fast And The Furious	2.8
7th Heaven	2.7	8 Mile	2.5
Friends	2.7	Harry Potter	2.5
Harry Potter	2.5	Jackass	2.5
I Am Sam	2.0	Old School	2.5

Table 23. Feel-good TV shows and movies: Grades 3–6 French*Kids' Take on Media, 2003*

Girls' choices	Percent	Boys' choices	Percent
Harry Potter	9.2	XXX	6.7
Star Académie	6.9	Star Académie	5.6
A Walk To Remember	4.6	Fast And The Furious	4.4
Agent Cody Banks	3.4	Lord Of The Rings	4.4
Legally Blonde	3.4	Harry Potter	3.3
Maid In Manhattan	3.4	Spiderman	3.3
Inspector Gadget	2.3	Sports Videos	3.3
My Big Fat Greek Wed	2.3	Beyblade	2.2

Table 24. Feel-good TV shows and movies: Grades 7–10 French*Kids' Take on Media, 2003*

Girls' choices	Percent	Boys' choices	Percent
A Walk To Remember	29.0	Jason	5.0
I Am Sam	3.2	Lord Of The Rings	5.0
Legally Blonde	3.2	XXX	5.0
Lion King	3.2	8 Mile	3.3
Lord Of The Rings	3.2	Fast And The Furious	3.3
Sweet Home Alabama	3.2	Harmonium	3.3
Nee Pour Danse	3.2	Jackass	3.3
Ace Ventura	2.1	Matrix	3.3

The frightening titles are highly consistent, both between boys and girls and in English and French. There is greater consistency with respect to these frightening titles than there is with respect to either feel-good titles or favourite TV shows.

Table 25. Frightening TV shows and movies: Grades 3–6 English

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

Girls' choices	Percent	Boys' choices	Percent
The Ring	10.6	Signs	12.0
Signs	8.7	The Ring	10.7
Scream	4.9	Scream	4.8
Halloween	4.5	Jeepers Creepers	4.0
The Mummy	3.2	The Mummy	2.9
Scary Movie	3.2	Lord Of The Rings	2.7
13 Ghosts	3.0	Goosebumps	2.4
Harry Potter	2.5	Sixth Sense	2.4

Table 26. Frightening TV shows and movies: Grades 7–10 English

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

Girls' choices	Percent	Boys' choices	Percent
The Ring	34.6	The Ring	25.5
Signs	6.0	The Exorcist	6.1
The Exorcist	4.3	Signs	4.2
It	4.1	Scream	3.6
Darkness Falls	3.5	Darkness Falls	2.7
Sixth Sense	3.2	It	2.7
Scream	2.6	Halloween	2.4
13 Ghosts	2.0	Friday The 13th	2.1

Table 27. Frightening TV shows and movies: Grades 3–6 French*Kids' Take on Media, 2003*

Girls' choices	Percent	Boys' choices	Percent
The Ring	14.2	The Ring	16.2
13 Ghosts	5.8	13 Ghosts	6.8
Chucky	5.0	Goosebumps	5.4
Scary Movie	5.0	Halloween	5.4
The Mummy	4.9	The Mummy	4.5
Halloween	4.2	Scream	4.1
Jeepers Creepers	4.2	Jeepers Creepers	3.1
Signs	3.3	Hannibal	2.7

Table 28. Frightening TV shows and movies: Grades 7–10 French*Kids' Take on Media, 2003*

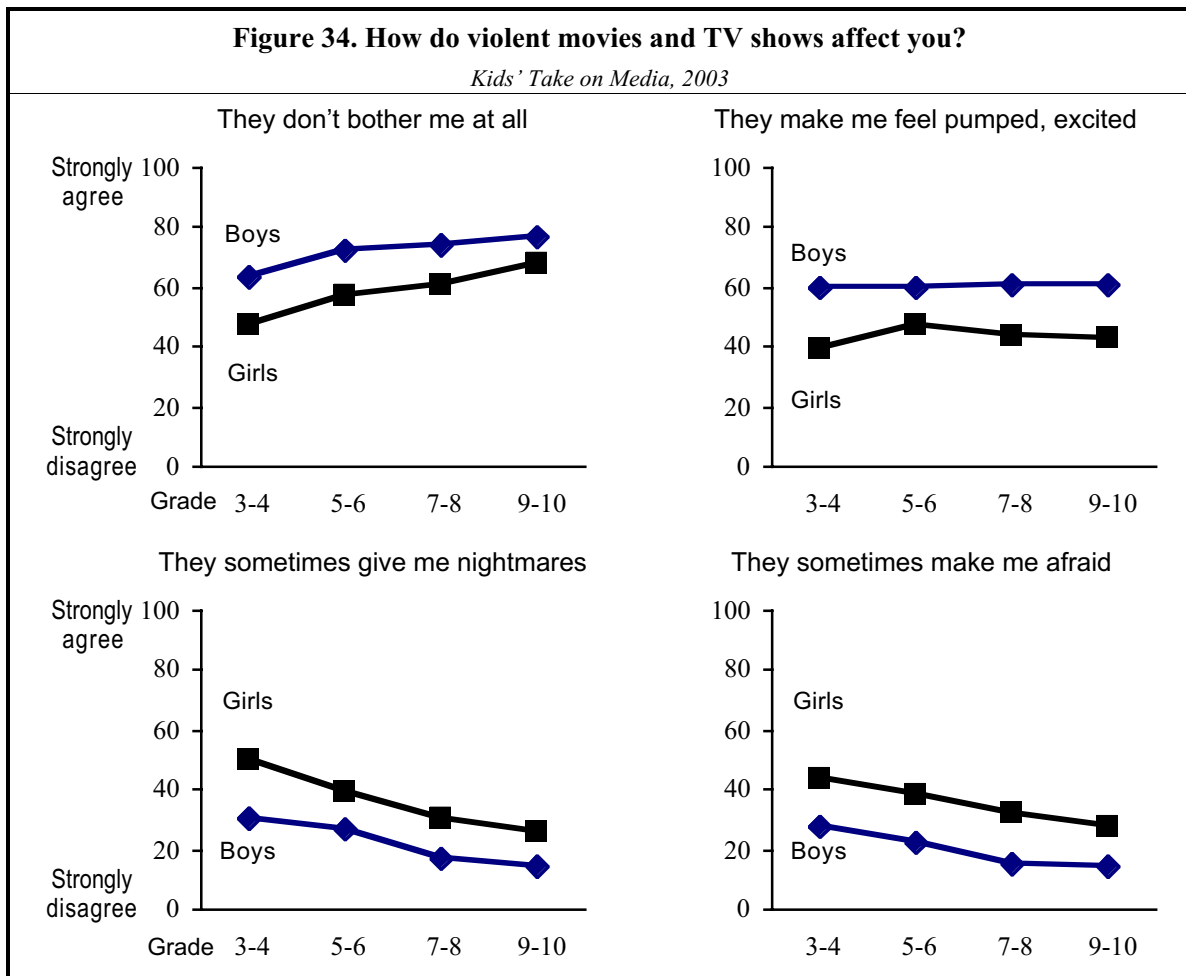
Girls' choices	Percent	Boys' choices	Percent
The Ring	37.7	The Ring	24.2
The Exorcist	6.9	Signs	11.3
Halloween	5.0	The Exorcist	4.8
13 Ghosts	3.8	Jason	4.8
Signs	3.8	Scream	4.8
House On Haunted Hill	3.1	Chucky	3.2
Sixth Sense	3.1	Freddy	3.2
Fear Dot Com	2.8	Goosebumps	3.2

How do violent movies affect you?

Movies can be disturbing in many ways, but violence or the threat of violence is a primary component of fear in teen movies. After respondents had identified their scary movie, the survey asked kids to assess how violence in movies and videos affected them.

Figure 34 shows kids' mean response to the four questions, broken down by grade and gender. Three questions address the fear factor. In each of these, boys admit to less fear, and both girls and boys appear less fearful as they grow older. The fourth question asks whether movie violence elicits feelings of excitement or being "pumped". Boys agree somewhat more with this idea than girls, though both boys and girls are close to the middle of the scale – on average they neither agree nor disagree to any strong degree.

The average response in the charts below does not highlight the fact that some kids are greatly moved by violent material. Ten percent "strongly agree" that violent material sometimes gives them nightmares; 10 percent "strongly agree" that violent material sometimes makes them afraid, and 14 percent "strongly disagree" with the idea that violent material doesn't bother them at all.



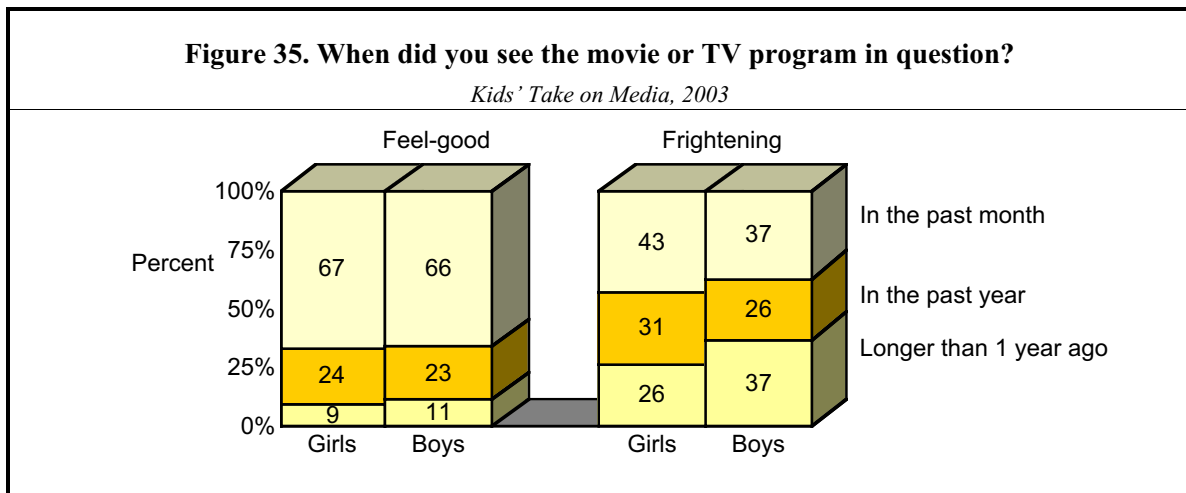
Note: Vertical scale is the mean (average) agreement with the statement above the graph.

Lasting impressions

It is interesting to consider how lasting the impressions made by these feel-good and frightening experiences might be. The survey therefore asked how long ago it was that the student had seen the movie in question. Results (Figure 35) show:

- Feel-good choices tend to be recent (two-thirds were seen within the past month), while disturbing experiences tend to be remembered longer.
- For boys, the frightening memories can remain longer than for girls. Thirty-seven percent of boys recalled scary titles from longer than one year in the past, compared to 26 percent of girls.

We should be careful in directly comparing the feel-good and frightening experiences. It is possible that the strong wording of the frightening question made respondents choose more carefully. It is also possible that the scheduling of the top-choice movies had an impact, though the top choices for both feel-good and frightening categories had certainly played within the past year.



Imitative violence

The survey asked the Grade 7 - 10 students if they had ever witnessed someone imitate a violent act that they had learned from a movie or TV show, and if so, whether the act had resulted in injury. A surprising 51 percent of respondents stated that they had witnessed imitation of some “violent act” from a movie or TV show. This proportion is consistent across Grades 7 to 10.

It is not clear just what kids include under the term “violent act”, but on the basis of discussion with members of the survey’s age group, “violent acts” can extend to any action that results in injury, such as imitating a dangerous stunt. It does not necessarily mean aggressive violence directed against another person.

There is some difference on the basis of gender: 46 percent of girls and 56 percent of boys report witnessing imitative violence.

Two-thirds of the respondents report that no one was hurt in the incident. In the remaining 34 percent of cases where injury occurred, the victim was:

- The person who acted in a violent manner – 12 percent
- Someone else – 17 percent
- Both – 5 percent.

Television programs that kids should not watch

Respondents were asked whether they could think of any television programs that kids a few years younger than them should not be allowed to watch. More than half of those in Grades 3 to 6 volunteered an answer, but only 40 percent of those in Grades 7 to 10 offered any suggestion. The idea of “not being allowed to watch” seems to carry less force with the older group.

Table 29 and Table 30 show the percent of kids who proposed each program, broken down by age and gender. There is some consistency among the four groups, and perhaps some surprises. *South Park* and *The Simpsons* top every list, presumably on the basis of vulgarity. Each list also has a representation of programs with violence (e.g. *CSI*, *The Sopranos*). Each group except for the younger boys has some representation of programs that kids consider too racy for younger viewers, such as *Friends*, talk shows, and blue movies. The sports entries centre on wrestling and some extreme sports programs. Barney’s presence is a question mark – is it simply too silly to inflict on impressionable young minds?

Table 29. TV programs that kids should not watch: Grades 3 – 6			
<i>Kids’ Take on Media, 2003</i>			
Girls’ choices	Percent	Boys’ choices	Percent
The Simpsons	10	South Park	7
South Park	3	The Simpsons	6
Buffy The Vampire Slayer	3	Certain Sports	2
CSI	2	Buffy The Vampire Slayer	2
Friends	2	DragonballZ	1
Fear Factor	1	Family Guy	1
Talk Shows	1	CSI	1
Soap Operas	1	Barney	1

Table 30. TV programs that kids should not watch: Grades 7 – 10			
<i>Kids’ Take on Media, 2003</i>			
Girls’ choices	Percent	Boys’ choices	Percent
South Park	4	South Park	4
The Simpsons	4	The Simpsons	2
The Sopranos	2	The Sopranos	2
CSI	2	CSI	1
Talk Shows	2	Blue movies	1
Seinfeld	1	Talk Shows	1
Friends	1	Certain Sports	1
Certain Sports	1	Barney	1

11. KIDS' VIEWS ON MEDIA

The survey presented students with 8 position statements on the impact of television and computer/video games. Five are positions on media violence and three are other contextual statements. Opinions vary little by grade. The attitudes that one has developed by Grade 7 last at least until Grade 10. By contrast, children's behaviour on most of the other dimensions measured in this survey shows great change over this 4-year period³

"We should study media in school" is the exception to the above rule: agreement with this statement increases with age. Nineteen percent agree with the statement in Grade 7 and the proportion increases to 27 percent by Grade 10. It would be interesting to know if the increase happens naturally, (kids intuitively begin to recognize the impact of media on their lives), or whether kids learn to appreciate the impact of media through media studies in school. This is an important question, and it can be answered empirically. The answer, however, is one step beyond the scope of the present survey.

Figure 36. Response to position statements, Grades 7 to 10

Kids' Take on Media, 2003

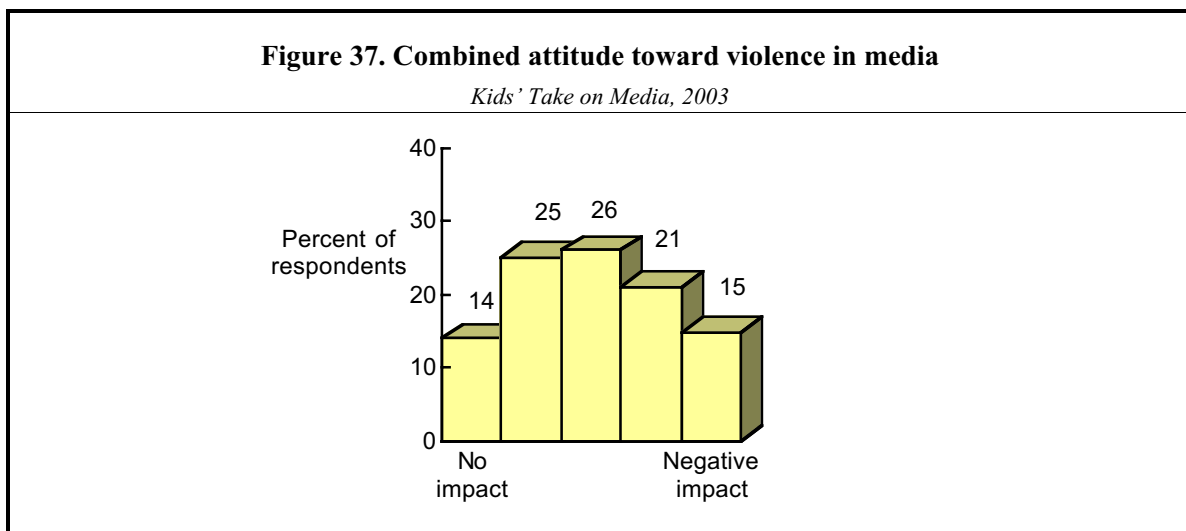
Killing someone in a computer/video game is not an act of violence	45	21	34
Violence in media contributes to violence in schools and communities	35	32	33
The way people treat each other in TV and movies contributes to bullying	48	31	31
My parents would be upset with the lyrics of some songs	51	24	25
We should study media in school	48	30	22
There is too much violence in movies and on TV	51	28	21
My family often discusses what we watch on TV	53	30	17
There is too much violence in hockey games on TV	71	16	13
	% Disagree		% Neither % Agree

³ The alternative is that individual opinions vary one way or another along each dimension over time, but that the pattern across individuals remains stable. This is logically possible, but does not seem very likely!

ORIGINS OF OPINIONS ON VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

What is it in the life of a young person that contributes to the idea that violent content in entertainment media is potentially harmful or simply benign? Consider these three statements: *There is too much violence in movies and on TV*, *The way people treat each other in TV and movies contributes to bullying*, and *Violence in media contributes to violence in schools and communities*.

The three statements are related in meaning, and responses to them are moderately correlated (from .42 to .52). Combining responses to the three statements creates a continuum from those who see media violence as having no harmful effect on society to those who see it as having a strong negative impact. Figure 37 illustrates how the 5,500 survey respondents are distributed along this continuum. They range, in an approximate bell-curve formation, from those kids who say that media violence has no impact on society to kids who say that it has a strong negative impact.



Our question is why: a person's position on the impact of media violence might arise from family, school, or friends, from exposure to media, and from other sources. The data in this survey provide the means to test a number of these ideas.

A thorough statistical analysis reveals six factors that are strongly associated with children's position on the effect of media violence. They are:

- **The respondent's emotional response to violent television and movies**

Those who experience fear when they see violent programs or movies tend to see media violence as negative; those who say they feel pumped or excited regard media violence as having little negative impact on society.

- **The respondent's participation in a cluster of related activities**
 Respondents who spend more time doing homework, reading books and participating in lessons, clubs and hobbies view media violence as having a greater negative impact than respondents who spend less time in these activities.
- **Family involvement in discussion of television**
 Children who report that their families often discuss what they watch on TV are more likely to perceive a negative impact of media violence.
- **The degree to which parents discuss violence, racism and sexism with children**
 When parents discuss violence, racism and sexism in the media, children are more likely to perceive a negative impact of media violence.
- **The degree to which parents supervise television viewing**
 Greater parental supervision of TV viewing is associated with a greater perceived negative impact of media violence.
- **Gender**
 Girls perceive a greater negative impact of media violence than boys.

Several of these factors appear to have a straightforward cause-and-effect impact. For example, parental supervision and modeling creates an awareness of the potential impact of media violence.

With other variables it is difficult to separate cause and effect. Does the experience of being frightened by violent material cause people to regard its impact as negative, or are people frightened more easily when they believe that violent material can be harmful to society? Perhaps both are true.

Taken as a group, this set of predictors emphasizes the role of the family in attuning kids to the potential impact of media violence. Left to their own devices, kids will tend to regard media violence as benign.

Having identified several components in the puzzle, it is important to note some elements that are *not* related in any meaningful way to children's attitudes on media violence. These include:

- Age/grade
- The amount of electronic equipment that kids have in their home
- The amount of time that kids spend using this equipment – watching television, playing computer games, instant messaging, surfing the Web, etc.
- The amount of time that kids spend doing activities other than those in the identified cluster of homework, reading and clubs/lessons (e.g. shopping, playing sports, talking on the phone, surfing the web, etc.)

This analysis of attitudes toward media violence is a beginning foundation but it does not tell the entire story. In statistical terms, the six predictors account for 24 percent of the variance in children's attitude toward media violence. A great deal is therefore left unexplained. In practical

terms, social science research rarely accounts for more than 50 or 60 percent of the variance in any situation – the remainder is due to individual differences (we don't all think exactly the same way) and also to imprecision in measurement (a 5-point scale, for example, may not capture all the subtleties of difference in the attitude that it seeks to measure).

This study leaves out the potential effect that schools exert on building toward media, and it would be important in the future to address this. A single survey can only accommodate a certain range of material and it was not possible to do justice in this one survey to the contribution of schooling as well as to the larger home and social context.

This study therefore represents an excellent start in determining the origins of children's attitudes toward media violence, but there is still more to learn in the future.

APPENDIX: CHOICE DATA

The percentage data for Figure 9, Figure 16, and Figure 33 appear on the pages following.

Copy the numbers into Excel – it works best if you copy them into rows in the spreadsheet, from left to right, rather than from top to bottom as they appear in the table below.

Draw a chart for each set of data. If you start with TV programs, select the cells with the TV program data – it will be a single row in the spreadsheet with cells 14.3, 20.6, 24.5, etc. Go to INSERT → *Chart* and specify *Line chart*.

(Note: You can copy just 5 or 10 data points from the table below to try this out, but when you have mastered the process, do it with the entire data set – you will get more accurate results).

Click on the curve and select *Add trendline* from the CHART menu. You have a choice of several mathematical methods for estimating the equation of the curve. Try all of them. Which equation fits best? Why? (You may want to consult with a math teacher on the “Why” part.)

To get a mathematical fix on which curve fits best, go to the *Add trendline* window and check the options for *Display equation* and *Display R squared value*. Excel will estimate the best-fitting equation of the kind that you have specified (linear, polynomial, etc). R^2 is a measure of how closely that equation fits the data in the spreadsheet. R^2 is the proportion of variance in the data that the equation explains, and the statistic varies from 0 to 1. A value of 1 means that the equation is a 100% match to the data. A fit of 0.98 or 0.99 is extremely good.

Imagine that all programs or all games were equally popular. If there are 500 programs or games in the set, then each title accounts for $100\% \div 500 = 0.2\%$ of the total. Draw this line as a reference – the first data point in (x, y) format is (1, 0.2), the second is (2, 0.4) etc. It is a straight line through the origin: $y = mx$. You can figure out its equation without Excel.

Cumulative percent of choices

Number of titles	TV programs	Computer & video games	Feel-good movies	Scary movies
1	14.3	6.7	4.3	21.7
2	20.6	12.6	8.5	28.8
3	24.5	17.5	12.2	32.2
4	27.8	22.4	14.2	35.5
5	30.6	25.8	16.1	38.6
6	32.8	28.6	17.7	41.1
7	35.0	31.2	19.3	43.2
8	37.1	33.2	20.9	45.3
9	39.1	35.1	22.4	47.4
10	41.0	36.9	23.6	49.4
11	42.7	38.7	24.8	51.0
12	44.3	40.4	26.0	52.6
13	45.8	42.0	27.1	54.1
14	47.3	43.6	28.2	55.5
15	48.7	45.1	29.3	56.8
16	49.9	46.4	30.4	58.1
17	51.0	47.6	31.5	59.3
18	52.1	48.8	32.5	60.4
19	53.1	50.0	33.5	61.4
20	54.1	51.1	34.5	62.3
21	55.1	52.1	35.4	63.2
22	56.1	53.1	36.3	64.0
23	57.1	54.1	37.2	64.8
24	58.0	55.1	38.0	65.6
25	58.9	56.0	38.8	66.4
26	59.8	56.9	39.6	67.2
27	60.7	57.7	40.4	67.9
28	61.5	58.5	41.2	68.6
29	62.3	59.2	42.0	69.3
30	63.0	59.9	42.8	69.9
31	63.7	60.6	43.6	70.4
32	64.3	61.3	44.3	70.9
33	64.9	62.0	45.0	71.4
34	65.5	62.6	45.7	71.9
35	66.1	63.2	46.4	72.4
36	66.7	63.7	47.0	72.9
37	67.3	64.2	47.6	73.4
38	67.9	64.7	48.2	73.9
39	68.4	65.2	48.8	74.4
40	68.9	65.7	49.4	74.9
41	69.4	66.1	50.0	75.4
42	69.9	66.5	50.5	75.8
43	70.4	66.9	51.0	76.2
44	70.9	67.3	51.5	76.6
45	71.3	67.7	52.0	77.0
46	71.7	68.1	52.5	77.4
47	72.1	68.5	53.0	77.8

48	72.5	68.9	53.4	78.2
49	72.9	69.3	53.8	78.5
50	73.3	69.7	54.2	78.8
51	73.7	70.1	54.6	79.1
52	74.1	70.5	55.0	79.4
53	74.4	70.9	55.4	79.7
54	74.7	71.3	55.8	80.0
55	75.0	71.6	56.2	80.3
56	75.3	71.9	56.6	80.6
57		72.2	57.0	80.9
58		72.5	57.4	81.2
59		72.8	57.8	81.5
60		73.1	58.2	81.8
61		73.4	58.6	82.0
62		73.7	59.0	82.2
63		74.7	59.3	82.4
64		74.3	59.6	82.6
65		74.6	59.9	82.8
66		74.9	60.2	83.0
67			60.5	83.2
68			60.8	83.4
69			61.1	83.6
70			61.4	83.8
71			61.7	84.0
72			62.0	84.2
73			62.3	84.4