# Addiction to Video Games

*Mathias Hamman*

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Who benefits from people being addicted to video games? What do you think makes something an addiction? In other words, when does something change from being a habit or something you like to do, to being an addiction?

Corporations that design video games make them addictive on purpose. They want you to be thinking about the game all the time. How do they do this? Let me give you an example. "Clash of Clans" is a game that you play on your phone. In the game, you create and defend your own village. This seems like it should be a fun game, and it is! But the problem is that the game is designed to make you want to play it all the time.

> **Games use many different methods to addict you so they can make more money.**

"Clash of Clans" uses different methods to make you an addict so they can make more money. For example, to have the best village, you need to send your villagers on missions where they collect gems. These missions can take one to eight hours. Therefore, you can spend many hours trying to collect gems for your village. If you don't want to spend that much time, you can buy your gems.

Another problem with the game is that when you are not connected, your village is more likely to be attacked. So the game gives you an incentive to be connected all the time. Also, you get a special reward each day just by starting the game. All of these techniques can make you more and more addicted.

> **Sometimes addicts lose their jobs or fail their classes.**

If you get addicted, you could face several problems. One effect of addiction is that the game takes more and more space in your life. You start thinking only about the game; everything else becomes uninteresting. You stop studying, work-

**$** According to <gameindustry.biz>, the gaming industry made $135 billion in revenue in 2018.

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ing, or playing sports. Sometimes addicts lose their jobs or fail their classes. Some addicts try to keep a "normal" life. They go to school or work during the day, but then they play all night.

This habit of playing every night causes people to lose sleep, which is bad for their health. Furthermore, even if they aren't playing during the day because they are at school or work, their minds are still busy thinking about the game.

When you are addicted to a game, your attention is always on the game even if you are not playing it. Addiction to video games is a serious problem that we should not take lightly. I hope that by reading this essay, you will be more aware of these problems and how they are caused.

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**AFTER YOU READ:**

**1.** According to the author, corporations design video games to be addictive. What are some of the specific ways companies do this?

**2.** What do you think about the author's idea that corporations want to addict people to video games so that they can make more money?

**3.** Read the information in the box on the right. What surprises you? What questions do you have about the informaton?

**DO SOME RESEARCH ON ADDICTION:**

**1.** What other items are legally for sale in the U.S. that might be addictive? Pick one and learn more about it.

**2.** How much revenue does the item generate? Who is its target audience? What policies or laws do we have in place to protect people from becoming addicted to this item and to treat them when they do become addicted?

**3.** Present your findings in an essay or a slide-show or poster presentation. Be prepared to discuss what you have learned.



# More Information about Addiction

A study appearing in the medical journal *Pediatrics*, conducted by research scientist Douglas A. Gentile, Ph.D., examined video game usage rates of 3,034 children and teenagers. Statistics from this study revealed the following:

- The average length of time spent playing video games was 20 hours per week.

- An estimated 72 percent of American households play video games.

- An estimated nine percent of the 3,034 participants in the study showed signs of video game addiction.

- Four percent of study participants were categorized as extreme users who played video games 50 hours per week on average.

**Source:** <www.addictions.com/video-games/alarming-video-game-addiction-statistics>