

A**“The Impact of Violence in the Media on Teens”**

**Local Concerned Parents
Advertising Agency
(Company in Charge of Violent Content)**

B**The Impact of Violence in the Media on Teens**

[speak forcefully and loud]

Did you know that by the time you graduate from high school, Canadian teenagers will have spent 15,000 hours watching TV compared to 12,000 hours spent in a classroom? This allows the media to be one of the leading educators.

[glance at everyone and make sure you have their attention]

Just sixty years ago the invention of the television was viewed as a technological curiosity, with black and white figures on the screen that were so small you could barely see them. Today that curiosity has become a constant for teens. Unfortunately, violent programs are endangering our society.

[sound thoughtful and upset]

In a matter of seconds, people can mimic a movie or a TV character. Over 1,000 case studies have proven that violence in the media has had a negative impact on teens. It increases aggressiveness and anti-social behaviour. It makes people less sensitive to real world violence and the victims.

[speak loud and angry with long pauses between words]

Violent images on TV or in movies have inspired people to set spouses on fire, commit suicide, rape, steal, murder, and commit numerous other shootings and assaults.

[make it look big talk with your hands]

The percentage of programs on TV that contain some violence has hovered near mid-60% during the past 8 years. However the number of prime time programs on broadcast networks that contain violence has jumped by 14% since 1994. In 1998 it was said that 68% of commercials contain violence and on basic cable, 87% did. 39% of reality programs contain violence, including talk shows, documentaries and tabloid news. Nothing has gone down since then.

LEVEL 2

C

[show them on your fingers, sound interested]

There are three major harmful effects of viewing media violence: learning aggressive attitudes and behaviours; becoming used to real world violence, and being afraid of becoming victimized. All of this leads to distrust in others.

[speak quieter and slowly]

I watched a show the other day that was an example of how violence had a negative effect on us. First, there was a perpetrator who was someone we might feel similar to. People imitate behaviors learned from characters they like or feel similar to. Second, there was a victim, who was a person we could not really identify with. Then there were weapons, which can activate aggressive thoughts. The reason for the violence seemed unjustified, which would encourage aggressive behaviour. The over all effect was desensitizing. Violence that is rewarded and not punished increases the likelihood of practicing it.

[loud and attentive]

Not all violence is harmful to watch and violence should not be confused with the conflict in a story. Conflict between characters, if handled responsibly by the producers, can help viewers learn negotiation skills and peaceful alternatives to violence. When violence is needed to tell a story, then there need to be consequences. The failure to show consequences is one of the main problems. Teens think there are very few, if any, repercussions for committing violent acts.

[act serious and look right at people, make it seem like you're talking to them personally]

Violence in the media needs to be decreased to a much smaller percent so its not viewed as entertainment but as a learning experience. Teens must learn alternatives to violence and the outcomes of it. Harming people and their lives is not a joke, it's a serious factor and just by watching TV you are absorbing these ideas.

D

[irritated and upset, lower your voice]

We are bombarded continually with images of violence, brutality, and sexual immorality. When teenagers mindlessly follow what they see, all they know is that "if the TV portrays violence as cool, then it must be cool!" It is hard to believe there are so many non-aggressive and non-violent people in the world. We as a humane society know in our hearts that violence is wrong, but by seeing it on TV everyday we are desensitized and look beyond the cruelty. Mass media can have a negative effect on teens but with a little control the TV can be turned into a beneficial tool rather than a negative impact.

E

Bibliography

Media violence. APP Committee on Communications, Pediatrics. Vol 95, no. 6. 1995

How violence manipulates viewers. 1979. Issue Briefs. Studio City, Calif.: Mediascope Press.

National television violence study scientific papers. 1999. Studio City, Calif.: Mediascope Press.

Teacher's Notes**Knowledge/Understanding**

- The student demonstrates some understanding of the facts surrounding the chosen issue. The student refers to the extent of teenagers' media exposure, describes the results of case studies on the effects of violence in media, and includes a number of statistics (e.g., "the number of prime time programs on broadcast networks that contain violence has jumped by 14% since 1994"). However, some statements are of questionable reliability (e.g., "Violent images on TV or in movies have inspired people to set spouses on fire ...").

Thinking/Inquiry

- The student supports the perspective taken using ideas of some relevance to the purpose and audience. The student lists the harmful effects of media violence, differentiates between violence and conflict in a story, and identifies the "failure to show consequences" as one of the weaknesses of media depictions of violence. However, the relevance of some of the student's arguments is not clear, because the ideas are not coherently expressed (e.g., in the discussion of the effects of violence in a particular television show [paragraph 7]).

Communication

- The student organizes information and ideas with some appropriateness. There is an engaging introduction that makes a startling point (e.g., teenagers spend more time watching television than they do in school), and a clear organizational pattern is used (i.e., introduction, body/exposition, and conclusion). However, the transitions from one idea to the next are often abrupt, making the argument seem disjointed.
- The student uses language and a voice that are somewhat appropriate. The language is straightforward and factual rather than emotive. The voice is at times inconsistent: in the introduction, the speaker addresses the audience as students (e.g., "Did you know that by the time you graduate from high school ...") when the stated audience is "Local Concerned Parents". The student does not state the identity of the speaker.

LEVEL 2**Application**

- The student uses oral presentation techniques with some effectiveness. Among the rhetorical devices used are a personal anecdote, an opening question, and numbered points (e.g., “First, there was a perpetrator ... Second, there was a victim ... Then there were weapons ...”).
- The student builds in speaker notes with some effectiveness. The notes cover volume, gesture, pacing, eye contact, and mood (e.g., “act serious and look right at people”), but are sometimes hard to understand (e.g., “make it look big talk with your hands”).
- The student predicts a somewhat realistic and effective resolution. Although the general conclusion seems reasonable (e.g., “with a little control the TV can be turned into a beneficial tool rather than a negative impact”), the student does not explain what “control” needs to be exerted and by whom.

Comments

This work is representative of a solid level-2 performance. The student demonstrates achievement of the expectations to some degree in all four categories of knowledge and skills.

The result is a speech that is moderately effective. The student uses statistical evidence and gives quite a convincing description of the impact of television violence. However, the lack of a clearly defined speaker and the limited awareness of audience create an effect of detachment that lessens the impact of the speech.

Next Steps

In order to improve his or her performance, the student needs to:

- review the task requirements to establish a clear context for the speech;
- connect statistics to real examples;
- employ a wider variety of rhetorical devices to engage the audience more fully;
- clearly identify concrete actions that can be taken to resolve the problem;
- edit work to improve the logical flow of ideas, and proofread to eliminate errors in sentence structure, spelling, and grammar, with particular attention to punctuation.