Is Fortnite Ruining Your Life?

Teachers complain that the craze is a classroom distraction, and parents worry that their kids are addicted to the game—but here’s what teens have to say.

**YES**
“Fortnite brings people—even siblings—together.”
Anne Hoffman, a high school junior in Pennsylvania

**NO**
“You’re better off catching up with friends in person.”
Thomas Cuth, a high school freshman in Florida

If you play *Fortnite*, you’re familiar with the phrase “Victory Royale,” which signifies a win in the hit survival game. But for many players, the triumph doesn’t end there. *Fortnite* brings lasting social “victories” to its players as well.

First, there’s the camaraderie. People may argue that video-game-based friendships aren’t “real,” but I disagree. The interactive experience allows teens to bond with each other.

It’s true that you and a friend can play *Fortnite* “together,” but it lacks something important: face-to-face interaction. This is problematic for teens, since we’re still honing our social interaction skills, and it’s possible that too much time spent playing the game could weaken these abilities.

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It’s no secret that *Fortnite* can be addictive. I have peers who play four hours a week, and some teens devote much more time to the game.

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"THAT GUY IS ONE SHOT."

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YES (continued) and several of my own friendships were actually strengthened by playing together in multiplayer “squad” mode. Laughing about our struggles and successes once the game is over brings us together—and many other kids feel the same way. Nearly 8 out of 10 teens who play online games with real-life friends say gaming helps them feel closer to their pals. If *Fortnite* players don’t unite and cooperate with each other while in squad mode, other teams can easily eliminate each individual. This means that it encourages teamwork. When my brother and I play, we have fun strategizing how we will win rather than fighting with each other like we often do when we’re not gaming. This is one of the reasons our parents don’t mind that we play *Fortnite*.

To top this all off, knowing that I’ll be able to relax by playing the game when I get home helps keep me motivated during long, stressful days. For me, that extra incentive to push through the school day makes *Fortnite* well worth my time.

NO (continued) Those are lost hours that could have been spent hanging out with friends and family, something that’s good for mental health. In fact, research has found that the happiest teens get more than the average amount of face-to-face time and less than the average amount of screen time. Of course, doing things in moderation is always advisable, and if teens can set limits, that’s great. The problem is that some kids can’t control themselves when it comes to *Fortnite*. It’s as if the game is the only thing they can think about!

Another problem is that players often throw down cash for in-game purchases. One of my friends recently spent $400 on *Fortnite* “skins,” or costumes. The purchases may seem necessary in the moment, but you might regret them the next time you go shopping with friends or if you’re saving up for bigger investments, like college.

Personally, I’d rather not waste my time—or my money—on *Fortnite*. Instead, I’ll use those hours to spend quality time with people I care about.

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**Teen Crazes Throughout the Years**

**FORTNITE MAY GET A BAD RAP, BUT IT ISN’T THE FIRST FAD TEENS HAVE LATCHED ONTO—OR THAT PARENTS HAVE WORRIED ABOUT.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>Rock and Roll</td>
<td>Artists such as Elvis rose to fame, and adults were not happy. Many believed that listening to the loud music would cause teens to act like the rebellious musicians.</td>
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<td>1960s</td>
<td>The miniskirt</td>
<td>Teens loved the raised hemline, a trend born in London. Parents, however, saw the fashion statement as a symbol of a wayward youth movement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>Dungeons &amp; Dragons</td>
<td>Critics argued that the fantasy role-playing game would drive teens to self-harm, but research found no link between the game and poor emotional health.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>Harry Potter</td>
<td>Not everyone was enchanted by the wizard. Many argued that the books would encourage witchcraft, and some churches even held book burnings.</td>
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**FORTNITE HAS MADE HEADLINES FOR SOME, UM, INTERESTING REASONS.**

**WACKIEST**

A tornado didn’t stop Anton Williams of North Carolina from playing *Fortnite*. The teen continued the game as the storm touched down, even as he saw parts of his neighbor’s roof blow away. He did finally seek shelter in the bathroom when the tornado worsened. Thankfully, he didn’t get hurt.

Last year, the creators of *Fortnite* sued two people—including a 14-year-old—for allegedly using cheat software to gain an advantage over others. If convicted, they may have to pay up to $150,000 each!

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**WOW-WORTHY**

A chemistry teacher in Ohio promised his students that he’d make their class exam about *Fortnite* if they got 6,700 retweets on Twitter about the topic switch. He probably should have aimed higher: The tweet received more than 30,000 retweets.

Kyle Jackson, a 13-year-old from the U.K. became the youngest professional *Fortnite* player. He isn’t paid to play, but he does have the potential to win tens of thousands of dollars in prize money.

—Jessica Brown