Buying Video Games for a Gaming Tot
A Quick How To

Visit any video game outlet and you're bound to get overwhelmed by the hundreds
of choices available - especially if you're new to gaming. Interestingly,
children and teens seem to know their way around these places as if they were
their second home. But for the adult, the typical video store looks like some
sort of color paint explosion and sooner or later, all the games start to look
the same. This guide is for the adult who's buying a game for a younger person
perhaps as a birthday gift or as a bribe. Whatever the reason, you're going to
appreciate the following tips.

1. Research this strange phenomenon before setting foot inside a video store.
There's plenty of information available about video games online, so to reduce
frustration offline, fire up your web browser and do a little homework. Visit
the website of the gaming outlet nearest you and then look for a link to the
games section of the system that your youngster plays. Here's a helpful chart to
explain what all those strange letters mean.

Wii = Nintendo's Wii System
EA Sports = Entertainment Arts System
PS3 = Playstation 3 System
XBOX 360 = Microsoft's XBOX 360 System
PC = Personal Computer
PS2 = Playstation 2 System
PSP = Playstation Portable System
DS = Nintendo's DS System

The key is to locate the system on the store's website first. The system, it's
accessories, and all of the games that work on that system will follow. If not,
you may need to use the website's internal search engine.

2. After locating the appropriate games section for your youngster's machine,
check out the ratings of each game and create a temporary shopping list of age
appropriate material. The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) gives each
game a rating in an effort to inform parents what their children are playing.
Here's a handy reference to what the ratings mean:

C = Appropriate for Early childhood
E = Appropriate for Everyone
E 10+ = Appropriate for Everyone aged 10 and older
T = Appropriate for Teens
M = Appropriate for Mature Adults

3. Within your temporary shopping list, try find a game that's built from the latest movie release. Little people love the new animated movies put out by Disney and Pixar, and they really enjoy re-living precious moments in the movie in a video game. That's why when these movies come out on DVD, their producers put a few games in the "Special Features section" of the CDs.

4. If you can't find a game that's built from a movie that the child likes, try to find a game that centers around a popular cartoon character or one that attempts to educate.

5. If you still can't find one that resembles something that you've heard this particular person rambling on about, first give yourself a slight slap on the hand. You should pay better attention. Then point your browser to the nearest Blockbuster or Hollywood Video website. Follow the same procedure outlined in steps 1 - 3 only this time, elect to rent 5 or 6 games that look appealing. This will give your tot a chance to play some games and select one to keep forever while you return the others.

6. If on the other hand, you did find a game in step 3 or 4, you can either check out online, or drive up to the store and buy it there.

They say you can't judge a book by its cover, but the illustrations on the both video and pc game cases do a pretty good job of representing the game's content. So if you see an illustration of fighting warriors, chances are the game will be more violent than you prefer. If on the other hand, you see an illustration that resembles what you'd see on the cover of an interesting children's book, the game should be age appropriate.

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