

# Is [X] a waste of time?

**Post by “Joshua” of September 30, 2020 at 8:21 PM**

*TL;DR—This post is a bit rambling. Skip to the next one for a discussion of the question, "Are video games a waste of time?"*

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When I was a young boy—the middle child of three—my parents brought home a Nintendo Entertainment System. It had been an especially difficult pregnancy for my mother; she was often sick, and particularly struggled to keep down food. I was born with a significant deformity of the chest and nearly died. I was baptized at the hospital for fear that I wouldn't make it.

Based on these and other factors, my parents were informed of two probabilities. The first was that my poor prenatal nutrition predicted a lifelong struggle with overeating and weight gain, and the second was that my mental development and mind/body coordination would be slow and possibly foreshortened.

To help with the second problem, my dad convinced my mother that video games—then in their infancy—would help with developing coordination. I also did Hooked on Phonics, created the year before I was born, to help me keep up with my peers.

In fact I exceeded them. My senior year of high school, I took the ACT test and got a perfect score of 36 in Reading Comprehension. It was 2006, and I was bookish, with a high reputation among my teachers, and skinny as a rail.

And I still played video games. A LOT of video games. Like many young people, and especially boys, they became a part of my identity. They were the main focus of my peer group, the main use of my money from my first job, and the major use of my free time.

I am nearly 32 now, gainfully employed, and while I haven't owned a gaming console for several years, I still play them on my laptop. Sometimes I play for hours at a stretch, while new and unread books languish on the shelf.

The public conception among our elders that video games will turn us all into violent sociopaths seems to have abated in the intervening decades, but it's been supplanted by a milder one—we're lazy, and we're wasting our lives.

Let's explore the question!