



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Video games and education

If one takes into account smartphone video games and social network games, video games have become a staple of the American entertainment diet. Currently, 72 percent of households play video games. The [Entertainment Software Association](#) says 52 percent of people own gaming systems. Fifty-three percent of players are male and 47 percent are female. Many use their game controllers to operate their televisions.

Education scholar James Paul Gee wrote in 2003 that learning is at its best when it presents an “embodied experience,” with meanings discovered throughout the game. Such learning seems ideal for teaching not just media literacy but also news itself. In his 2010 book, *Newsgames*, scholar Ian Bogost says games that explain news can teach more than traditional articles or television news.

Time to play:

Flashlight: Have students pick one of the following Newsgames: [CutThroat Capitalism](#), [September 12th](#), [Quandry](#), or [Heartsaver](#). Have them play the games and share what they learned. What else do students think games could teach?

Spotlight: Choosing one of the above games, have students write a one to two-page critique. What digital media literacy skills did you learn? How could the game have taught you more?

Searchlight: Divide students into groups. After research on the web, develop an idea for their own game to teach about a news event or digital media literacy. What would you teach and how would you make it fun?