

DOES WATCHING TELEVISION VIOLENCE LEAD TO VIOLENT BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN?

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the evidence on the back of the sheet.

Based on what you read, answer the following questions.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THE QUESTION ABOVE? WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?

HOW CAN YOU JUSTIFY YOUR OPINION?

WHY DO YOU BELIEVE SOME EVIDENCE OVER OTHERS?

EVIDENCE

More than 1000 studies on the effects of television and film violence have been done during the past 40 years. The majority have reached the same conclusion: television violence leads to real-world violence. They tend to agree on the following points: 1) television violence encourages violent forms of behavior and influences attitudes about violence in daily life, 2) children who watch significant amounts of television violence have a greater likelihood of exhibiting later aggressive behavior.

U.S. Senate, *Children, Violence and the Media: A Report for Parents and Policy Makers*, 1999

The current violence in society is disturbing to all of us. The current excessive, gratuitous violence in television and film is disturbing to all of us. But because two phenomena are both disturbing and coincident in time does not make them causally connected.

American Psychological Association

Television violence is as strongly correlated with aggressive behavior as any variable that has been measured.

National Institute of Mental Health.

Because of our belief in the media-violence connection, we are primed to look for connections when violent events occur. We look for easy answers—the media did it.

S. Fischhoff, (1999). Psychology's quest for the media-violence connection, *Journal of Media Psychology*, 4 (fall).

Televised violence teaches aggressive attitudes and behaviors, desensitization to violence, and increased fear of being victimized by violence.

National Television Violence Study, Center for Communication and Social Policy, 1997

Television viewing is voluntary. The viewer knows that the content is symbolic and is not real, and is watching to relax. Television viewing is mainly an occasion for relaxing, not absorption. Every viewer knows this, but every social critic seems to forget this fact.

J. Fowles, (2002). *Television Violence*, Sage Publications.