

“So What?”

When writing an essay, you should aim to make your composition *relevant* to your intended audience. You want to prove to your readers that they should care about the topic under discussion, and you must demonstrate *why* it is important to them. One way to accomplish this task is to answer the “so what?” question in your introductory paragraph.

The following introduction neglects to adequately answer the “so what?” question; compare this to the revised paragraph that follows. Note that the lines in **bold font** demonstrate a direct response to the “so what?” question that might be posed by the reader.

“So What?”: Original Paragraph

The topic of media violence has been a growing issue in the United States due to the alleged effects that it has on children and young teens. In particular, many people are concerned about the proliferation of video game violence. Since video games are popular among youth, some claim that the graphic violence present in them is the cause for the increased violence in our society. However, others say that the responsibility for acts of youth aggression lies with negligent parents who allow their children to play these games and do not teach them “right from wrong.” Since parents are ultimately responsible for their children, video games should not be blamed for youth violence.

“So What?”: A Possible Revision

The topic of media violence has been a growing issue in the United States due to the alleged effects that it has on children and young teens. **When violence occurs at school or between children in a home environment, people wonder *why* these horrible incidents occurred.** In particular, many people are concerned about the proliferation of video game violence. **Multiple games graphically depict murder, rape, mutilation, and torture; these are not appropriate topics for children or teens since they do not always understand the differences between fact and fiction, and they do not comprehend the consequences of these actions in real life.** Since video games are popular among youth, some claim that the graphic violence present in them is the cause for the increased violence in our society. However, others say that the responsibility for acts of youth aggression lies with negligent parents who allow their children to play these games and do not teach them “right from wrong.” **All video games are branded with clear “ratings”-from “E for “Everyone” to “M” for “Mature”-and the parents or responsible adult guardians can keep their children from purchasing or playing the games that are labeled as violent. Violence among youths has been rising in recent years, as evidenced in a number of highly publicized school shootings, and something should be done in order to remedy this issue.** However, since parents are ultimately responsible for their children, video games should not be blamed for youth violence.