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Sports Module Instructions and Diary Questions

Introduction

Perhaps one of the fastest growing video game genres, the sports module allows gamers to engage in new activities without investing large amounts of money into equipment. Often the subject of controversy, sports video games have been criticized for giving children an alternative to healthy exercise. On the other hand, arguments have been made that the introduction of a sport through video games makes an individual more likely to play the sport in real life. This module explores this debate, as well as some of the core issues in the worlds of football, soccer, and skateboarding.

Game Choices (choose one)

Tony Hawk's American Wasteland (≈ 15 hours). Of the Tony Hawk's Pro Skater series, American Wasteland stands apart in that it contains a story-rich plotline that relate to several aspects of the social sciences. As an amateur skateboarder, skate your way to the American dream while overcoming personal disputes and systematic oppression faced by an alternative culture. Along the way, gain an appreciation for the video game franchise that inspired thousands of children to take up skateboarding in real life.

Madden 18 and Madden 19 Longshot Story Mode (≈ 10 hours) series offers gamers the opportunity to take on the stresses that go into entertaining millions of Americans on Sundays (and now Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Mondays). Players must deal with real-world social issues found in athletics such as competitive pay and physical strain on players. The Longshot story mode of Madden 18 and its continuation in Madden 19 offer an even greater insight into the social pressures faced by those trying to make it to the NFL and survive once they get there. **Please** note which games you should play. More recent versions of Madden have been released, but do not have story the same story mode option. Franchise modes are also not adequate substitutes for the story mode.

FIFA 18 and 19 'The Journey' Story Modes (≈ 15 hours). Dive into the greatest international sport sensation in the world of professional football (no, not that one). Begin your journey as a teenager with ambitions to make it in the Premier League, experiencing the professional athletic scene on an international scale.

Readings

All students should read the 4 PDFs in the "Everyone Reads" content folder for Sports. These are named: Soccer Will Soon Be..., Go to College..., The Positive Effect of Sports..., Movement-based sports... In addition to these, you should also read the content included in the "X Gamers Read" folder, where "X" is the name of the game you decide to play from your menu of options. For example, if you pick Madden, then you should do the five readings in that folder. There are five readings for FIFA and one reading (and one video) for Tony Hawk.

Reading Diary Questions

Your reading diary questions will depend upon which game you decide to play.

Tony Hawk Gamers

As the first chapter of 'Skate Life' suggests, skateboarding is a mixture of 'Sunshine and Rebellion.' As both a sense of identity and community as well as a vehicle for juvenile delinquency, skateboarding has historically been seen with mixed opinion. For your diary assignment, complete the following:

- (1) While playing the game, journal the events that you believe influence these mixed opinions such as deliberate criminal activity or being heckled for lawful recreation. (50 points)
- (2) Upon finishing the game, reflect on how the video game itself portrayed the skating community. (45 points)
- (3) Do you believe that the draw that Tony Hawk discusses in the required video comes from an interest in the sport or from the rebellion discussed in the book chapter? (45 points)
Make sure to reference the module readings, the Skate Life book chapter and the Tony Hawk interview in crafting your response.

Madden Gamers

While baseball may be America's pastime, professional football has become the dream for a vast majority of children. To capture this desire in a video game, the Madden franchise has gone to great lengths to illustrate the pains that go into attaining this goal. Beyond the 'Longshot' story mode, also play approximately 10 hours of another play-intensive mode. In this time, you should begin to see the impact of injuries on the team. For your diary entry, discuss the following:

- (1) Compare the experiences in story mode and franchise with the articles on NFL injuries, compensation, and masculinity. In doing this, address the three-way balance between life goals, personal health, and wealth. Reference the module readings in crafting your discussion. (70 points)
- (2) Second, take a stance: do you believe that football players are properly compensated for the risks they take? Use the articles provided in the module to guide your arguments. (70 points)

FIFA Gamers

Soccer has grown support in the US and abroad, becoming the most widely played sport in the world. However, those that strive for true greatness are faced with both personal and physical struggles on their way to the top. In your diary response, respond to the following:

- (1) Using your experiences as the goal-oriented Hunter, use this diary entry to reflect on the sacrifices made by those striving for international stardom. Use the assigned articles to compare the physical and emotional barriers that budding stars must overcome. (50 points)
- (2) In addition to personal reflection on the game, use evidence from the readings to evaluate the youth athletic culture in the United States, and how it compares to the illustration provided in The Journey story mode. (45 points)

(3) Finally, consider the opposite relationship. How do video games such as FIFA influence the popularity of sports across the world? Make sure to draw on the cosmopolitanism article as well as the other assigned readings for the module. (45 points)



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