

I. The Occasion and who are the participants.

A. Immediate circumstances of the occasion.

**1. Date: December 9, 1993, Time: 8:00 PM – 11:00 PM EST,**

**Subject: 1993 Senate Committee Hearings on Video Game Violence (recorded from C-Span)**

**2. Location: U.S. Senate Committee, Size: ~50+ Attendees (including listeners and speakers), Nature: formal and serious senate hearing**

B. Important speaker-listener aspects.

**1. Number of listeners (audience): ~40+, Number of speakers: ~10, Sex and Age groups represented (both): men (majority) and women (minority), issue of focus: all ages (adults – decision-makers/consumers, industry developers and representatives—present, kids – the affected demographic—not present)**

**2. Educational background: Senators (law, professional speaking), Industry representatives (business, professional speaking), Educators, Children’s Television/Advertising Spokespeople (research, psychology)**

**3. Ethnic background: (diverse, applicable to kid demographic, overwhelming Caucasian majority in the hearing), religious affiliations (Christians and Jews, alluded to from the acknowledgement of the then-holiday season contrasting strikingly from the violent/counter-religious subject matter called into question)**

**4. Estimate of the speakers’ attitude toward the subject before and after and during: all serious throughout on both sides of the issue**

**5. Did the all participants overtly participate: yes**

II. The Participants—what were the participants' qualifications?

**A. Main participants, testimonial session: Senators Joseph Lieberman and Herb Kohl (hearing presidors), Howard Lincoln and Bill White (industry representatives, Nintendo and Sega respectively)**

**B. What did you know about the participants before the event? Both senators: for their democratic backgrounds, both industry representatives: their integral contributions and associations with their company’s success in the market (where such success ultimately led to the controversies that arose from video games being violent as the popularity and advancement of technology grew at the time)**

III. The event—briefly describe the type of event and the purpose.

**A. How was this accomplished? A senate hearing on the issue of violent videogames was called in response to children being exposed to blood, gore, and mature themes inappropriate to children and minors. Two particularly racy titles that garnered national attention prompted congressional action to moderate the violence seen by young players. The main purpose was to find a means to establish a rating system akin to the one used by the MPAA for rating films.**

**B. Were the techniques used appropriately? Yes; representatives from Nintendo and Sega, two videogame companies, as well as spokespeople representing many fields (education, children’s programming, etc.) expressed support for their cases (for the industry to adopt a rating system and for children to be shielded from violent exposure effectively respectively) via their speeches. Congress would ultimately agree to**

**the concept of a rating system on the grounds that it is structured to their conditions.**

IV. What was the listening purpose of the participants? (All parties may have the same purpose or it may be different for different parties. For example, if one party is listening for information and another party is evaluating the information.)

- A. Informative: The senators listened to the industry representatives with regards to explaining how their games/peripherals function in order to clear confusion and demonstrate rebuttals to the main arguments presented at the hearing**
- B. Critical: The senators openly criticized the video game industry for its use and exposure of violence and supported this with statistics and resources while the industry representatives evaluated these comments and constructed their rebuttals**
- C. Empathic: Both sides of the issue expressed emphasis on their part; the senators in advocating for the morality of violence exposure on the youth and the representatives on the control of such exposure via a rating system**

V. What was the personal style of the participants?

**Content-oriented: the senators and representatives all came prepared with a speech containing specific information, quotes, and facts/figures to better illustrate points and arguments made regarding the issue**

**People-oriented: senators represent a voice of the public (a select few) who nonetheless bring forth the issues and concerns that face the population; the senators in this hearing served to raise the seriousness of the problem in question in a public setting amongst people of many different backgrounds**

**Action-oriented: use of visual aids were exhibited by the senators in demonstrating their points**

**Time-oriented (on both sides): speeches were done in an organized and timely fashion, one-at-a-time (for opening and closing statements and argument/rebuttals for the most part)**

VI.. Paraphrase—did the participants paraphrase what the other parties said. Provide an example of paraphrase and how it was used.

**One example of a statement that was paraphrased in the hearing was one regarding the concern of having a company target multiple demographics, with an emphasis on the older audience despite catering to a younger audience as well. This was interpreted as the need for categorizing games that better fit each age group ala films being rated for the same reasons.**

VII. Evaluate the event—now you are the “critical listener.” What effective listening techniques did the participants demonstrate and what ineffective or faulty listening behaviors did the participants demonstrate?

**The effective listening techniques noted throughout the hearing were as follows: speaking when being addressed (to ensure that everyone participates and those who do**

**not, listen) and speaking clearly and coherently to a microphone (to ensure quality for those who listen). No notable ineffective listening behavior was demonstrated.**