

Immigration test questions



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Violence In Our Children Cities of violence: Santee, California; El Cajon, California; Littleton, Colorado. These are names of American cities and towns where violence has usurped deep into the American heartland where families settle to raise families away from the violent big cities. Andy Williams, Jason Hoffman, Eric Harris, and Dylan Klebold; names of students who came to their schools with weapons to kill those students and staff whom they felt were responsible for their melancholy. What are the motivating factors behind these suicidal attempts? Society is trying to convince itself that it must be Hollywood with its violent entertainment and glorification of violence. Another scapegoat is videogames with all the gore and realistic killing or maybe even music that has lyrics considered by the majority to be riddled with suicidal or homicidal messages to today's youth. Politicians, parents, law enforcement, and society are asking themselves, What are the factors leading to the increase in violence among our children?. The most convincing cause for violence in our children lies not in the entertainment industry but in us. The main source is depression of the killers due to rejection by their peers, the breakdown of the cohesive family unit due to divorce and the easy accessibility to weapons.

The major cause of violence believed by some researchers is the age-old traditions of bullying and the clique system in high schools. Jerry Adler states in his 1999 article *The Truth About High School* that these are so called rite of passages that all American students have been exposed to. These factors have been around since the invention of high school and adolescents have been forming cliques and mentally ranking them just as in an adult society which are dominated by hierarchies (Adler 56).

As in most high schools across the country the athletes dominate the social scale and enforce the hierarchy, which explains why they are at the top of the food chain. Its pretty common to see jocks picking on the fat kid or the wimpy kid, or anybody whos different (Adler 56). So what provokes aggression and violence among the lower hierarchical levels? Often it is scapegoating, in which teens are bullied by and in front of their peer group by a higher hierarchical group, leaving them excluded and humiliated. In an online survey conducted by the San Diego Tribune statistics show that 87 percent of students thought that school shooters were motivated by a desire to get back at those who have hurt them and 86 percent said teenagers resort to violence because of other kids picking on them, making fun of them or bullying them (Eckert 2). School shootings and murders are largely the work of young men acting out a script that society gives them for displaying their masculinity. As adults, we don't want to hear that a boy is depressed or has been shamed. We don't know how to deal with it. Given the pressures on these boys, we should be thankful that so few actually turn to violence as a display of masculinity. As our society evolves into more acceptance of a larger female role being played into everyday life, we have seen an increase of girls being involved in violence. In comparison to past generations, cliques are now much more likely to have both boys and girls in them. Researchers say this is due to early exposure to sexual equality in todays world.

Familiarity with the opposite sex comes much earlier now (Adler 56). As in all civilizations researchers say, adolescence is a tribal society (Adler 56).

Adolescent hierarchical lines are drawn by teenagers and are frequently unfair and are often hurtful and generally enforced by physical and

psychological intimidation, which is why most depression is found in adolescent teens.

Another major contributing factor to this violence is that a lot of these kids are growing up in broken homes or homes with family problems. As adolescents spend less and less time with their parents, cliques increasingly fill the emotional vacuum, and the high-school game of acceptance or rejection is being played for even higher emotional stakes (Adler 56). Keeping these kids on the right path means maintaining parental involvement and encouraging them to take healthy risks versus dangerous ones. Without parental involvement these kids are left alone to make important decisions without having the full support of their families behind them. As in the case with the shooters Dr. Lynn E. Ponton's article *Their Dark Romance With Risk* states that Peers can influence risk-taking in both positive and negative ways a toxic best friend or group of friends can escalate bad behavior, especially where there is no adult input (Ponton 55). Most of these kids grew up in broken homes or homes where the families did not take an active role in their healthy decision-making. Taking on everyday challenges in unexplored situations is an important tool that teenagers use to develop distinctive individuality apart from their parents. So parental guidance is an extremely important element in helping their teenagers make correct important decisions.

Though boys who are unhealthy risk-takers often hurt others, girls usually turn their shame and anger on themselves, engaging in self-destructive behaviors such as cutting or extreme dieting (Ponton 55). Even though incidences of extreme violence have not been observed at the destructive

magnitude as boys the potential is there for violence just as easily. One major factor contributing to violence in our children is the easy accessibility to firearms. While children in the past have brought weapons to school, most were knives, brass knuckles, and chemical sprays. In a study at Santana High School published by Jill SpielVogel called School bullying old problem in 1999 before the acts of violence engulfed the school a survey showed about 11 percent said they had brought a weapon to campus. Many said they forgot they had the weapon with them. More than one-third brought it for protection and 11 percent brought it for intimidation to scare others (Spielvogel 2).

This data along with students being victims of bullying or hierarchical intimidation has led to a rise of firearms being brought into the schools. Most students and parents do not tell school officials about bullying and intimidation because they did not think it would do any good. Only 7 percent of students said they felt unsafe at school-sentiments parents and staff echoed in their surveys at Santana High School (Spielvogel 2).

As in the case of Andy Williams, the gun was easily accessible due to an unlocked gun cabinet. This coupled with the bullying that has been termed torture by his defense attorney and his fathers lack of parental support and healthy descion making led Andy Williams to a poor decision making process. Andy Williams is not the only student to have retaliated in such a violent manner according to the survey. About one-third of 1, 200 students surveyed at Santana High School said they had been the target of abusive behavior. Nearly half said they had retaliated in some way and one in five

students appeared to be true bullying victims who were repeatedly targeted, more often girls than boys (Spielvogel 2).

Unfortunately the violence of children in our society is not being blamed on the real culprits of violence but is being blamed on the media, television, video games and musical lyrics. The surgeon general has declared these potential causes as harmful to children and that repeated exposure to violent entertainment during early childhood causes more aggressive behavior throughout a child's life. However, in his article *Loitering On The Dark Side*, Steven Levy quotes Doug Richardson of *Die Hard II* and *Money Train* by stating that the thousands of violent images we see don't inspire more acts of violence (Levy 39). So basically the sheer volume of violence and carnage is proof of its harmlessness. Therefore, there must be a better culprit to blame the violence of children than just the entertainment industry. Although, the media maybe a part of the problem it's not an either-or situation at work here. It is about America craving brutal images and violence in all aspects. The violent entertainment just caters to what the population desires and the entertainment industry produces these due to the popularity and profitability of this brand of entertainment. All forms of violence in our society can easily be blamed for the rise of violence in our children but the root of all these problems reaches deeper than playing a violent video game or watching a violent TV program. The media merely reflects many aspects of our society's reality and in this reality it is more about depression, the breakdown of the family unit, the drop off of religious values, and the accessibility of guns to almost anyone in our society.