

# [Psychology and music violence](https://assignbuster.com/psychology-and-music-violence/)

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The Effects of Violent Music Content on Teenagers   
Throughout history the human populous has been   
attracted to music. Whether it be part of a ritual, an   
emotional release, religious reasons, or just for   
listening pleasure music has been at the center of our   
society. We have used music to express ourselves, tell   
stories, and let others into our thoughts. However, we   
often wonder whether what we are saying has an effect on   
the listening audience.   
Recently, in the 1990's references have often been   
made to link violent and deviant behavior to music and   
certain music genres. Some such genres include but are   
not limited to; heavy metal, rock, death metal, rap,   
gansta rap, industrial, hardcore, and alternative music.   
During the last decade we have seen music lyrics become   
more and more violent and sexually explicit. Experts   
argue that this can cause problems in children and   
adolescents. Studies show that the average teenager   
listens to approximately 40 hours of music in a given   
week. One is to assume that somewhere in the mix a child   
is going to hear something derogatory or objectionable, as   
it has become the norm in todays society. In most music   
today especially rap and heavy metal most of the lyrics   
contain references to violence, sex, and/or drugs. While   
many argue that this is dangerous for children to hear we   
know that a modern day teenager often faces violence,   
drugs, suicide, pregnancy, and other aspects of this   
music.   
While we find that lyrics may be dangerous to a child   
we must ask ourselves whether the child fully understands   
and comprehends what the artist is saying. Teenagers   
often do not understand what is being said, in fact in one   
study only 30 percent of those questioned knew the lyrics   
to their favorite songs and they all had varied   
comprehension as to what the message was. It could be   
argued that if the lyrics were not included in the artists   
booklet then the audience would never know what was being   
said. Some lyrics are indeed harsh such as this Nine Inch   
Nails lyric:   
I am a big man yes I am; and I have a big gun; got   
me a big ole \*censored\* and I like to have fun; held against   
your forehead I'll make you suck; you know, just for   
the \*censored\* of it.

Obviously we cannot interpret this as a positive meaning.   
A sampling of lyrics from Marilyn Manson include Who says   
date rape isn't fun, ... the housewife I will beat..,   
and I slit my teenage wrist, among others. Manson   
concerts are often grounds to bash religion and rip bibles   
while fan chant we hate love, we love hate. Other songs   
that have overtones of violence include slap-a-ho by   
Dove Shack and another song sung by death metal band   
Cannibal Corpse in which they make reference to   
masturbating with a dead womans head. Avid music lovers   
attest that they words sung in these songs are just words   
and or no different that poetry printed in literature   
books. No studies to date have concluded that listening   
to a song that speaks of death will make a teenager want   
to go out and kill.   
Do these kinds of lyrics breed todays children to be   
killers and to be sexually promiscuous? Yes, and no,   
depending on who you speak to. Listening to music does   
not drive people to kill, and no proof of such has been   
offered. In fact, one teacher speaks of a student who   
wore a Metallica shirt everyday to school and wrote lyrics   
with foul language, but was often seen sitting in the   
front row at Sunday mass with his mother in a nice suit.   
The same people who go out to see Black Sabbath and Motley   
Crue are the same people who handle world finance and   
international affairs, it is just their choice in music.

Studies that use music videos on the other hand show   
an increased tolerance in deviant behavior among both   
males and females. Music videos add reinforcement to what   
is being heard with the use of visuals. Now an extra   
sense is being used. Videos often exhibit sexual   
innuendo, acts of aggression, and gender stereotypes.   
Studies showed that men have a tolerable attitude as to   
what is violent and what is too far in sexual advances.   
Women have less of a tolerance. Studies have also found   
that heavy metal music and gansta rap influence mens   
attitudes towards women and that increased exposure to   
videos containing interpersonal violence against women   
tended to increase men's acceptance of rape myths such as   
she was dressing like she wanted it or she brought it   
on herself. In contrast, women's beliefs decreased and   
they felt that men were coming on too strong and being to   
aggressive.   
Another study conducted on college campuses in the   
northwestern United States involved men and women watching   
various music videos and then answering a set of questions   
afterwards. One video was The Way You Make Me Feel by   
Michael Jackson which depicts a man stalking a woman who   
then becomes infatuated in his game of pursuit. The other   
was The Stand by REM which only showed the band on-stage   
playing instruments. In questions answered after the   
videos men said it was necessary to pursue the woman to   
such an extent while women thought it was annoying and/or   
disturbing. Men scored higher on a attitudes for sexual   
overtones, while surprisingly women scored slightly higher   
on the acceptance of interpersonal violence. The studies   
did conclude that women who were often subjected to   
violent music videos were more accepting of violence than   
those who have not had constant viewing or listening to   
such lyrics and images. It also showed that men had a   
greater acceptance of sexual stereotyping and rape myths   
after being subjected to the videos.   
Many methods of behavior modification have been   
suggested in order to keep this music from causing harm or   
hurting anyone individuals. Many arguments can be made as   
to whether the music should be censored or if it is   
unconstitutional to do. The American Academy of   
Pediatrics recommends different types of behavior   
modification to combat the harmful effects of this music.   
One such idea is as simple as having parents be aware as   
to what their children are listening to, and to discuss   
anything they deem objectionable. This would be a   
positive way to relate emotions to the songs. Another   
idea proposed is labeling of content in compact discs. It   
would be labeled outside as to what the lyrics contained   
(i. e. language, sex, drugs). It has also been suggested   
that groups as well as individuals approach record   
companies, music studies, and artists and ask them to   
consider the ramifications of their music on their   
audience and market it accordingly and in a favorable   
manner. Ideas have been proposed to set up research   
studies to further investigate the effects of explicit   
music on the behavior of teenagers. One of the most   
effective ideas proposed is as simple as people accept   
that this music is an art form and a means of self-   
expression and emotional release and treat it as such.   
Just as with rock and roll and Elvis Presley people will   
always find something wrong with the music that others   
listen to.