

# Free essay on history of mario bros.

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## **Abstract**

The Mario Bros. franchise is one of the longest-running and most popular series of video games in the world, sparking a decades-long and billion-dollar media franchise that continues to this day. The series remains the flagship property of the Nintendo video game corporation, and there have been dozens of games in various series within the franchise. The history of the franchise parallels the history and evolution of the gaming industry itself, and the eponymous character Mario is a recognizable pop culture icon all around the world.

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Mario, a plump Italian plumber with a penchant for mushrooms and princesses, had his origins as the protagonist of the 1981 arcade game Donkey Kong. The game itself was created to help save the floundering Nintendo company; in it, Mario, then named only "Jumpman," had to navigate a platform consisting of slanted beams, ladders, and barrels being rolled down the building by Donkey Kong, a large ape who held a princess hostage at the top of the building. Mario's (and the player's) goal was to scale the building, avoiding the barrels, in order to save the princess. The

game proved to be a startling success in arcades around the world, and the name of Jumpman eventually became Mario, named after the landlord of the offices of Nintendo of America, who once asked for a rent payment that was overdue in the middle of a meeting (Mushroom Kingdom, 2012). The success of Donkey Kong spawned a sequel, Donkey Kong Jr., in which Mario once again fights a member of the Kong family, this time to save his father.

A pseudosequel for the Nintendo Entertainment System, Super Mario Bros., was released in 1985, and was the game that truly popularized Mario and brought him to a larger worldwide audience. The game popularized the side-scrolling platform game, and was the impetus for many sequels after this point. Its combination of diverse levels and addictive gameplay, combined with the then-impressive graphical prowess of the NES, made it a game that is still considered one of the greatest games ever made. It was thought to be essential in rescuing the video game industry, as the video game crash of 1983 and reviving console gaming as an economically viable enterprise. Two sequels to the game were released to similarly wide acclaim, while the third was featured heavily as a plot point in the film *The Wizard*, about a video game-playing savant attending a tournament.

With the advent of the Super Nintendo Entertainment System and the booming console industry of the early to mid 90s, Super Mario World was the first of many Mario games to make a big splash on the system, often being referred to as one of the greatest games of all time. Further acclaim and popularity came with the release of a racing game, Super Mario Kart, in 1992. This game became the third best selling Super Nintendo game of all time, and currently holds the title of top console game in history by the

Guinness Book of World Records (Ryan, 2011). The success of this game also allowed the franchise to see potential beyond mere platformers, as the Mario games have been adapted into RPGs, fighting games, children's puzzle games, and much more.

Each new generation of Nintendo consoles has featured a Mario game as its flagship title, from the Nintendo 64 (Super Mario 64) to the GameCube (2002's Super Mario Sunshine) to the Wii (Super Mario Galaxy), among others. The franchise has also branched out into film and television, with a children's cartoon and sketch show, The Super Mario Brothers Super Show, being released in the early 1990s, and a misfiring 1993 live action film, starring Bob Hoskins and John Leguizamo as Mario and Luigi. Both incarnations were relative failures when they were released, but Mario as a video game presence and icon remains firmly popular and high-selling. Mario is one of the most influential and commonly known video game characters in history; the games in which he is featured have become some of the most oft-played and culturally recognizable video games throughout the world. They have sold billions of copies worldwide, and have seen many different incarnations along nearly all of Nintendo's various consoles and portable gaming devices. To that end, he has become a symbol of the success and potential that the video game industry is capable of.

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