

# BAITING TEENS WITH R RATINGS

## Coming of Age

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Copy Editor

Though ratings are placed on movies, some only view them as recommendations. Teenagers under the age of 17 could find ways to view movies that may not be suited for their age. However, parents do have a place in managing what their underage teenagers watch. Are parents executing their restrictions sufficiently? Or are they on the extremes of both spectrums?

"As long as kids get good grades and don't stay out late, and in some cases keep the house clean, [parents] could care less what their child becomes," junior Ethan Spencer said.

If teens are mature and responsible, it does not seem to matter whether they are below the required age, since they will respond maturely and appropriately. Yet, this questions the purpose of having the age restriction, when the purpose of the limitation is to prevent those not mature enough, a characteristic that does not wholly rely on how old someone is, from viewing a movie.

Adolescence is the period when teenagers begin transitioning to adulthood. When they first begin, parents should prevent their children from being prematurely exposed to more adult themes. Later on, parents can become more lax, since their children are closer to adulthood and supposedly more sensible.

Guardians can also go to the other antithesis and be too restrictive. Technological devices teens commonly use have parental functions parents can change, ranging from password restriction to outright website blocking. Parents may also monitor their children closely, to the point where they control whatever they may see. This does not indicate that teenagers will cede their online social life, but that will more cautious to their doings.

Overall, parents should make an effort to watch what their children ogle at. However, a fine line rests between excessive sheltering and apathy.

"I am officially a grown up!" This is the mantra teenagers recite to their parents before watching an R-Rated movie. Research has found the destructive repercussions these "decisions" have on the youth today, but what makes these movies so appealing? What drives movie companies to produce such explicit films?

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## Rise of the R-rated Reels

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A new movie comes out in Hollywood, dubbed "Room C225 Never Existed." The movie, featuring stabbed and bloody teenage bodies, crude language and drug abuse is rated R for restricted. However, if it is rated R, why is it directed to a teenage audience?

Teenagers generally have more time to watch movies, especially during the weekends, when adults are still working and they are at home alone. The time a middle-aged adult with children has for leisure is about two and a half hours each week, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

On the other hand, according to the BLS, unemployed teenagers have an average of three and a half hours of free time each week, including weekends. This increases the probability of teenagers watching movies more often than adults watch movies.

However, R-rated films may contain strong profanity, graphic sexuality, nudity, strong violence, scariness, gore, and drug use. A movie rated R for profanity often has more severe or frequent language than the PG-13 rating would permit. The exposure teenagers get when they are given this amount of liberty endangers them to seek risky and inappropriate types of entertainment.

According to the Motion Picture Association of America, in 2012, rated R movies made the list of the top 25 films in the U.S. and Canada than in the year 2000. One cause could be because watching R-rated movies may be considered sophisticated and cool, which draws teenager to these movies. Word of mouth and movie reviews are also effective ways of selling movie tickets since people watch movies when they were formerly apathetic to the film.

# ATTENTION PARENTS

## Say Hello to my Little Violent Friend

DEREK WU Staff Writer

R-rated movies often target teenagers, even though they feature gore, violence and horror. Though many teenagers enjoy watching these types of movies, R-rated movies often have negative effects on the not-as-developed mind. In addition to psychological effects, health problems could also occur over time.

Published in an issue of *Prevention Science*, a scientific journal of the Society for Prevention Research, studies done by James D. Sargent showed that children under 17 who watched R-rated movies were more likely to seek feelings of sensation and excitement, which can lead to problems that include underage drinking and alcohol abuse.

Dartmouth Medical School and Sargent explain that teenagers who want to experience risky behavior often surround themselves with other teenagers who also have a higher sensation-seeking behavior. This causes delinquent like behavior and further desensitizes the person, encouraging more recklessness.

R-rated movies with violence also contribute to a tendency toward acts of violence in teenagers. As stated in the *ScienceDaily*, researcher Jordan Grafman conducted a study where teenagers were exposed to *World's Wildest Street Fights*, a collection of violent street fights. The boys in the study had been desensitized to violence after watching the movies. However, there are many factors to one's sensitivity to violence including violence in one's personal life and genetics.

"The risk would go up for being accepting of violent or aggressive behavior around you, which be often as devastating as actually committing the act, or potentially being more easily provoked," Grafman said.

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