

# THE FIGHT OVER FORTNITE

Find out why this popular video game is under attack.

BY TOD OLSON

## VOCABULARY

**streak:** series of wins or losses

**addictive:** causing a strong need to do something harmful over and over again

**obsession:** thing a person thinks about constantly

**menace:** dangerous person or thing

**seized:** used official power to take

**T**he Philadelphia Phillies are a baseball team. Last September, they were on a losing **streak**. Carlos Santana, their first baseman, thought he knew why the team was losing. Players went to the clubhouse in the middle of games. They put down their baseball gloves. They picked up game controllers. They played *Fortnite*.

The team lost its ninth game in a row. So, Santana grabbed a bat. He went into the clubhouse. He smashed the TV.

## Hooked on Games

In the past two years, *Fortnite* has become very popular. Around 250 million people around the world play it. They also watch gamers



GO TO  
WEB VIEW

### COULD YOU STOP PLAYING?

Some experts worry  
that too many kids  
are hooked on  
*Fortnite*.

like Tyler “Ninja” Blevins. He plays *Fortnite* live online. He says he earned \$10 million last year playing the game.

Some experts are worried about *Fortnite*. They say people are playing too much. Kids play in the middle of the night. They also use their parents’ credit cards to buy their characters clothing and tools.

Michael Rich is a doctor. He works with kids who can’t quit *Fortnite*. “They are not sleeping,” he says. “They are not going to school. They are dropping out of social activities.”

Prince Harry of England has even commented on *Fortnite*. He said the game was made to be **addictive**. He said that it should be banned.

## Place to Hang Out

But is *Fortnite* truly dangerous? This is not the first time that adults have worried about a teen **obsession**. In the 1950s, parents worried about rock ‘n’ roll music. They thought it might turn kids into criminals.

In some ways, *Fortnite* is like rock ‘n’ roll. It’s new. It scares many adults. But it’s





just a way for teens to hang out with their friends.

Kurt Squire does research on video games. He says that *Fortnite* can be addictive. But studies show that only 3 percent of gamers are at risk.

For other kids, *Fortnite* is just a fun activity to do with friends. When Squire was a kid, he built forts. He played war with his friends. Now kids do the same thing online.

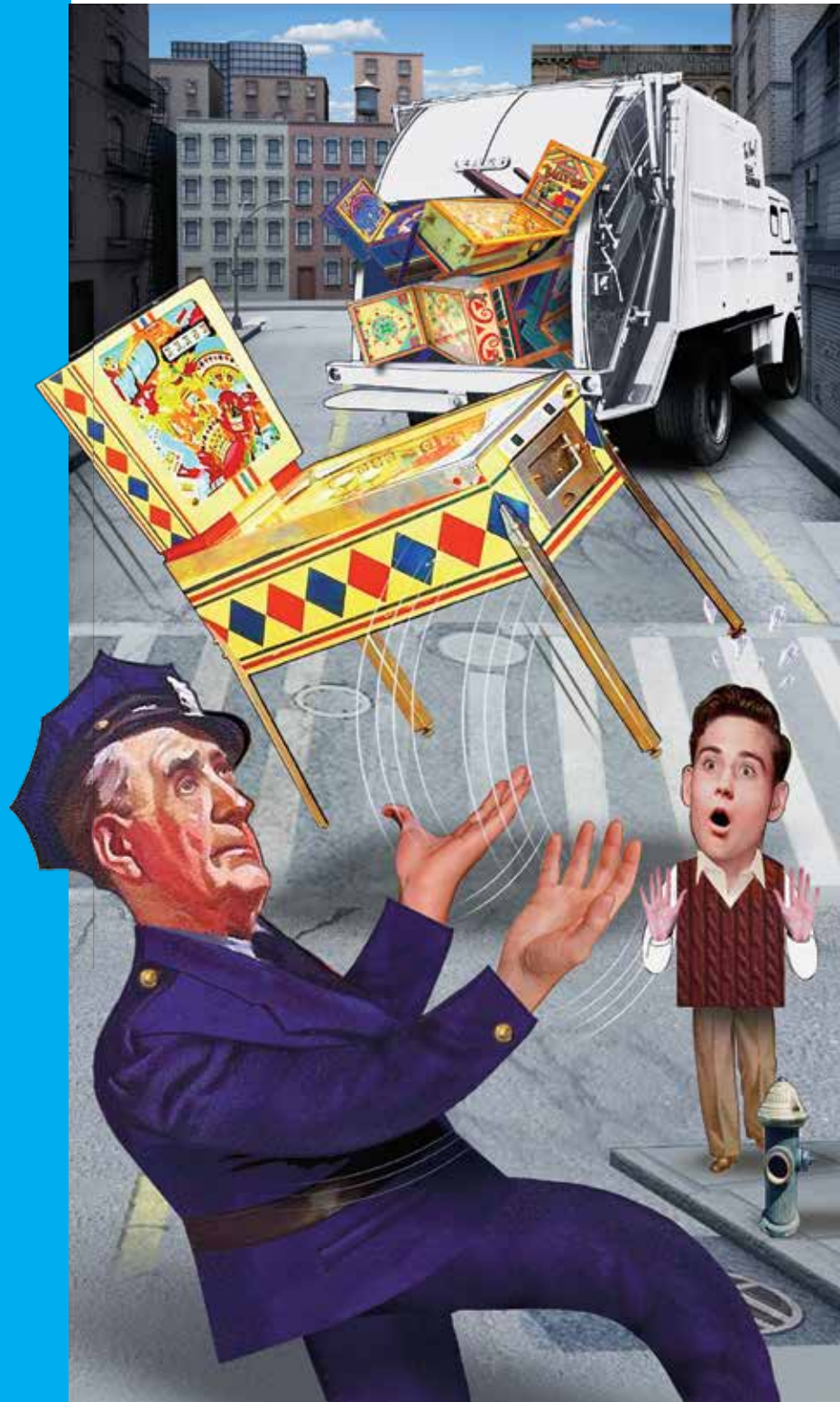
Squire's son Walt is a good example. He's in seventh grade. He plays *Fortnite* with his friends. They talk online while they chase enemies in the game.

Walt plays *Fortnite* 15 to 20 hours a week. But he plays basketball too. He likes to write. He gets good grades. "It's not like I'm avoiding real life," he says.

Still, experts agree that gamers need to find a balance. Sometimes, Walt feels like he's playing too much. So he stops for a week.

And the Phillies? We would never suggest smashing a TV, like Santana did. But the break from *Fortnite* might have helped. They started this season with a *winning* streak. •

# The Problem



# With Pinball

Guess what? *Fortnite* isn't the first game to make adults fear for America's kids.

It was a cold winter day in 1942. Americans were fighting in World War II. But the mayor of New York City was dealing with a different problem. He wanted to save kids from a serious **menace**.

The mayor sent police officers all over town. They searched restaurants, bowling alleys, and candy stores. What were they looking for? A game called pinball.

## A Game of Luck

Americans began playing pinball in the late 1800s. The game was simple. Players shot a ball onto a tilted

board. It dropped into a hole worth points. Or it rolled to the bottom for no points.

In the 1930s, pinball became more fun. Machines had flashing lights. Bells rang with each point. Some places gave out prizes. The game cost a nickel to play.

The world was in the middle of the Great Depression. Millions of Americans were poor. They didn't have jobs. They had free time. And they wanted cheap fun. They found it playing pinball.

But as pinball spread, it made enemies everywhere. Some people said pinball

players acted like addicts. All they wanted to do was play.

## Saving Kids

The mayor of New York City led the fight against pinball. He said kids were spending their lunch money on it. His police chief said that kids stole money to play. The mayor saw kids as victims.

The city council agreed. They made pinball illegal in New York. It was illegal until 1976. During that time, police **seized** 11,000 pinball games. What did they do with them?

They did what Carlos Santana did with that TV. They smashed them! •

ART BY CAROLYN RIESDALE

**ACTION  
ACTIVITY**

## Compare and Contrast

**GO  
FURTHER!  
FIND MORE  
ACTIVITIES**

How are these two games alike in some ways and different in others?

**WHAT TO DO:** Complete the sentences below using examples from the texts.

1. *Fortnite* is similar to pinball because

(Hint: Why did some people worry about pinball? Why do experts worry about *Fortnite*?)

2. *Fortnite* is different from pinball because

(Hint: What kind of game is it? Where do people play?)