



What are the representations of migrants and violence in videogames?

This educational card focuses on some specific videogames' representations of migration and violent actions showing how these fictional representations might (or might not) affect young players' perceptions of migrants/refugees and their understanding of migration and violence. Through the activities young people are invited to analyse two representations of migration, as well as to disclose and discuss further (and alternative) portrays of migrants.

Introduction (20 min)

The teacher introduces two very different videogames representing respectively the story of one immigrant and the experience of some refugees. The first is an educational videogame titled *Against All Odds*, which has been produced by the UN Refugees Agency (UNHCR). The second videogame, *Grand Theft Auto IV*, is an action adventure videogame developed by Rockstar North, a large company in the entertainment industry.

Handout 1* Grand Theft Auto IV (GTA 4)



Source: *Grand Theft Auto IV*, Rockstar Games, 2008.

In GTA4, the player plays the role of an immigrant from Eastern Europe moving to Liberty City in the USA, persuaded by the promises of a better life. Soon he will have to face problems with Albanian loan sharks and with the Russian mafia.

Handout 2* Against All Odds



Source: *Against all odds*, UNHCR (United Nations Human Rights Council), 2005.

Against All Odds is an internet-based educational videogame putting players through the experience of being a refugee.

Activity (1h)

The teacher organises the class into groups of four or five students, s/he provides students with the videogames handouts and s/he explains how to use the worksheet with the questions for the analysis of the videogames. In teams, students engage in a comparative analysis between the two videogames. In order to answer the question in the worksheet for analysis students read the videogame handout, they play online with *Against All Odds* (www.playagainstallodds.ca) and they watch to a brief trailer of *Grand Theft Auto IV* (YouTube).

Conclusion (40 min)

Each group reports its written answers on a common worksheet displayed to the whole class. Here the teacher invites students to comment and further elaborate some answers. The teacher chairs a plenary discussion in which students

Worksheet for analysis

1. Is this videogame intended to be realistic? What are the features that make the videogame realistic and/or unrealistic?
2. Does the videogame claim to tell the truth about migration? How does it try to seem authentic?
3. How does the videogame represent particular social groups? Are those representations accurate?
4. Does the videogame support particular views about migration and violence? Does it put across moral or political values?
5. Does the videogame affect your view of particular social groups or issues such as migration and violence?

as a whole class are asked to mention some examples of media narrative or biography of their knowledge in which migrants do not necessarily play the (exclusive) roles of victims or criminals.

About MEET

The European project MEET conducted a research action to adapt media education learning scenarios in intercultural context with the aim of promoting equity and tolerance. This research action resulted in an online toolkit including:

- 4 videos documenting pedagogical practices
- 6 ready-for-use learning scenarios
- Guidelines to support teacher in integrating media education in intercultural contexts

This educational card is an extract of the MEET learning scenario *Challenge violence and play your rights*.

Discover the whole toolkit on
www.meetolerance.eu/toolkit



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