

# Computer gaming: sport or not?

This is a classroom discussion about whether or not computer gaming can be considered a sport.

**Kam:** Okay, let's start with a definition. What does 'sport' mean? Well, according to the dictionary, it's 'an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment'. It takes training, effort and skill—and there's no mention of technology.

**Jarrah:** Kam's right. If you think about the differences between a high jumper and a gamer, the first totally relies on his or her body and on training which targets strength and technique—not just anyone can launch their body two metres into the air. But, for a gamer, how much simpler is it to work the technology, to work your fingers and thumbs? Millions of people develop that same ability just by sitting at home! Gaming doesn't require the years of hard physical work and sacrifice that real athletes endure.

**Ellin:** But that comparison ignores a key component of gaming. There's so much difference between the casual gamer, playing inconsequentially for leisure, and the professional gamer, who trains for competitions, develops strategies and engages in high-level intellectual processes. Gaming calls for thinking ahead and visualising what might happen, then responding to what does happen. You have to be alert and adaptable. How much of that's going on in the high jump?

**Travis:** I disagree with you about the high jump, Ellin. It requires athletes to be impeccably alert. But I definitely agree with your case for gaming. And there's another dimension I think we have to consider: 'e-sports', which millions of people participate in for entertainment and competition. Even as we speak there will be people all over the world competing in serious, complicated gaming challenges online. Not only that, but also huge audiences will be watching their every move, relishing the prowess on display! When you've seen the skill of these players in battle arena games and arcade fighter games, you can't help but think of them as sportspeople. They're elite competitors!

**Jarrah:** Yeah, some of your arguments are valid, but I'm not convinced. No one's given any evidence that gaming involves significant 'physical exertion'. Surely, it's that aspect of 'sport' that gaming can never fulfil, and that's why you can't classify gaming as a sport.