

A Guide to the Most Commonly Used Rating Systems in the United States**

Medium/Name	Evaluative Ratings (Recommendations & Warnings)	Content Indicators	Assignment (Who Decides?)
Movies/ Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) Ratings	G: General Audiences PG: Parental Guidance Suggested PG-13: Parents Strongly Cautioned R: Restricted NC-17: No One 17 and under admitted	None; reasons for ratings of recent films available at www.mpa.org ; reasons also available in some large newspaper ads and some television ads	Assigned by paid, anonymous panel of parents; possibility of appeal to Industry Panel
TV/ TV Parental Guidelines (V-chip ratings)	TV-Y: [All Children]* TV-Y7: [Directed to Older Children] TV-G: [General Audience] TV-PG: [Parental Guidance Suggested] TV-14: [Parents Strongly Cautioned] TV-MA: [Mature Audiences Only]	FV: [Fantasy Violence]* V: [Violence] S: [Sex] L: [Coarse Language] D: [Sexual Dialog or Innuendo]	Self-assigned by producer or distributor; designed to be applied to all programming except news and sports.
TV/ "E/I" Educational/Informational Programming	E/I (Various icons and indicators for different stations)	None	Self-assigned by television station
Music Advisories	"Parental Advisory: Explicit Content"	None	Self-assigned by producer or distributor
Video Games/ Electronic Software Ratings Board (ESRB) Ratings	eC: Early Childhood: Ages 3+ E: Everyone: Ages 6+ E10+: Everyone 10 and older T: Teen: Ages 13+ M: Mature: Ages 17+ Ao: Adults Only	Variety of phrases, e.g., "cartoon violence," "fantasy violence," "intense violence," "sexual violence" "comic mischief," "strong language," "mature sexual themes."	Assigned by Rating Board based on submitted tape and questionnaire
Arcade Games/ Parental Advisory System	None	Animated Violence, Life-like Violence, Sexual Content, Language (three levels of each: green: "suitable for everyone" yellow: "mild"; red: "strong")	Self-assigned by producer or distributor
Internet/ Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA)	None	Violence, Nudity, Sex, Offensive Language, Intolerance, Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Use, etc.	Computer-generated rating based on self-report questionnaire by producer

*[Material in brackets is not usually given with the ratings.]

**Adapted from www.yourmindonmedia.com

For further information on these issues, see Cantor, J. *"Mommy, I'm Scared": How TV and Movies Frighten Children and What We Can Do to Protect Them*. San Diego: Harcourt (1998) and *Teddy's TV Troubles*. Madison, WI: Goblin Fern Press (2004).

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