

Video games

Today, Nintendo is one of the biggest names in the world of video games, but the company had very humble beginnings. Established in 1889 by Fusajiro Yamauchi under the name “Nintendo Koppai,” the company began making and selling playing cards called Hanafuda in Kyoto, Japan. Hanafuda means flower card in English because the cards used flowers to represent numbers. Today Nintendo is a household name producing consumer electronics and hugely successful video games like Tetris, Donkey Kong, Super Mario, The Legend of Zelda, Pokémon, and Super Smash Bros.

In 1966 Nintendo went from being a playing card company to a toy manufacturer with Gunpei Yokoi’s invention of the Ultra Hand, an extendable arm that could grab things out of reach. Yokoi started his career with Nintendo as a maintenance man but was soon promoted to product developer because of his work with the Ultra Hand. He would later be known for creating the “Game and Watch,” an early version of the Game Boy based on calculator technology, and for creating the “Directional Pad,” the four-way finger controlled button that is still used today on game controllers, remote controls, and smartphones. He is also credited for designing the original Game Boy and being a mentor to Shigeru Miyamoto, who would come to be known as “The Father of Modern Video Games.”

In 1983 Nintendo launched the Famicom (Family Computer) video game system which suffered from unimpressive sales in Japan until Miyamoto created Super Mario Bros. The game was so popular that people rushed to buy the Famicom console. Soon after, other titles like Metroid and The Legend of Zelda further boosted sales. Following the success of the Famicom in Japan, Nintendo decided to try selling the system in the United States. At first, the console was not well received in America, but after redesigning the exterior and renaming it the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), sales went through the roof.

In 1989 the first Game Boy was released. The Game Boy Color followed in 1998 and Game Boy Advance came out in 2001. These portable game devices would become some of the most popular gaming systems ever to be created and are still widely used decades later.

At a time when most of Nintendo’s competitors were moving to disk-based systems, Nintendo kept to their original cartridge design and released the Nintendo 64 (N64) in 1996. The console itself was not revolutionary but is known as one of the greatest video game consoles of all time. The N64 sold around 32 million units worldwide and was released in a variety of colors and designs. It was not until 2001 that Nintendo released their first disc console, the Nintendo GameCube.

The 21st century gave rise to new technology which inspired new ways of gaming. In 2004 the company launched the Nintendo DS, their first touchscreen handheld system. 2006 saw the release of the Wii that utilizes motion sensors, and in 2011 the company entered the 3D market with the Nintendo 3DS. These days Nintendo continues to amaze its customers with products such as the Nintendo Switch, the 2in1 handheld system and console that can be played both on the go and on a TV screen. This revolutionary device shows that even after 100 years, Nintendo is still an innovative genius in the gaming world.

Sources: <https://www.lifewire.com/history-of-nintendo-729734>

<https://gizmodo.com/the-surprisingly-long-history-of-nintendo-1354286257>

Vocab Match

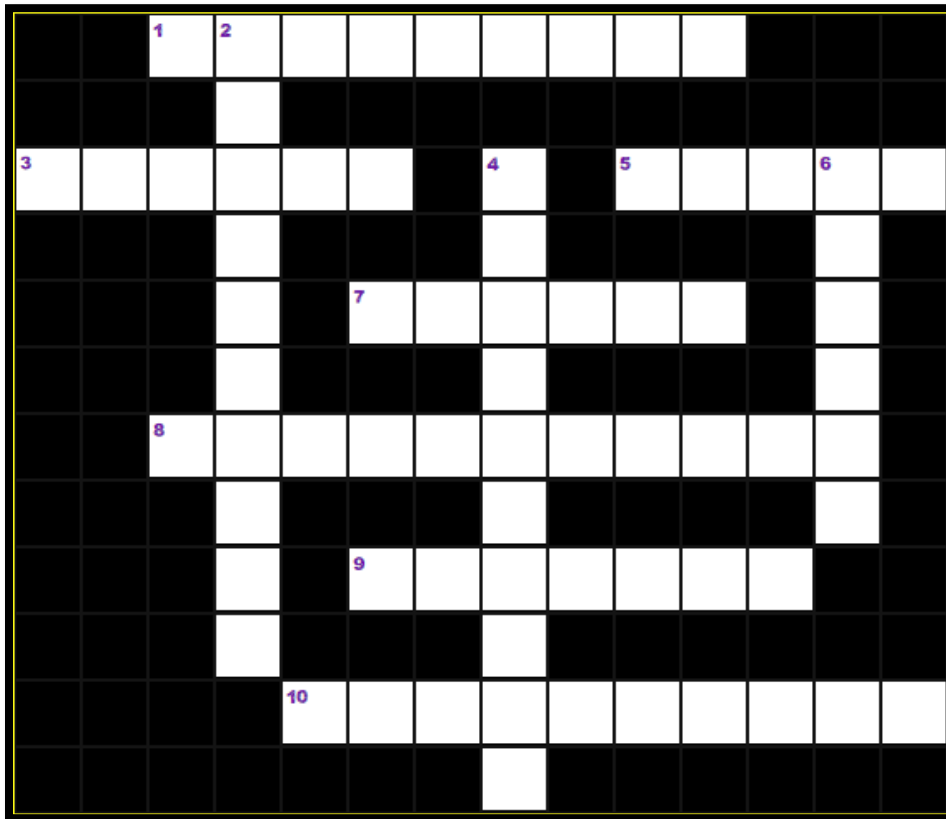
Name: _____

| Word | Answer | Definition |
|----------------|---------------|--|
| 1. humble | 1. ____ | a. verb- negative experience |
| 2. represent | 2. ____ | b. adjective- using new or creative ideas to solve a problem |
| 3. extendable | 3. ____ | c. verb- improve or increase |
| 4. maintenance | 4. ____ | d. adjective- can be made longer |
| 5. mentor | 5. ____ | e. adjective – basic or ordinary |
| 6. suffer | 6. ____ | f. noun- those fighting against others |
| 7. boost | 7. ____ | g. verb- to be a sign or symbol for something |
| 8. competitor | 8. ____ | h. noun- a person who helps those less experienced, possibly at work or school |
| 9. utilize | 9. ____ | i. noun- act of keeping something in good condition with checks and repairs |
| 10. innovative | 10. ____ | j. verb- to use well |

Discussion Topics

1. Do you think there should be restrictions (age, content, etc.) on video games?
2. What video games do you play? How often do you play?
3. What do think video games help players learn skills? What skills?
4. What are the negative sides to video games?
5. What is your favorite video company? Why is it better than others?

Nintendo



Hints!

ACROSS

- 1 verb- to be a sign or symbol for something
- 3 noun- a person who helps those less experienced, possibly at work or school
- 5 verb- improve or increase
- 7 adjective- basic or ordinary
- 8 noun- act of keeping something in good condition
- 9 verb- to use well
- 10 adjective- using new or creative ideas to solve a problem

DOWN

- 2 adjective- can be made longer
- 4 noun- those fighting against others
- 6 verb- negative experience

Quiz

1) What was the first product Nintendo sold?

- a. Flower Cards b. Flowers c. Toys d. Cars

2) What did Nintendo start selling around 1966?

- a. toys b. video games c. calculators d. remote controls

3) Why did Gunpei Yokoi change jobs?

- a. because he didn't like his old job b. because he moved to a new place c. because he was very smart d. because he was friends with his boss

4) Why is the "Directional Pad" an important innovation?

- a. it is a button b. it is still used today for many things c. it has four directions d. it was used in the Game Boy

5) What helped the sales of the Famicom in Japan?

- a. celebrities using the system b. lowering prices c. renaming the system d. the release of exciting games

6) What helped the Famicom console become successful in America?

- a. color change b. price change c. name change d. company change

7) When was the Game Boy Color released?

- a. 1989 b. 1998 c. 2001 d. 1997

8) What was Nintendo's first disc console system?

- a. Switch b. GameCube c. DS d. Wii

9) What was the first touchscreen system from Nintendo?

- a. DS b. Wii c. 3DS d. Switch

10) How long has Nintendo been in business?

- a. more than 100 years b. less than 70 years c. less than 50 years d. more than 300 years

Key

| Matching | Quiz |
|----------|-------|
| 1. e | 1. a |
| 2. g | 2. a |
| 3. d | 3. c |
| 4. i | 4. b |
| 5. h | 5. d |
| 6. a | 6. c |
| 7. c | 7. b |
| 8. f | 8. b |
| 9. j | 9. a |
| 10. b | 10. a |

PROJECT: summarize your favorite video game. Who are the characters, what is the object of the game, how do you win, what is the history of the game, who are the creators, what company/console was the game on.