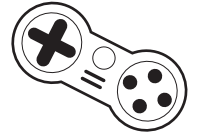# Opinion Essay: Anchor Paper

Read the essay. The essay has an introduction paragraph, three body paragraphs (in bold) and a conclusion paragraph. After reading the essay, follow the directions to identify the parts of an opinion essay.

<u>Video Games as Learning Tools</u>

Think about the last time you were in a class. Were you and your fellow students excited and engaged? Was it challenging but not too frustrating? If yes, then you're lucky, but it's not realistic to expect one teacher to maintain this for every student, all day long. Video games that are designed to help teach school subjects can be a huge asset in the classroom, improving engagement and learning for everyone.

Video games are designed to have features that make learning fun. Just like other kinds of games, players are challenged with a problem to solve, a goal or purpose. Sometimes there are other features like a limited amount of "lives" or time to complete the mission. There are unexpected surprises in games, like sound effects, great art, and fun themes. The thrill of winning or losing keeps learners on the edge of their seats!

Video games improve learning. They can focus on all kinds of different academic skills that boost learning, including reading, writing, math, geography, science, and social/emotional skills. In games, learners don't sit idly by and answer questions in video games, they manipulate characters and resources, and make choices. When games are designed around academic skills, learners will play the game and engage with the skill, perhaps without even knowing it. Games can be designed to encourage higher level thinking like analyzing, collaboration, and problem solving.

Last, education video games can really help kids who struggle. In many classrooms there is a pressure to look smart and never get the answer wrong. Video games do just the opposite. When you "fail" at a video game it's just seen as part of the process. You learn from it and try again, without the whole class watching. Most games move at the pace of the learner, whereas teachers usually move the class at one speed, with some finishing early and some never completing the work. When a student clicks "done" or moves the character to the next screen the game progresses, so the speed of the learning is in the student's hands.

Video games are a great learning tool. There are drawbacks, like cost of computers and finding educational games that are high quality, but considering the many benefits for learners, those can and should be overcome. Teachers and principals should find ways to integrate video game learning into students' school experience.

1. Circle the hook.
2. Circle the sentence that is the **Main Idea**, or **Thesis**. This is what the writer wants the reader to understand and believe.
3. Put a rectangle around each of the three **Supports**. HINT: The body paragraphs each have a main topic.
4. Underline **Supporting Details** in each of the body paragraphs.
5. Circle the two **Counter Points**.
6. Underline the **So What** with a squiggly line.