

FLASH POINTS

POWER ON!



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VIDEO GAME ADVANCEMENT

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You are the last defense between the Earth and an army of invaders. Aliens hover above you, then inch closer and closer. They shoot at you while you dodge and fire back at them, taking them out one by one. Can you defeat them in time to save the Earth?

No, this is not a real alien attack. It is 1978, and this is the most popular video game in Japan. Toshihiro Nishikado spent years creating an exciting new video game—one unlike anything people had seen before. The game is called *Space Invaders*. It is a two-dimensional top-down shooter game. In it, the player is located at the bottom of the screen. They must defend Earth from an army of aliens attacking from the top.

Most of the video games that came before *Space Invaders* were very simple and similar to each other. But now, *Space Invaders* offers something new.

Two years later, in 1980, *Space Invaders* arrives in the United States. It is just as successful as it was in Japan. Arcades buy as many copies of the game as they can get. People wait in lines for hours to play. They don't know this at the time, but *Space Invaders* is about to change the future of video games.



Studies have shown that adults spend just as much time playing video games as kids, and many families play together.

arcade: an indoor area containing coin-operated video games

DID YOU KNOW?
The first-ever video game was released in 1971. It was called *Computer Space*. It was similar to *Space Invaders*. But it was difficult to learn. Most people lost interest.

How and Why

The creation and use of new technology is a process. Many different people, events, and ideas come together when new technology is needed. Below are some of the things that led to the invention and success of *Space Invaders*.

The First Console

Televisions were becoming more common and more popular. People began to wonder what else they could do with a television screen. In the 1960s, people started to design electronic games. A man named Ralph Baer built the first gaming console. The console was a small box with controls like those at an arcade.



Pong

Pong was the first arcade video game. It came out in 1972. *Pong* was an electronic version of table tennis. In 1974 it was released as a home game, called *Home Pong*. It started the video game trend.





Losing Interest

Although people loved *Pong*, they got used to it quickly, and it became less popular. Many of the new games that were released after *Pong* weren't original. Most of them were different versions of *Pong*. The video game industry began to die out. Atari, who had made *Pong*, was looking for something new. If their next game succeeded, the company would survive.



Sci-Fi Fascination

Close Encounters of the Third Kind and *Star Wars* both came out in 1977. These two science-fiction films became very popular. Suddenly, science fiction was everywhere. People wanted more sci-fi. *Space Invaders* was exactly what they were looking for.

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