

Power of Play

Information for Students



The popularity of digital games has exploded. From playing games on your smartphone to connecting with gamers across the world, gaming has become part of our lives. The technology of games is now so good that you can spend more and more time in these online worlds.

According to a recent study, the total number of people around the world who play games is more than **1.2 billion!** That is 17% of the world's population. So it's important to take a closer look at the positive and negative aspects of online games:

Pros	Cons
Gaming can be a very social activity when playing against/with friends or online with other people	On the other hand, many games are for single players and can be isolating if played for a long time
Games can be educational, teaching you knowledge in a fun and playful way	When gaming you are constantly using your eyes, thumbs or wrists, often without a break. This could lead to strain
They can improve skills such as eye-hand coordination, problem solving, and strategic thinking...	Games do take a lot of hours to complete and can be quite addictive. It is important to find a balance when gaming
Online gaming gives you the opportunity to meet new people from around the world and chat to them while gaming	Talking to people you don't know online can be a risk as you can never be 100% sure who you are talking to. Be careful when giving out personal information of any kind

The variety of games on the market is growing daily and. You can play games of all kinds from cooking games to action games, and many of them are
FREE

Although many games are free, a lot of them have ways for you to pay for things in the app like upgrades, to unlock levels, or get extra lives. This can get quickly get expensive

You may also be tempted to play games above your age rating. This can lead to you seeing inappropriate or upsetting content.

For more information on these pros and cons, check out the following links:

www.childnet.com/ufiles/Online-gaming.pdf

www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/hot-topics/gaming

www.getsafeonline.org/protecting-yourself/online-gaming

Multiplayer games

When chatting to other players on multiplayer games that you haven't met offline, be aware of the following:



Bear in mind that not everything they say is necessarily true (they might be a different gender or age...)



Never share any of your personal information (address, phone number, bank details...)



Don't get pressured into using your webcam when gaming or chatting if you're not comfortable doing so



If the person you are chatting to makes you feel uncomfortable in any way be sure to report and block them (most games have these options)

Multiplayer games mean that you can talk to lots of other players at the same time. But there can be pitfalls. If you are upset by any of the language or behaviour you come across, such as 'griefing' or cyberbullying, follow these steps:

-  Remember you can always leave that game
-  Report or block the player. This will mean that you can continue to play but can't be contacted by that player (most games have a guide to block or report bad gaming behaviour like 'griefing')
-  Talk to someone, such as a trusted adult or friend, who can help you
-  Mute your mic – this will mean that you can continue to play without the chat function
-  Contact NSPCC for help or further advice on 0808 8005002 or call ChildLine on 0800 1111

Frequent Use

Make sure you moderate the time you spend gaming. Gaming is there to have fun and help you gain different kinds of skills. Be aware that as soon as you are not in control of the game- and it is in control of you- you might want to think about limiting your gaming time.

Paying for add-ons

A lot of games are free, but there are things you can buy inside the game which can get expensive quickly:

-  Think twice before paying to unlock a level or getting extra lives – costs can quickly spiral out of control
-  Don't give away bank details – of you or a family member- without checking with a trusted adult first.

Age ratings

There is a reason that age ratings exist – they are designed to protect younger players and make sure they're not badly affected by the game's content. Make sure you look at the age rating before playing and keep an eye out for younger players who might not know what effect playing overage games can have.

More Info

www.antibullyingpro.com

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

www.childnet.com

You can call ChildLine anytime on 0800 11 11- calls are free and confidential. Visit www.childline.org.uk for more information.