

1 About this unit

UNIT SUMMARY

In this unit, children will learn the different ways that game developers ensure their games are successful and make money. They will discover different strategies to help guide them when making good choices about the games they play and then apply their knowledge to create a safe online gaming guide for families.

REPORTING ROUTES

In Year 5, children should know a range of ways to report concerns and inappropriate behaviour through:

- talking to a trusted adult
- calling Childline (0800 1111)
- clicking the CEOP button.

These points should be re-emphasised in any teaching and learning where children are working online.

If any safeguarding issues or concerns arise during this unit, you must follow your School Safeguarding Policy.

ONLINE SAFETY FOCUS

In this unit, children will:

- understand different business models for online games
- understand that accounts for devices are linked to real-life bank accounts
- understand that some features in online games and apps cost real money
- understand that research, parental controls and device settings are tools we can use to help us game confidently.

ENGAGING PARENTS AND CARERS

- Children will take what they have learned from this session to generate a safe gaming guide for families, which they will then share with grown-ups at home.
- Consider running an online safety session for parents to promote parental controls and device settings to disable **in-app purchases** to prevent unexpected expenses. Encourage parents to engage with their children's gaming habits and reinforce the need to keep passwords for devices private.
- Consider sharing web links on in-app purchasing and parental controls with parents and carers (see *Useful links*).

TEACHER KNOWLEDGE

- Many of the most popular apps now available include in-app purchases, whereby upgrades, special skills or items can be unlocked for a fee. Children are often unaware that they are making purchases or that this fee is real money that will come out of their parent's linked bank account.
- It is important to be clear that the business models described in this unit can change and that 'free' does not always mean free forever.
- Review the definitions of the following terms using the glossary on page 64: **free-to-play**, **in-app purchase**, **in-game purchase**, **paymium**.

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

Computing

- Use technology safely and respectfully, keeping personal information private; identify where to go for help and support when they have concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies.

2 Getting ready

ONLINE SAFETY PRINCIPLES

Think about how you can embed the online safety learning and outcomes from this unit within your whole-school online safety strategy through:

- whole-school e-team engagement
- online safety displays
- use of a website online safety area
- Twitter tweets. For example: 'This half term our Year 5 pupils are learning about how game developers make money through the use of in-app purchases.'
- a school newsletter. You may wish to paste the following advisory text for parents and carers into your school newsletter, or send home in book bags (see editable *Newsletter text* on My Rising Stars): 'This half term Year 5 pupils have been learning how game developers can make money through in-app purchases and that understanding this can

prevent unexpected app purchases (both for grown-ups and children). Children have created a safe online gaming guide for parents and have been asked to discuss the advice provided within this with their grown-ups at home.'

THINGS YOU NEED

- Interactive whiteboard

THINGS TO DO

- Familiarise yourself with the steps of this activity before running this online safety session.
- Double-check the content of all websites before sharing in class.
- Find an appropriate example of a free online game (via the App Store or Google Play) which has in-app purchases.



MY RISING STARS RESOURCES

- *Online gaming models* (.ppt)



OTHER RISING STARS RESOURCES

- This unit has links with *Switched on Online Safety Unit 2.6 – We are game raters*.



INCLUSION/THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Be aware that some children may not have any access to digital games at home. Reinforce the fact that this doesn't matter – it is still important for children to be aware of these concepts for any future contact they may have with such technology.
- If you become aware or suspect that some children have been making in-app purchases, discuss this with their parents or carers as soon as possible.
- You may wish to extend this unit and link it to the annual Childnet Film Competition. Entries must be submitted by mid-June.



USEFUL LINKS

- App Store Games: www.apple.com/uk/itunes/charts/free-apps/
- Google Play: <https://play.google.com/store/apps>
- Parental controls set-up for major devices: www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/devices-computers/

3 Running the lesson



Resources

- App Store Games: www.apple.com/uk/itunes/charts/free-apps/
- Google Play: <https://play.google.com/store/apps>
- *Online gaming models* (PowerPoint presentation)

Possible outcomes

- Children will use their knowledge of how game developers make money to create a safe online gaming guide to advise families.

Step 1: Introducing the session

- Explain to the children that in this session they are going to create a guide to help others use online games and apps safely and responsibly.
- Before they can do this explain that they need to think about how game developers make their games attractive to consumers, and ensure they sell well and make them money.

Step 2: Exploring different ways game developers make money

For this session, you may wish to project the *Online gaming models* PowerPoint presentation onto the interactive whiteboard.

- Ask the children if they have ever played games that are free to download (sometimes called **free-to-play**). How do they think a game developer can make money if a game is free? Explain that in a free-to-play game some features of the game are locked until they are paid for and the game can't be finished without payment.
- Talk more about **in-app purchases** in games; they allow players to buy things like upgrades, special skills or items to help them progress more quickly through the game. Discuss why players might choose to pay for these. Scribe children's responses on the interactive whiteboard. For example, players might like the game and are happy to spend money or they might be impatient and feel they need to buy more turns. They might even feel pressure to finish the game more quickly because friends are further ahead.
- Explain that another type of game is called **paymium**. In this case, a game costs money to buy and so players do not need to pay to unlock premium features. However, the game might have in-app purchases that don't affect the gameplay (for example, paying for our character to have an exciting costume).

Step 3: Avoiding making accidental in-app purchases

- Ask children to consider who pays for in-app purchases. Correct any misconceptions; in-app purchases cost real money which is taken from a real bank account linked to the device.
- Ask the children to discuss how we can avoid accidentally making **in-game purchases**, where real money is deducted from a bank account. Scribe their responses on the interactive whiteboard.
- If children haven't mentioned it, explain that one way is to research with grown-ups at home before downloading a game. Project an appropriate web page from the App Store or Google Play and highlight the relevant information about in-app purchases. Explain that sometimes we need to look carefully for this information to find out if games have in-app purchases.
- Another way is to manage parental controls and device settings. Explain that most devices, including tablets and games consoles, have settings that lock features (like the ability to make in-game purchases). Ask the children if they are aware of these features.
- Finally, remind the children that they should always speak to a trusted adult if they are unsure what to do within an app, even if they think they might have accidentally made a purchase.

Step 4: Creating a safe gaming guide

- Explain to children that they are now going to create a safe online gaming guide for families, which provides advice about safe and responsible use of gaming apps. The information they provide should be simple and clear.
- Encourage children to be creative – will their guide be on paper? Perhaps it will be a pdf that could be emailed out or uploaded to the school website? Maybe they'd like to write a blog post and provide the link via the school newsletter?
- Give children time to develop their content and, where possible, provide a platform for this content to be shared within the school community.

Step 5: Summing up

- Reinforce that game developers have different ways to ensure that their games are successful and make money. It is important to research online games and talk to family members before we download games so we understand if a game has any hidden costs. Parental controls and settings on devices are tools that help us to game confidently.

4 Taking it further

- Ask children to share their safe gaming guide with their grown-ups at home. Were their grown-ups aware of in-app purchases in games and how parental controls can be set to prevent in-app purchases?
- Children could design their own online game (or use a game they are already familiar with) and explain how as a game developer they would use in-app purchases to provide upgrades or unlock special features.