

Fortnite: the online game

We are aware that increasing numbers of young people worldwide are playing this online game. Please find below some key points about the game and some potential risks it may present. Further information about it can be found at <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/fortnite-everything-you-need-know-about-online-game>

What is Fortnite?

- Fortnite, which is published by Epic games, is a game where players work collaboratively or by themselves to survive in an open-world environment, involving combat against other zombie-like characters controlled by the game or other people. Games age of 12+
- Fortnite's most popular mode is its standalone free-to-play multiplayer platform, Fortnite Battle Royale. This sees up to 100 players enter an online game, competing individually or as part of squads of up to four, to be the last player standing within a constantly decreasing battle arena.

Why is it so popular?

- Fortnite is **free** and widely available on all major consoles, PC and Macs, with tablet and phone versions soon to come, meaning it could hardly be more accessible for children.
- The gameplay is **simple** but extremely immersive. Multiplayer games last up to 30 minutes, and players can quickly re-enter a new game, making long sessions extremely easy.
- It is attractively designed, and with **weekly updates and challenges**, the game is constantly evolving so maintaining its powerful allure.
- Added elements, such as an in-game currency – V-Bucks – allow players to complete **challenges** for rewards.
- The game has a **large social media following** via video and streaming apps such as YouTube and Twitch. With such a large cultural following, many children may feel compelled to play to keep up with friends and peers.

Things of which you need to be aware

- Fortnite requires players to create an account in order to play. Children will be required to give an **email address**, which they will subsequently have to verify, and a username.
- It is **easily addictive**, there are reportedly over **45 million players**
- There are in-game purchases, which require **payments by cards**
- It has unmoderated **chat functionality** – as players are open to communications, either by voice or on-screen, from anyone they are playing against. As with other games with chat functions, children may be at risk of exposure to inappropriate language, extremism or, in extreme cases, grooming.
- Young people are selling their statistics to each other

How to help your child stay safe whilst playing

- Speak to them about what is an appropriate amount of gameplay, and when. It is also important to understand the immersive element of the game and to respect that they may be emotionally invested in a game. Bear in mind that multiplayer games last only up to 30 minutes, so setting suitable amounts of play is easy without pulling the plug on their game.
- Use the feedback tool on the Game if you have a concern about a conversation in the chat room
- Contact CEOP
- Turn on YouTube's restrictive mode to block inappropriate content