



What is Fortnite?

Fortnite: Battle Royale (usually just called Fortnite) is a free to play Player vs Player game available on X-Box One, Playstation 4 and PC. A mobile version has been released for iOS but access is limited.

Released in 2017, Fortnite has broken numerous records and has overtaken Minecraft as the most watched video game on YouTube. As the game is both free and rated PEGI 12, it has a huge following amongst children of all ages. It has become the latest gaming 'obsession' and media reports have highlighted parental concerns over their children becoming addicted to playing.



You start the game by jumping onto an island with 99 other players and try to become the last player standing. As the game progresses, the playing area gets smaller and smaller as a storm closes in. Players collect a range of weapons such as handguns, shotguns and rocket launchers from chests dotted around the island, aiming to use them against opposing players.

Resources such as wood, brick and steel can be collected and used to build structure to protect yourself against other players, or to obtain hard to reach chests.

The game offers 3 standard playing modes and will occasionally feature limited events.

Solo Mode—This is the single player option where you are against 99 other players.

Duo Mode—You and a 'friend' play against other duos. You communicate with your colleague through a headset

Squad Mode—You and 3 other 'friends' can play against other squads. As a squad, you can communicate through a headset

Do age restrictions apply?

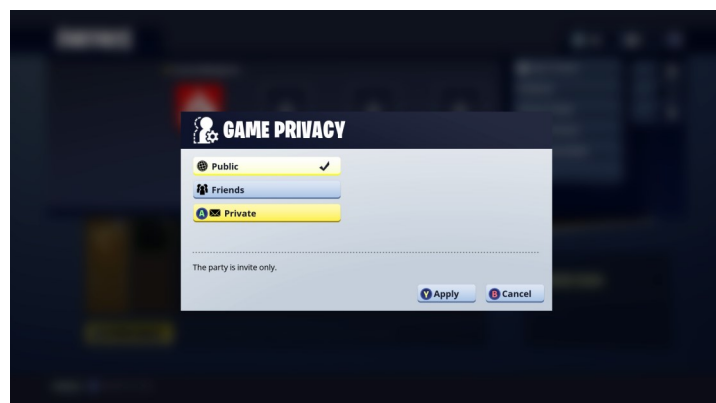
Fortnite is rated as a PEGI 12 for frequent scenes of mild violence. While the main purpose of the game is to shoot your opponent, the violence has been described as 'cartoony'. Other online services required to play the game (such as X-Box Live, PSN, Twitch) may have different age requirements.

Are there any privacy settings/controls?

You can be randomly matched against 99 other players, however, some game modes give you the ability to play and communicate with your teammates. If you don't have any 'friends' online to play with, the game will match you with other random players. This ability can be turned off by selecting 'No Fill' before you start the game. The only other privacy option is to set your 'party' (the other players in your squad) to private so that other players have to be invited.

There is a reporting option available if a player is being abusive or disruptive and players can be blocked through X-Box Live or the PlayStation Network.

Fortnite does include an option to link your game to a live streaming service such as Twitch, allowing you to broadcast the game you are playing live (including your voice chat). This can be disabled in the game settings on the lobby screen before you start the game.





Things to think about

Strangers

While many children and young people love the ability to play with and against random players online, there are certain risks to communicating with strangers online. While Fortnite is a 12 rated game, many players are older teens and adults who may not always behave in an appropriate way or with appropriate language.

Encourage your children not to add any strangers they've played with on Fortnite as online friends and ensure they limit the amount of personal information they share. It's important to remember that there are individuals who may pretend to be friendly or offer to help them play the game better in order to create a friendship. Even if someone is really nice while playing online, they are still a stranger and should be treated the same way as they would treat a stranger in the street – we don't have to be rude, just careful what we share with them.

Taking a break

While video games can sometimes be a positive experience, too much of anything can be a bad thing. Many children have spoken about becoming frustrated or angry when playing so encouraging regular breaks when playing or limiting the amount of time they spend playing the game each day can be hugely beneficial. Games consoles can be set up to allow parents to enforce time limits on devices, a guide to setting up parental controls can be found at www.internetmatters.org



Abusive behaviour

As Fortnite is a competitive game, there are players who sometimes get frustrated or angry when they win or lose. Playing as a member of a duo or in a squad means that individual mistakes may be heavily criticised and behaviour can sometimes turn abusive. The chat function can be turned off within the game but it is quite a critical element of working as a team so if you feel comfortable for your child to play the game and communicate with their teammates, always ensure they know how to block other players, mute them on the chat if needed and report any abusive behaviour through the game.

Micro Transactions

While Fortnite is free to play, there are elements of the game which can be bought, with real world money. Fortnite uses a currency called 'V-Bucks' which can be purchased within the game and then spent on cosmetic elements of the game such as skins (changing the look of the player) and emotes (animations which characters can perform).

If you have linked a debit or credit card with your PC or console, make sure that it asks for a password to complete every purchase to make sure you don't end up with an unwanted bill at the end of the month!



If you have concerns about the immediate safety of a child, you can call Lincolnshire Police on 101 or, in an emergency, dial 999