



Gooseberry Parent



Fortnite – Battle Royale (PEGI Rating 12)

What is Fortnite?

Fortnite brings new meaning to 'fighting your own battles'. This online game is a live, military-themed, multiplayer adventure where players go PvP (Player vs Player) to compete and battle against each other for ultimate survival. The winner of each battle is quite literally the last person standing. Fortnite enables up to 100 players to freely connect and communicate at random (depending on the device and platform used) in a fast-paced gaming environment.

It's no surprise that this 'free', 'survival of the fittest' combat and strategy game, is a firm favourite amongst many gamers. The exciting and thrilling game play leaves players eager for more action but the desire to become victorious can be expensive, with costly in-app purchases (with 1000 V-Bucks of in-game currency selling for over £9 - April 2018).

Wacky 'character skins' and dance moves are fun to watch and play around with and there is kudos attached to having the latest clothing and items (purchased) to help improve gaming performance and character originality. Matches can last up to 20 minutes, this can be helpful to know if establishing time limits. Consider allowing your child time to finish the game, to avoid losing points and leaving team mates in the lurch.

On top of this are the frustrations that come with playing in a gaming environment that physically shrinks, forcing players into combat, with the guarantee that one of them will be 'eliminated' at the hands of their opponent.

The game play is at times chaotic and can be an assault on the senses. It uses 'fight or flight' to up the ante, creating high levels of stress, tension and emotion. Some people may view this as excitement.

Fortnite is available to download for most gaming platforms and most mobile devices. If your child is not playing it, then their friends probably are. Whether it's playing solo, in a duo or in a squad, battle lines have been drawn.

The following information is based upon the iOS mobile version of Fortnite unless otherwise stated.

Key Features of Fortnite

Signing Up and privacy

- Playing Fortnite on compatible devices, requires an account. Registration is free.
- Fortnite has a PEGI rating of 12 (for more information on PEGI ratings please [click here](#))
- Accounts need personal information for set-up – Full name, email address. You will also need to create a password.
- Age verification is not part of the sign-up process and this personal information is not asked for.
- Users must create an in-game name, that will identify them on-screen.
- Depending on the device, players can chat to other players over voice and message chat.
- In signing up and creating a Fortnite account you automatically agree to the '[Terms of Service](#)' and the '[Privacy Policy](#)'.



Expected content, in-game chat, friends and privacy

- Characters use weapons for close PvP combat.
- Contains scenes of slight graphical violence between fantasy characters, using weapons collected in the game.
- Fortnite can be played as a 'solo' player, in a 'duo' or in a 'squad'.



- Players create their squads by sending invite codes to existing friends or, depending on the device, team up with random players or create 'parties' if playing on a console.
- Unless purchased separately, players play random characters from standard templates. These cannot be personalised.
- In-game chat can enhance the gaming experience. It allows players who are in teams to co-ordinate their play.
- In-game chat is open to misuse and enables some players to make inappropriate contact. It is important to report such in-game chat and behaviour.
- The capability for in-game chat is different depending upon the device you are using and the source from which you have downloaded the App. For example, in-game chat is currently (officially) not possible on some mobile devices but is possible if it is being played on a games console or PC. **Be aware that there are unofficial workarounds for in-game chat on mobile devices.**
- Fortnite accounts can be linked to Facebook. Avoid sharing data and linking accounts as this can put the privacy and security of your personal information at risk.
- Game privacy can be controlled. The privacy level is default set to Public, which means that any player can contact you via your in-game name. Other options include: allowing friends (friends of friends can also be managed) and private.

In-app purchases

- Like many online games, it takes time to earn rewards. Fortnite tempts players to purchase extras in the online store.
- Be aware that V-Bucks are expensive and they do not go far.

Things worth knowing

- Unfair play, upsetting behaviour and inappropriate contact can be reported easily in the game but you will need precise information about the other player (for more detailed information [click here](#)).
- When reporting another player, it is useful to take a screenshot and use their in-game name (ensuring it is correctly spelt).
- Fortnite has a clear **code of conduct** that you agree to follow when you sign up.
- Once you have started playing, it may be difficult to stop. The concept and game play has many players hooked.
- Playing Fortnite can create high levels of stress for players. Managing emotions and reactions can be a problem.

Enjoying Fortnite safely and managing the risks

If you have decided that it is appropriate for your child to download and play Fortnite, consider the following:

- **Signing Up** - Children must be aged 12 or over to create an account and play Fortnite. There is nothing to prevent a child under 12 from creating an account. If it is appropriate for your child to have an account and play, encourage them to keep login details and passwords secure and share them with you.
- **In-game Names** – Use a creative and appropriate in-game name to protect the personal details and identity of your child.
- **Privacy Settings** – Make accounts 'private' to help reduce the risk of being contacted by random players.
- **Friends** – If playing in a 'squad' or would like trusted friends to be able to contact and connect, select the 'Friends' option in the on-screen 'Privacy' options. Avoid allowing 'Friends of Friends'.
- **In-app purchases** – Players are understandably tempted to buy 'character skins' and accessories but these are expensive. Disable or manage 'in-app' purchases to avoid buying items from the online store.



- **Adding Friends** – Encourage your child to play in a ‘squad’ or ‘party’ with friends who they know and trust in real life.
- **Know the capabilities for your device** – Although the game is the same, the settings and features for communicating and connecting with people are different for different devices and platforms. Take time to find out what is and is not possible to do on the device that is being used. Use the appropriate privacy settings to help manage the ability to communicate and connect with people.
- **Screen time** – Establish a realistic length of screen time and with and stick to it.
- **Managing emotional wellbeing** – Monitor the reactions and behaviour of your child during and after playing. Fortnite can be stressful.
- **Communicate your expectations** – As a parent, it is your responsibility to make clear what is and is not acceptable online behaviour. Allowing your child access to online apps like these, requires guidance and clear boundaries, for their own wellbeing. Supervision may also be appropriate.
- **Modelling positive and safer online behaviour** – Safer behaviour online starts with us as adults. Following basic safety suggestions and demonstrating these will help your child to follow in your footsteps.
- **Do your homework** – Take time to read Privacy Policies and Terms of Use to find out how app developers use personal information. You can also learn about “acceptable use” of the app and find advice on securing online accounts and managing privacy settings on devices. Share these with your child to help them understand their responsibilities.
- **Download and use the app** – Having a go yourself can help you understand how the app works and how to secure an account. Remember: Model positive gaming behaviour for your child if you are playing Fortnite.
- **Read the reviews** for the app and pay attention to updates. This will give you an idea of what other people are saying about it and what potential risks there may be.
- **Making an informed decision** – As a parent you will know your child enough to decide whether to allow them to play online games. Fortnite is designed to be fun and appealing and it is not difficult to see why it is so popular. By following the steps outlined above, you will be better able to ensure that your child is better protected online.

Play online games with friends...but do it safely! Let battle commence.

