

Meet ScratchJr

Lesson at a glance

Open by linking everyday apps to ordered steps, like a recipe. Model the full ScratchJr cycle on the IWB: new project, one character, green-flag start, move block, then a pop or looks block. Pairs open the app, add a character, and snap that short sequence so the character moves and makes a sound. Tablets close before pupils draw the character, block line and result on the Investigation Journal page, then talk about order and fixes.

Learning objectives

- Open ScratchJr and add a character with support
- Snap a short block sequence so the character moves or makes a sound

Before the bell – prep

Charge tablets, unlock them, and open or install ScratchJr beforehand; set volume low. One tablet per pair is ideal. No pupil tablets? Mirror one device to the IWB and let pairs take turns calling taps. Have charge points ready for collection after coding.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
tablet with ScratchJr installed	1	group	school kit	one tablet or laptop with ScratchJr driven by the teacher on the IWB, with pairs taking turns to choose the next block
IWB or large display to mirror ScratchJr	1	class	classroom	gather the class close around one large tablet held by the teacher
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	classroom	a blank A4 sheet headed with character, blocks, what happened

Safety watch-point

Handle tablets with two hands; keep leads and chargers clear of walkways. Close or collect devices before drawing so live screens do not pull focus.



Teaching moves

- **Watch how ScratchJr works:** Drive ScratchJr on the IWB and think aloud through wonder → predict → try → observe → think. Snap green flag, move-right, then pop; run it once. Ask which block comes first and what happens if move and sound swap. Stress the character only does the blocks we snapped, left to right.
- **Open ScratchJr and add a character:** Release tablets only now. Cue calmly: open ScratchJr, tap +, choose one character, leave blocks alone. Sit with pairs stuck on the home screen and point back to the IWB model. On the single-device path, rotate pairs calling the next tap while the class coaches.
- **Make it move and pop:** Set pair roles: one chooses the next block, the other snaps; swap after the first run. Keep the goal to green flag + one move + one sound. Midway, pause and run one clear working line on the class device so everyone sees success. If most pairs still have no run, finish on the board with pupils calling blocks — do not overrun drawing time. Collect or close tablets before pencils come out.
- **Draw what we made:** Screens off first. Prompt: draw the character, the blocks in order (simple coloured shapes are fine), and what happened. Pairs who only watched the IWB still draw the class sequence — say that aloud so nobody freezes.
- **What we noticed:** Display-only talk. Revoice: the character follows blocks in order; a gap or wrong block is a bug we can fix. Link briefly to apps being built from steps like these. Confirm tablets are on charge.

What it should show

A short snapped line — green flag, one move, one sound — should make the character move then pop when the green flag is tapped. Odd results usually mean a gap between blocks, a missing green flag, or too many blocks so the character leaves the stage. Celebrate one short working run over a long broken line.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **The character guesses what to do, or does things we did not program.** — Point at the snapped line on the board and trace left to right with a finger: it only does these blocks, in this order. Delete one block, re-run, and show the action disappears.
- **Blocks sitting near each other will run even if they are not snapped tight.** — Show a gap on the IWB, tap the green flag (nothing or only part runs), then snap them flush and re-run so pupils see the join matters.
- **Order does not matter — move and sound can go in any sequence.** — Swap move and sound on the class device and run both versions. Ask what happened first each time so pupils hear that order decides the story.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Sit with the pair for the first snaps and point to the named green-flag, move and sound blocks on the IWB model. • On the single-device path, let them call one tap at a time while you drive; they still draw the class sequence in the journal.	• After one working run, swap pair roles and try a different move block (e.g. hop instead of move right). • Ask: what would happen if we put the sound before the move?	• Once the character is on stage (still before free coding), change the background, then keep the same short working sequence. • Prompt a fair-test style critique: which block would you change to make the character do something different, and why?

Cross-curricular hook

Link to English oral language — pupils retell the sequence as a three-step recipe: first, next, then.