

technology

ScratchJr: make our character do a little dance

Lesson at a glance

Open with a quick unplugged three-move body dance (clap, turn, jump) so children feel order before any device. Model a ScratchJr line on the IWB—green-flag start, move right, hop, turn—then press the green flag and watch. The class calls three picture blocks for a shared dance. Pairs snap their own two-to-four block dance, swap two blocks, and notice the change. They draw the final order left-to-right on the Investigation Journal page and close with an oral stem about what happened first.

Learning objectives

- Snap three or four ScratchJr blocks together after a green-flag start, in their own order
- Press the green flag and watch the character act out the dance
- Change two blocks around and notice how the dance changes

Before the bell – prep

Charge enough tablets for one per pair (or plan two waves of ~10 minutes device time). Pre-open ScratchJr on each: fresh project, one character, simple background, Start on Green Flag ready, Motion tab open. Mirror ScratchJr on the IWB with the same palette. Have Investigation Journal pages and crayons ready for the draw step.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
tablet with ScratchJr installed	1	group	school kit	If only half as many tablets: two waves of about 10 continuous device minutes each so every pair completes make-dance then change-two-blocks before swapping; waiting wave does unplugged body-order practice with the teacher, not a simultaneous IWB character. Not one shared board turn for the whole class.
IWB or projector linked for ScratchJr modelling	1	class	classroom	large tablet held facing the class for the model
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	classroom	one A4 sheet of plain paper per child
crayons or pencils	1	pupil	classroom	shared pot of crayons per table

Safety watch-point

One charged tablet per pair with clear turn-taking; carry with two hands, no running, screens wiped and returned to the charge trolley at pack-away.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Stand where all can see. Do clap, turn on the spot, small jump; invite the class to copy twice. Keep tablets away. Ask: Did we do the moves in the same order each time? Link aloud: app makers snap picture instructions so characters move, just as we will.
- **Watch a three-block dance:** On the IWB, think aloud: wonder, then place Start on Green Flag, move right, hop, turn. Point to each picture and name it before asking which comes first. Press the green flag and notice aloud: it moved, hopped, then turned—same order as the blocks. Children watch only.
- **We choose the dance together:** Limit the palette to move, hop, turn and Pop (or one looks picture). Keep green-flag start first. Snap three blocks in the order children call, press the green flag, and ask: Did the character do what we asked, in that order? Fold watchers in with What will happen next?
- **Make your own little dance:** Name partners before any tablet is touched; one tablet per pair. Circulate for three checks in order: green-flag start on the left, two or three dance pictures snapped tight, then press the green flag. Kneel and fix snags with them. Ask: What order did you choose? Which move happened first? No target spot on screen.
- **Change two blocks around:** Whole-class model first: slide one dance block past another on the IWB; green-flag start stays left. Pairs then swap two dance blocks on their script, press the green flag, and answer Which move is first now? On a two-wave plan, keep make-and-change as one continuous device turn.
- **Draw your dance:** Hand out Investigation Journal pages and crayons while screens stay visible as reference. Prompt staller: Point to the first move on your screen, draw it on the left; what comes next? A scribbly two-or-three picture sequence left to right is enough. Collect devices only after drawing is under way.
- **What changed?:** Board stem: After we changed it, ____ happened first. Think-pair-share thirty seconds, then three or four pairs share. Revoice infant talk into clear sentences. Draw out: the character follows the blocks; changing order changes the dance; more than one dance is right. Oral only—no written reflection.

What it should show

After the green-flag start, the character runs blocks left to right: move, hop and turn in whatever order was snapped. Swapping two dance blocks changes which move happens first. If nothing runs, check green-flag start is first and snapped tight, blocks click together, the correct character is selected, and the green flag was pressed. Success is noticing order, not hitting a target.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **The character picks its own order for the dance.** — Point along the block line left to right as it runs and say: the order of the blocks is the order of the dance. Press the green flag again while tracing each picture.
- **Children press the green flag button but leave out the green-flag start block on the left, so nothing happens.** — Kneel beside the pair, place Start on Green Flag first, snap the dance pictures tight to it, then press the green flag together and watch.
- **An unexpected dance means they did it wrong.** — Praise the noticing: your order made that dance. Ask which move came first and affirm that different orders make different dances—more than one is right today.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Count two dance blocks snapped after the green-flag start, with the green flag pressed, as success; teacher kneels and helps snap tight rather than taking over. • For drawing, prompt one picture at a time from the still-visible screen: first on the left, then next beside it.	• Aim for three dance blocks and clear talk about which move came first after they press the green flag. • After swapping two blocks, say the oral stem with a partner: After we changed it, ____ happened first.	• Snap three or four dance blocks and explain the full order before and after the swap. • If space allows on the Investigation Journal page, draw the order before and after changing two blocks.

Cross-curricular hook

Links to Maths sequencing—first, next, last—as children order picture blocks left to right and name which move happened first.