

Meet ScratchJr

Lesson at a glance

Open by linking tablet games to ordered steps, like a recipe, then model the full ScratchJr cycle on the IWB: new project, add a character, snap green flag → move → sound, and run it. Pairs open ScratchJr, add one character, then snap the same short line and tap the green flag. Tablets close before journal time so pupils draw the character, the block line in order, and what happened. Close with display-only talk on order, first blocks, and simple 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, install or open ScratchJr, unlock devices, and set volume low before the bell. One tablet per pair is ideal; otherwise mirror one device to the IWB for whole-class calling. Keep tablets closed until pairs open the app themselves.

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	provided printable	a blank A4 sheet headed with character, blocks, what happened

Safety watch-point

Supervise tablet handling; set volume low; close or collect devices before journal time. Wipe screens and return tablets to charge at the end if that is school practice.



Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Hold up a closed tablet or point to the IWB. Ask what a picture block might tell a character to do, take two or three answers, then move on. Leave ScratchJr closed and block names unsaid so curiosity drives the watch.
- **Watch how ScratchJr works:** Drive ScratchJr on the IWB and think aloud through wonder, predict, try, observe, think. Open a new project, add one character, snap green flag → move-right → pop/sound, then run. Ask which block we start with 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:** Cue one step at a time: open ScratchJr, tap +, agree one character, leave blocks alone. Sit with pairs stuck on the home screen and point back to the IWB model. On a single-device path, rotate pairs to call 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. Celebrate a short working line over a long broken one; stop pair work and finish on the board if most pairs still have no run.
- **Draw what we made:** Screens off and tablets closed or collected first. Prompt: draw the character, the blocks in order (simple coloured shapes are fine), and what happened. Pairs who only watched still draw the class sequence from the board.
- **What we noticed:** Class talk only—no extra writing. Revoice: the character follows blocks in order; a gap or wrong block is a bug we can fix. Optional spoken home noticing: spot one app and ask an adult what job it helps with.

What it should show

Expect a short working line: green flag, then one move, then one sound/looks block; the character moves, then pops, in that order. Common fails: blocks not snapped tight, missing green flag, or too many blocks so the character leaves the stage. A pair with no run still records the class sequence shown on the board.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **Pupils think the character guesses what to do or acts on its own.** — Point to the snapped line on the IWB and trace left to right: it only does these blocks, in this order. Swap move and sound on the board and run again so they see the change.
- **Pupils leave gaps between blocks or skip the green flag, then say ‘it doesn’t work’.** — Name the snag aloud—gap or missing start—and have them push blocks until they click, with green flag first. Run once to show the fix.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Sit with the pair for open → + → one character, pointing to the IWB model; they may only watch the first snaps then copy the class line. • Accept a drawing of the board sequence if their own run did not work yet.	• After one successful run, swap pair roles and try one change (different move or sound) while keeping green flag first. • At the mid-step gather, answer 'Are the blocks in a good order? What would you try next?'	• Once the short line works, change the background still using only ScratchJr tools already in use—no extra blocks required before the first success. • In the talk, explain a fix they made (gap, order, or missing green flag) in their own words.

Cross-curricular hook

Link to English oral language: pairs explain the block order and the fix they tried, using first / next / then.