

technology

ScratchJr: a little story with two characters

Lesson at a glance

Open with a robin-and-hedgehog story and ask who goes first and what the second character waits for—no tablets yet. On the IWB, contrast both characters on green flag (both move at once) with Start on Tap → say → Send Message on the first and Start on Message → move on the second. Pairs open a shared two-character starter project and build that order, then record question, prediction, what happened and one order fix on the Investigation Journal page. Close by sharing two or three order bugs and linking to turn-taking in apps.

Learning objectives

- Program two ScratchJr characters to act out a short story in order
- Debug timing so the story runs as planned

Before the bell – prep

Before the bell: open ScratchJr on the IWB, place two characters on a simple background, and save that as a shared starter project every pair will open. Charge one tablet per pair. Coloured card ready only if devices fail and pairs act the story on the carpet.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
tablet with ScratchJr installed	1	group	school kit	teacher drives ScratchJr on the IWB while pairs take turns, or pairs act the story with a coloured card as the message then one pair builds on the board
Investigation Journal page	1	group	provided printable	plain paper; pairs record the question, their prediction, what happened, whether the second character waited, and one fix or check of the order
device with ScratchJr for IWB modelling	1	class	school kit	laptop mirrored to the class display
three-step support story beats	1	group	provided printable	write the three beats on a sticky note or mini whiteboard for the pair



Safety watch-point

One tablet per pair; both partners seated so they can see and take turns. Pack away carefully—charge or plug in per school routine. No other hazards.



Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Keep tablets away. Tell the robin-and-hedgehog story in one or two sentences, write both names on the board, and ask who goes first and what the second waits for. If time is tight later, skip a second character pair and finish in two minutes.
- **Two characters, one story:** Project only the short board text. Hold up or project the yellow Start on Tap block, then a matching-colour Send Message / Start on Message pair, so Stage 2 pupils see the icons with the words. Keep green flag clearly distinct from Start on Tap.
- **Watch the two-character story:** Think aloud one contrast only: green flag on both (muddle), then rebuild Start on Tap → short say → Send Message on the first and Start on Message → move on the second. Ask: starting together or one after the other? Do not demo mismatched colours here—save that for circulating.
- **Plan and build your mini-story:** Pairs open the shared starter and take turns. Voice the three-step support story on the board. Circulate for both-on-green-flag, mismatched colours, wrong facing, and characters too far apart. Prompt: Who starts? What same-colour signal tells the other to go? Protect the full seventeen minutes.
- **Record your story:** Tablets to the side; one shared Investigation Journal page per pair. Work the printed headings—question, prediction, what happened, did the second wait, one change or check. Prompt full sentences aloud if writing is slow. Keep at least three or four minutes even if the build overran.
- **Share the fix:** Invite two or three pairs only. Revoice: the same-colour message kept the order. Celebrate pairs who checked and found order already right as well as pairs who fixed a bug. Link briefly to apps and games that wait for a touch or signal.



What it should show

A successful run: touch the first character; it speaks once, sends one coloured message; the second starts on that same colour and moves toward the first—order, not both at once. If the second never starts, colours usually differ or the send is missing. If both move together, both still have green-flag start. Characters that never look like they meet are often too far apart or facing the wrong way.



Misconceptions & interventions

- **Both characters need Start on Green Flag, so they both run when we press go.** — Point back to the IWB muddle: green flag on both fires together. Rebuild with Start on Tap on the first only and Start on Message on the second, then run from a tap.
- **Any message colour will wake the second character.** — When a pair's second character never starts, freeze the screen and match the send and receive blocks side by side—same colour only. Have them change one block and re-run once without other edits.
- **If the story is wrong, keep adding blocks instead of fixing when the message is sent.** — Prompt plain-word checks: too soon, wrong colour, or message in the wrong place. Ask them to run once without changing anything and say who moved first.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Retell the three-step support story with the pair and stay on the shared starter: tap → short say → send; matching start-on-message → a few move steps only. • Optional second journal copy; scribe short oral answers onto the shared page.	• After the order works, name one order bug they fixed in plain words (too soon, wrong colour, message in the wrong place) on the journal page.	• Add a short reply from the second character after it arrives—still one message chain. • Fast finishers sketch one tiny improvement (e.g. face the friend) on the journal rather than opening a new project.

Cross-curricular hook

Links to English oral language: pairs retell their mini-story in order—who spoke first, what signal came next, who moved.