

technology

ScratchJr: a little story with two characters

Lesson at a glance

Hook with a robin-and-hedgehog turn-taking story and ask who goes first. Name Start on Tap and same-colour Message blocks on the IWB, then demo the muddle of green flag on both versus tap-then-message order. Pairs open the class starter project and build first speaks → send message → second moves. They record First / Blocks / Bug on the Investigation Journal page, then share one order fix in a short talk.

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 lesson, open ScratchJr on the IWB and save a shared starter project with two characters already on a simple background with a gap between them. One tablet per pair. Print the three-beat story strip for support pairs. Plain paper with the three journal stems if the Investigation Journal page is not ready.

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 pupils seated so the device cannot slide off the desk. Pack away carefully and charge or plug in per school routine.



Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** No tablets yet. Plant the robin chirps, hedgehog toddles story (or cat and dog). Write the two names on the board and ask who goes first and what the second waits for. Keep to about two minutes if build time is tight.
- **Two characters, one story:** Project only the short board text. Point to the real yellow Start on Tap block, then a matching Send Message / Start on Message pair. Stress that green flag on both makes everything fire at once; today the first starts on tap and the second starts on the message.
- **Watch the two-character story:** Use the pre-placed characters. Briefly show green flag on both (both move at once), then rebuild once: Start on Tap → short Say → Send Message; second uses Start on Message same colour → move forward. Ask: starting together or one after the other? Stay inside five minutes.
- **Plan and build your mini-story:** Keep the three beats on the IWB. Pairs open the starter, agree who speaks and who moves, build, and run by touching the first character. Circulate for green flag on both, mismatched colours, wrong facing, or characters too far apart. Prompt: change one thing and rerun. Protect the full build block.
- **Record your story:** Tablets to the side. One shared Investigation Journal page per pair: First..., Blocks we used..., Bug we fixed or how we checked the order.... Prompt full sentences aloud if writing is slow. Keep at least 3–4 minutes even if the build overran.
- **Share the fix:** Invite two or three pairs on a bug and the fix, or how they checked order with no bug. Revoice that the same-colour message kept the turn. Link briefly to apps and games; avoid a full show-and-tell.



What it should show

When the first character is touched: short speech, then same-colour message, then the second moves toward the first. Common odd results: both move at once (green flag on both), second never starts (colours differ or message missing), or they never look like they meet (facing wrong or too far apart). Fix one thing and rerun.



Misconceptions & interventions

- **Both characters get Start on Green Flag, so they run at the same time.** — Point back to the demo muddle. Have the pair swap the first character to Start on Tap and the second to Start on Message, then run by touching only the first.
- **The send and receive colours don't match, so the second character never starts.** — Ask them to name the colour on each message block side by side. Match the pair to one colour, rerun without other changes, and watch the second wait then go.
- **Pupils think the green flag always starts the whole story the way other ScratchJr projects did.** — Hold up Start on Tap beside the green flag and restate: today we touch the first friend so only its blocks begin; the message starts the second.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Give the printed three-beat story strip (first speaks → message → friend moves) and sit at the teacher table to place Start on Tap, Say, and the matching message pair. • Optional second journal copy; scribe short dictated stems if writing blocks the record.	• After the story runs in order, name in plain words whether the bug was too soon, wrong colour, or message in the wrong place. • Check facing and gap so the second character clearly meets the first.	• Add a short reply from the second character after it arrives, still on the same one-message chain. • On the journal, sketch one tiny improvement (e.g. face the friend) rather than opening a new project.

Cross-curricular hook

Link to oral language: pairs rehearse the three-beat story aloud before they build the block sequence.