

LESSON 5

Make your own Mystery

40 minutes

Unplugged Adventures

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Hey there! In this lesson, you'll create your own choose-your-own-adventure mystery story. You'll build on the If/Then/Else ideas from last week by making stories with choices that lead to different endings. Get ready to be creative and see how decisions change the outcome!

BEFORE THE LESSON

- This is an unplugged lesson: pupils work on paper, so have blank sheets and pencils ready for every pupil, plus a couple of spare sheets for flowchart redraws.
- Prepare one simple branching story on the board or a large sheet as a worked model, showing a choice point with arrows to two outcomes.
- Optional: if you want to show the ready-made virtual adventure in step 3, open and test it on the projector before the lesson.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

Introduction

Recap: The Basics of Conditionals

The Choose-Your-Own-Adventure

Brainstorm Your Mystery

Draw Your Story Flowchart

Writing Your Adventure

Test Your Program

Final Reflection: The Story of Code

TEACHING MOVES

1. Intro. Frame the task in one line: every reader choice is a new path, just like a programmer building branches with if/then/else. Keep it short, the writing comes later.
2. Recap: The Basics of Conditionals. Say the three words aloud with a real example: if it rains, then indoor games, else the yard. Take three or four pupil examples so everyone is warm before writing.
3. The Choose-Your-Own-Adventure. Show the sample branching story and make one choice live so pupils see one decision splits into two endings. This is the model they will copy on paper.
4. Brainstorm. Pair pupils and give a firm three minutes for an idea with at least two choice points. Offer a title to unstick anyone, then call time hard so they move on.
5. Flowchart. Draw the blueprint before the words. Start box, then branch arrows for each choice. Circulate and check every choice box has an arrow to each outcome before they write.
6. Writing Your Adventure. Have pupils number each section and write clear jumps like "if the red door, go to part 2, else part 3". Push for short sections so the branching stays readable.
7. Test Your Program. Pairs swap and read, deliberately making a different choice each time to hit every path. This is the debug step: ask them if any choice led to a dead end or wrong outcome.
8. Final Reflection: The Story of Code. Bring the class together and ask how writing choices helps them understand programming. Keep responses spoken; note two or three on the board for the class to see.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Pupils write a single straight story with choices that all lead to the same next section, so there is no real branching. At the flowchart stage, point to a choice box and ask where each arrow goes. If both arrows land on the same box, ask them to invent a different outcome for one path.
- Pupils forget the else, giving only what happens if a choice is made and nothing for the alternative. Ask them what happens to the reader who does not pick that option. Every choice point needs both a then path and an else path before they start writing.
- Pupils write section jumps that do not match their flowchart, so a reader gets lost mid-story. During testing, have the partner read aloud and stop at any jump that leads nowhere. Fixing the mismatch is the debugging, so treat it as success not failure.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Emerging: Give a ready-made opening and one choice point on paper so the pupil only has to invent the two outcomes. Let them plan the flowchart with a partner out loud before drawing it.
- Developing: Prompt them to add a second choice point once their first branch works, one step at a time. Have them read their own story back and check each jump before swapping with a partner.