

Fortnite's millions of players and sudden success, you might be wondering: What's it all about -- and is it OK for my kids?

This survival-action game is a bit like what you'd get if you combined a sandbox-building game like [Minecraft](#) with an action shooter like [Call of Duty](#). On one hand, it's getting major points with kids and parents alike for building teamwork and thoughtful collaboration. On the other hand, it's a combat-based zombie game with guns and violence.

What is *Fortnite*?

Fortnite is a video game for PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Windows, and Mac (with an iPhone and Android version coming soon) that takes elements from sandbox-building games and adds the fast-paced action of a third-person shooter. There are two modes to the game: a solo version called *Save the World* and the hugely popular multiplayer version called *Battle Royale*.

What is *Fortnite: Battle Royale*?

If your kids say they're playing *Fortnite*, they're probably talking about *Battle Royale*, the free-to-play multiplayer offshoot of *Fortnite*. In this version, up to 100 people participate in a match together. Players are dropped onto the game map and must compete to be the last one standing by killing every other player in the game. During the game, players collect weapons, build safe structures, and try to avoid the Storm that damages all players outside of a safe zone. Unlike the *Save the World* version, there aren't any zombies to kill, which makes it a less scary version to play. However, players can buy items to make themselves look like a zombie or another creepy character.

Do you play by yourself or with a team in *Fortnite: Battle Royale*?

There are three modes of play in *Battle Royale*: Solo, Duo, and Squad. In Solo mode, you're dropped into the game alone. In Duo, you're dropped in with a partner. In Squad mode, you play on a team of four. Duos and Squads can either be friends choosing to play together or randomly matched players. All players in a match are playing in the same mode.

What is *Save the World*?

Save the World is the traditional solo campaign in the game *Fortnite*. Unlike in *Battle Royale*, where players compete against each other, players in the *Save the World* mode are survivors of an apocalyptic storm where the few remaining humans must band together to defeat creepy zombie-like creatures called husks.

Why is my kid so interested in playing *Fortnite*?

There are many reasons why *Fortnite* has taken off with kids. One is that it combines two other genres that are big winners with young gamers. Another is that it has a more cartoonish look than some other more gory video games, so younger gamers are drawn to it. Kids can play with friends in Duos and Squads, creating a more social element. And popular YouTube and Switch gamers like [DanTDM](#) have also taken to playing the game on streaming sites. Plus, in the case of *Battle Royale*, it's free (although it does have in-app purchases -- more on that below).

Is *Fortnite* appropriate for kids?

For some parents, the cartoonish, bloodless style of the action in *Fortnite* makes the violence less problematic than the aggressive gore in other popular shooter games. But the game's online chat feature -- especially in *Battle Royale* -- could expose younger players to offensive language or mature content from random strangers. Common Sense doesn't recommend games with open chat for kids under 13, but with the right controls and parental guidance, this can be a tween-friendly alternative to violent first-person shooters.

What age should kids be to play *Fortnite*?

Common Sense recommends *Fortnite* for teens 13 and up, primarily because of the open chat and action violence.

Are there microtransactions in *Fortnite*?

There are frequent opportunities for players to spend real money on items in the game. *Fortnite* encourages purchases such as upgrades to editions such as *Deluxe* and *Super Deluxe*, as well as

in-game currency to buy bonus items. There's also the Premium Battle Pass, a \$10 subscription that lets players compete on more levels and win exclusive game skins/costumes.

What platforms can you play *Fortnite* on?

Fortnite is available on PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Windows, and Mac. Users need an internet connection to play. A mobile version is also coming to iOS and Android for a limited number of players.

Can players chat with each other in *Fortnite: Battle Royale*?

There is live, unmoderated chat possible between users in *Fortnite: Battle Royale*. Both voice chat and on-screen text chat are options. This exposes players to random strangers and the likelihood of profanity.

How do you turn off voice chat in *Fortnite: Battle Royale*?

Open the Settings menu in the top right of the main *Fortnite* page by selecting the three bars, then the cog icon. Choose the Audio tab at the top of the screen. From there, you can adjust several audio features, including voice chat. Turn the setting from on to off by tapping the arrows.

How long is a match of *Fortnite: Battle Royale*?

Each match in *Battle Royale* lasts about 20 minutes, although players who are killed early play for less time.

How do I manage screen time for my kids when they're playing *Fortnite*?

When each match only takes 20 minutes, it's easy to fall into the trap of "just one more". But you can take advantage of the quick matches by using them as a natural stopping point in gameplay. Some kids benefit from using a timer, limiting themselves to a certain number of matches per day.