

# UNDERSTANDING GAMING – A REFERENCE FOR PARENTS

The modern gaming world can seem foreign and overwhelming to many parents. This fact sheet gives you the run-down on the most common games on the market, how these games are played, the major gaming genres and the different pricing structures. Understanding these basics will help you communicate more effectively with your kids about gaming.

## Types of games

**Player vs player (PVP)** – people play against each other in live action. This type of game is normally played online, with players in different locations.

**Player vs environment (PVE)** – the player fights against computer-controlled enemies.

**Role-playing game (RPG)** – players assume the role of a character with specific strengths and attributes in a fictional setting. Role playing games can be single-player or multi-player and normally involve completing quests by acting out their role through structured decision making.

**Massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG)** – a vast, interactive world where thousands of people play together online and go on a mission to defeat an enemy.

**First Person Shooter (FPS)** – weapon-based game where the player assumes the character of a ‘shooter’ and sees the game through their eyes. You do not see your character but you can see the weapon you’re holding. In a Third Person Shooter game, the view is from above and you can see your character.

**Multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA)** – a game where a player controls a single character in a team that competes to destroy the opposing team’s main structure.

**Sandbox** – a game without specific instructions or objectives where the player is free to roam through an ‘open world’ and select whatever task or activity they want to participate in. This may include building structures, exploring different parts of a city, or interacting with various characters.

## Ways to play and watch games

**Console** – a video game system that typically hooks up to a TV, but there are also portable, handheld versions. Popular consoles are Microsoft Xbox 360, Sony PlayStation, and Nintendo Wii or Switch.

**Virtual reality (VR) gaming** – a person experiences a 3-D environment, most commonly through a virtual reality headset, and can interact with that environment during a game.

**Twitch** – an online streaming technology that allows people to play games or watch others play them. It’s important to be aware that games are live-to-air, so they are not regulated or edited.

**Steam** – a popular gaming distribution site where gamers buy, play, and chat privately with friends inside and outside of games. Battle.net is a similar site.

## Pricing

**Free-to-play (F2P, FtP) or freemium** – these games are free to download and play but often incorporate microtransactions to generate revenue for the developers.

**Microtransactions** – in-game or in-app purchases, usually under \$10 and often for the virtual currency a player needs to acquire goods or premium content.

**Pay-to-play (P2P, PtP) or premium** – games that require an upfront or monthly subscription payment to play.

## Popular games

**Fortnite: Battle Royale (F2P)** – an online shooter game in which 100 players fight to be the last person standing. Available on console, PC and as a mobile app. Rated M.

**Red Dead Redemption II (P2P)** – a Western-themed action-adventure game in which the player robs, steals and fights their way across America. Available on console. Rated MA15+.

**Call of Duty: Black Ops 4 (P2P)** – a multiplayer FPS game set in the future. Available on console and PC. Rated MA15+.

**FIFA 19 / NBA 2K19 (P2P)** – football (FIFA) and basketball (NBA) simulation games. Available on console and PC. Rated G.

**Assassin's Creed: Odyssey (P2P)** – set in ancient Greece, players control a soldier who fights for both sides as they attempt to unite their family and uncover a malign cult. Available on console and PC. Rated MA15+.

**Super Smash Bros. (P2P)** – a series of crossover fighting video games published by Nintendo that primarily feature characters from their various franchises. Available on console. Rated PG.

**Marvel's Spider Man (P2P)** – an action-adventure game where Spider Man uses his superhero abilities to protect the citizens of New York from different enemies. Available on console. Rated M.

**Social casino games (F2P)** – online versions of casino games like blackjack and poker with no monetary payout for winning. Available as mobile apps or through social media. Generally rated G or PG.

**eSport** – professional gamers playing against each other for the entertainment of spectators. These events are usually held in a stadium with a live audience, as well as televised via YouTube, Twitch or TV.

**Fantasy sport** – an online game in which players assemble imaginary or virtual teams of real players of a professional sport to compete based on the statistical performance of those players in actual games. There is sometimes a 'cost of entry' fee that creates a prize pool.

## In-game actions

**Loot boxes** – 'treasure-chests' that contain virtual rewards of varying value, such as clothing, weapons, or game advantages. Players purchase them in microtransactions using in-game currency (credit that's earned as you play) or real money (via PayPal or credit cards). Loot boxes are chance-based – players do not know what's inside them before purchasing.

**Skins** – vanity items that serve no other purpose in gaming than to change the look of a character or weapon, but can be used as currency on special gambling websites. Skins can be earned while playing or bought using in-game currency.

**Avatar** – a graphical representation of the player, or the player's alter ego or character.

**Experience points (XP)** – used in RPGs to quantify a player's progress through a game.

**Troll** – a person who harasses others in a multiplayer game or online.

## CLASSIFICATION OF GAMES

Like TV and movies, video games are classified by the Australian Classification Board. Video games are rated based on the presence and impact of the following elements: themes, violence, sex, language, drug use, and nudity.

**G** – suitable for all ages.

**PG** – parental guidance is recommended as it contains content that children may find confusing or upsetting.

**M** – recommended for ages 15 and over as it contains

content of a moderate impact such as nudity, horror or depictions of violence.

**MA15+** – legally restricted to people 15 and over as it contains content strong in impact, for example, realistic or graphic violence, aggressive coarse language or drug use.

**R18+** – legally restricted to people 18 and over.

Gambling content falls under the broad category of 'themes' and it's important to be aware that these games are mostly rated 'G' (suitable for children) or 'PG' (parental guidance recommended by people under 15).

