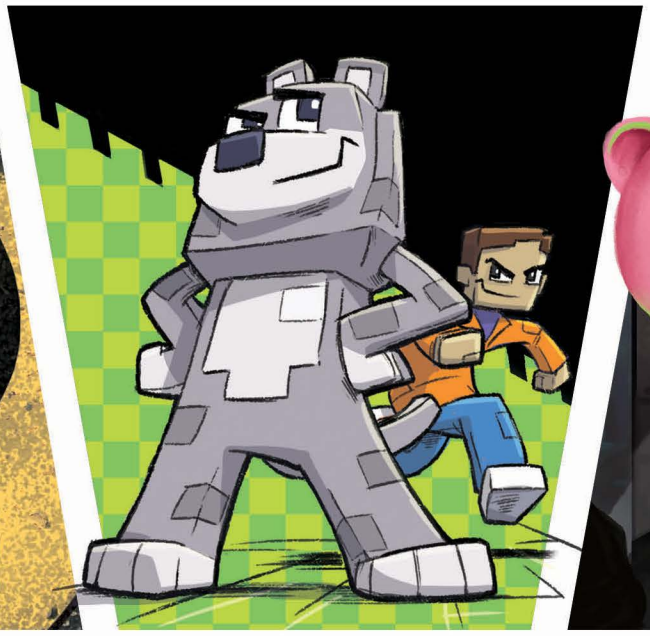


SCHOLASTIC

AFK

away·from·keyboard

CONNECTING PAGE AND SCREEN FOR GAMERS

What Is Scholastic's AFK Initiative?

Scholastic's "Away From Keyboard" (AFK) Initiative builds on kids' interests in video and computer games through novelizations, guidebooks, and behind-the-scenes storytelling with massively popular games like *Five Nights at Freddy's*, *Piggy*, *Roblox*, *Minecraft*, *Bendy*, and many more. The books in this program will provide ways to develop literacy skills and kids' love of reading in addition to enriching their gaming experiences with additional knowledge, world building, and strategies. AFK books offer a range of titles that teachers, librarians, and parents can use to engage and support growing readers of all ages and interests.

Just as graphic novels and comics have gained prominence and become more accepted in both literary and educational areas, digital media like video games is also becoming a more integrated part of the cultural and educational landscape. There are additional learning opportunities with gaming and other alternate forms of media, which can provide an entry point to focus on STEM and coding.

The titles in the AFK line can be used in conjunction with the games for literacy lessons and with curriculum-based standards, touching on elements of story, craft and structure, key ideas and details, diverse literacies, critical-reading skills, and more. Additionally, while some titles provide content that's tied to the plot, characters, or world of a game, many of these are original stories that readers can enjoy without having played!

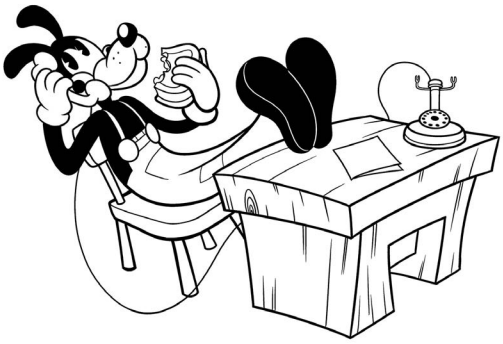
Can Video Games Be Used for Learning?

Absolutely! As video games have become mainstream entertainment for children, our understanding of their role in education and child development has evolved as well. Research suggests that video and computer games can increase engagement, expand creativity, support memory and content retention, and aid in the acquisition of positive social skills for kids of all ages.

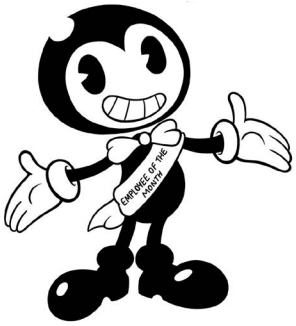
Gaming has also been shown to aid in brain development and metacognition by promoting critical thinking, problem-solving, project management, and other skills vital to success in school and life. In addition, contemporary games represent a wide cross-section of genres, time periods, topics, themes, and characters, offering a seemingly endless supply of inroads to content across curriculum.

What Are the Educational Benefits of Gaming?

Motivate and Engage Young Readers
In recent years, librarians, teachers, and parents have reported tremendous success in engaging kids through video and computer games. Gaming has been shown to motivate and empower kids by giving them a world they can shape and control. It also presents challenges that kids may not be able to achieve success with on the first try—giving them the chance to "fail" without the worry of real-world consequences. Recent studies have also shown that gaming provides kids with learning disabilities a platform to express and represent themselves.



Limitless Educational Potential
Today, video games can be nearly limitless in their depth and scope. Games offer worlds with infinite boundaries and character storylines that play out over months and years. Games also tackle an incredible range of topics—from philosophy to science to history and beyond—offering innovative ways for kids to explore a wide array of content. The AFK titles further enrich these learning experiences by providing opportunities to engage with these worlds beyond the screen and, beyond that, to boost reading and literacy skills.



Expand Creativity
Games are a place where kids need to improvise and adapt, immersing themselves in worlds, characters, and settings that engage their imaginations and critical-thinking skills. Some games even allow kids to build entire worlds from scratch. Studies have found that kids who play these kinds of games score much higher on creativity tests than non-gamers and that gaming provides important cognitive, social, emotional, and motivational benefits. The AFK novels expand upon these as well by sharing more of the story, requiring reading comprehension skills, engaging in further storytelling and world building through the written form, and providing an opportunity for kids to integrate information from diverse media and formats.

Build Community
Many video games require cooperation and engagement with other participants. Kids must work together to finish complex tasks, think critically through each of their decisions, and take turns as both leaders and followers to overcome challenges. As a result, kids must constantly examine choices and their consequences both individually and alongside their peers, fostering important social skills, including project management, problem-solving, and self-expression. Through the AFK Initiative, kids will be able to gain additional knowledge that they can bring to these communities and share in order to advance and grow their gaming experiences.

Discussion Questions for AFK Titles

1. Can you identify the key elements of storytelling in the game and in the related book (setting, character, theme, plot)? How does a story get told in a game? How is that the same or different from how the story emerges in the book? How do these storytelling elements overlap in the game and book and how do they differ? How do they work together to give you an even more complete understanding of the game or story?

   Try this with *Diary of a Minecraft Wolf #1: Player Attack* or other AFK titles!

2. Describe the journey/quest that the main character embarks upon. What changes do the characters and/or world go through during this journey?

   Try this with *Five Nights at Freddy's: The Silver Eyes* or other AFK titles!

3. How is good and evil defined in the books or the game? How do you know what is good and what is evil? Do you agree with the characters' decisions? If not, what would you have done differently? What makes a "hero" and "villain" within the books or the game?

   Try this with *Five Nights at Freddy's: The Official Movie Novel* or other AFK titles!

4. Themes including justice, survival, right vs. wrong, and transformation are all common features in gaming. Where do these themes and others show up in either the books, the games, or both? How are these themes represented differently in the books or the game, and how does that affect the way you understand them?

   Try this with *Bendy #3: Fade to Black* or other AFK titles!

5. How are suspense and foreshadowing used in the book or the game to create conflict and excitement around the plot? How do these clues further character development and world building?

   Try this with *Piggy: The Entity* or other AFK titles!

6. Analyze the use of figurative language, imagery, characters, and settings in the books as they relate to the game. What elements do the books provide that weren't included in the game? And what elements are present in the game, but not in the text of the books? Would it have been possible to represent those elements in text or gaming?

   Try this with *Diary of a Roblox Pro #7: Cash Splash* or other AFK titles!

AFK Projects and Activities

World Building: Using a real-world historical event or something imagined yourself, build a world from scratch—paying close attention to setting and characterization. Either individually or in groups, write and/or draw this world and then present your creation to the rest of your group.

Game Development: Think of a quest/journey that you have taken. What challenges did you face? How did you overcome them? In groups or individually, build a game that tells this story. You can use prose, artwork, technology, or another format to develop this game. Make sure to write directions, and feel free to be as creative as you want, using costumes, building a game board, developing props, etc.

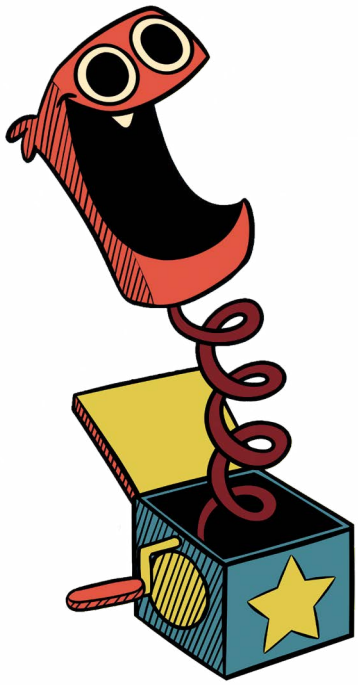
Hero's Journey: Learn about the hero's journey (use https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/hero-journey as a starting place). Using what you know about this story pattern, analyze the path of a character or characters through the lens of the hero's journey. Highlight significant events in the story and create a timeline that depicts those events as they relate to the journey of the character.

Paired Readings: Video game storylines have expanded into movies, television, and prose. Using 3–5 different media related to one or more specific games, compare and contrast the representation of characters, storylines, settings, and other important details of the texts. How do these different representations affect the experience and change your perspective on the game?

Antagonist's Journey: Analyze the antagonist and their role in the game/prose. What motivates the antagonist to be "evil"? What details let you know that they are a villain? Is there a difference between the way the antagonist is represented in the game vs. the prose? Write a paragraph and/or draw an image featuring defining features of the antagonist.

Mythos & Themes: Most video games have their own "mythos" and associated themes. Analyze the mythology and themes that show up most often in games, both visually and textually—such as dark vs. light, oppression vs. freedom, individual vs. community, and so on.

Characters & Settings: As you read, draw or create visual art of the characters and settings at the end of each chapter/section based *only* on the prose. Then, using the visuals from the games, compare your drawings to the images from the games—how do they match and how do they differ? Is there anything different about the storytelling of the book vs. the game that influences how the characters are represented?

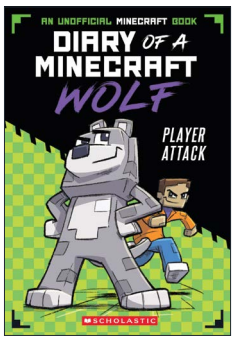


AWAY • FROM • KEYBOARD
TITLE LIST

Explore more of the worlds you love.
From guidebooks to original novels, Away From Keyboard brings you books from all your favorite video games.

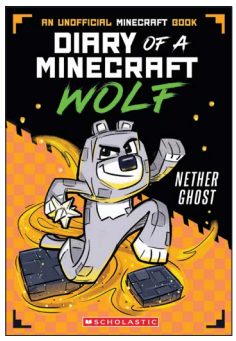
DIARY OF A MINECRAFT WOLF • Ages 6–10

This 100% unofficial Minecraft chapter book series is packed with all the action, adventure, and humor a young gamer could wish for! Winston Wolf is not like other Minecraft wolves—he's a secret agent! With help from Brian, his pet player and best friend, and Edwina, a gadget-inventing engineer, Winston takes on dangerous missions to protect the Overworld from evil. Read all about them in his top-secret Minecraft Wolf Diaries!



NOVEL
Diary of a Minecraft Wolf #1: Player Attack
PB: 9781339041223
128 Pages • Ages 6–8

NOVEL
Diary of a Minecraft Wolf #2: Underwater Heist
PB: 9781339041230
128 Pages • Ages 6–8

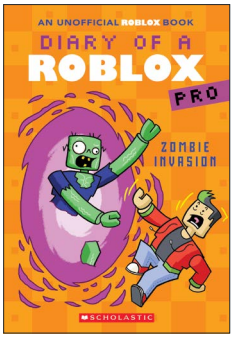


NOVEL
Diary of a Minecraft Wolf #3: Nether Ghost
PB: 9781339041247
128 Pages • Ages 7–10

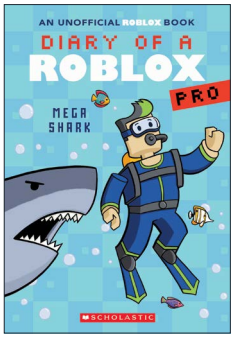
Also Available: GUIDE
Minecraft Mega Builds
PB: 9781338850192
144 Pages • Ages 7–10

DIARY OF A ROBLOX PRO • Ages 7–10

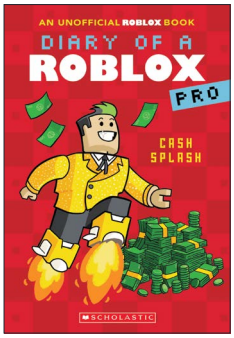
Ari Avatar is just your average Roblox kid living in a blocky world! His best friends are Zeke, the parkour pro, and Jez, the Queen of Tech. He loves doing obbys with his friends and avoiding the totally annoying school bully, Trip. At home he hangs out with his sister, Ally, and his super-cool dog, Coda. Battle monsters and avoid disasters in a Roblox universe—all through the eyes of Ari and his friends. The 100% unofficial Diary of a Roblox Pro is a must-read for any kid who loves to game! Select titles listed below; additional titles available!



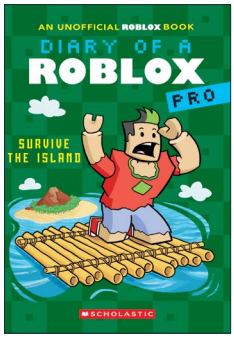
NOVEL
Diary of a Roblox Pro #5: Zombie Invasion
PB: 9781339008615
128 Pages • Ages 7–10



NOVEL
Diary of a Roblox Pro #6: Mega Shark
PB: 9781339008622
128 Pages • Ages 7–10

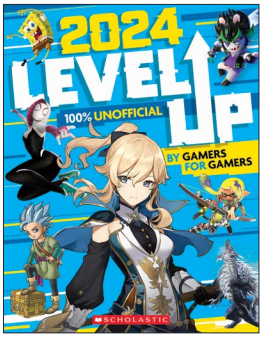


NOVEL
Diary of a Roblox Pro #7: Cash Splash
PB: 9781339008639
128 Pages • Ages 7–10



NOVEL
Diary of a Roblox Pro #8: Survive the Island
PB: 9781339008646
128 Pages • Ages 7–10

Also Available: GUIDE
Roblox: Create and Conquer!
PB: 9781338893083
144 Pages • Ages 7–10



LEVEL UP • Ages 7–10

Get set for a crazy year of gaming with this mega guide to all the year's best! *Level Up 2024* is your one-stop-shop guide to all the coolest games and consoles. Inside you'll find hidden gems and need-to-know info on everything from *Legend of Zelda* and *Pokémon* to *Fortnite* and *Genshin Impact.*

GUIDE
Level Up 2024
PB: 9781339012490
208 Pages • Ages 7–10

PIGGY • Ages 8–12

Welcome back to the bone-chilling world of *Piggy*, the survival-horror game that will have you hearing haunting oinks in your sleep, guaranteed! These original stories set in the world of the viral video are packed with pulse-pounding action, goosebump-giving scares, and more infected monsters than you can shake a wrench at! Select titles listed below; additional titles available!

NOVEL
Piggy: Infected
PB: 9781338848120
176 Pages • Ages 8–12

NOVEL
Piggy: Hunt
PB: 9781339039435
176 Pages • Ages 8–12

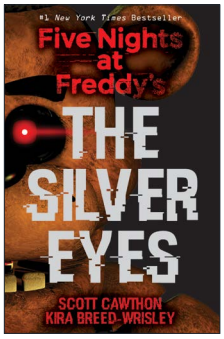
NOVEL
Piggy: The Entity
PB: 9781339051079
176 Pages • Ages 8–12

GRAPHIC NOVEL
Piggy: Permanent Detention
PB: 9781338848243
128 Pages • Ages 8–12

GUIDE
The 100% Official Piggy Survival Manual
PB: 9781338864656
128 Pages • Ages 8–12

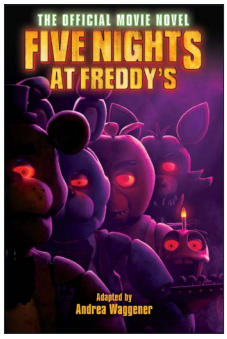
FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S • Ages 12 & Up

Five Nights at Freddy's is a bestselling survival-horror video game, where players defend against the malfunctioning animatronic characters in a pizza restaurant—Freddy Fazbear's Pizza—by using security cameras to track their movements through the facility! Creator of the game series, Scott Cawthon, brings his game and characters to life in a number of Scholastic books, including young adult novels and guidebooks. Full of intense gameplay and twisted mysteries, these books capture all the excitement, terror, and strategic gameplay that is so integral to this beloved game series. Select titles listed below; additional titles available!

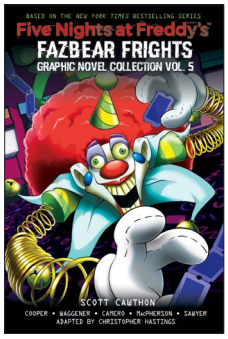


NOVEL
Five Nights at Freddy's: The Silver Eyes
PB: 9781338134377
400 Pages • Ages 12 & Up

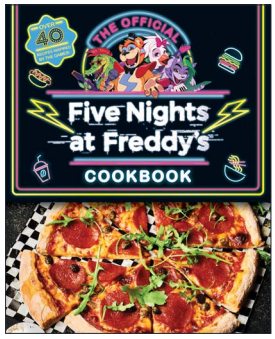
INTERACTIVE NOVEL
Five Nights at Freddy's: The Week Before
PB: 9781546131113
256 Pages • Ages 12 & Up



MOVIE NOVELIZATION
Five Nights at Freddy's: The Official Movie Novel
PB: 9781339047591
352 Pages • Ages 12 & Up



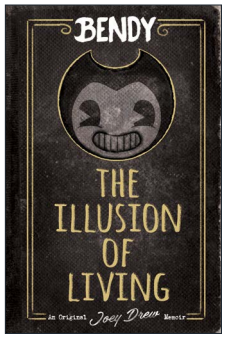
GRAPHIC NOVEL
Fazbear Frights Graphic Novel Collection Vol. 5
PB: 9781339005348
HC: 9781546109631
192 Pages • Ages 12 & Up



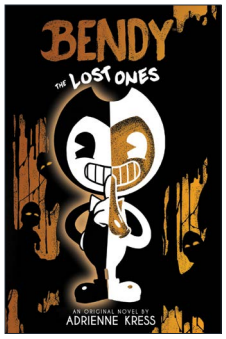
COOKBOOK
The Official Five Nights at Freddy's Cookbook
PB: 9781338851298
128 Pages • Ages 12 & Up

BENDY • Ages 12 & Up

Unlock the mysteries of the hit horror video game *Bendy and the Ink Machine* in the terrifying, in-world guidebook and discover new stories to keep you up at night with the all-new original novels from the twisted world of Bendy!



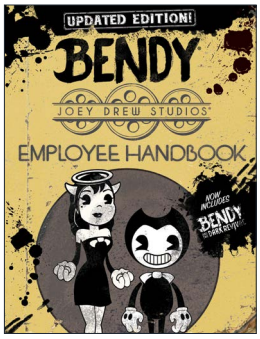
NOVEL
Bendy #1: The Illusion of Living
PB: 9781338715880
256 Pages • Ages 12 & Up



NOVEL
Bendy #2: The Lost Ones
PB: 9781338572216
304 Pages • Ages 12 & Up

NOVEL
Bendy #3: Fade to Black
PB: 9781338889055
320 Pages • Ages 12 & Up

GRAPHIC NOVEL
Bendy: Dreams Come to Life
PB: 9781339032276
160 Pages • Ages 12 & Up



GUIDE
Bendy: Joey Drew Studios Updated Employee Handbook
PB: 9781339032269
224 Pages • Ages 12 & Up

AWAY • FROM • KEYBOARD
TITLE LIST (continued)

POPPY PLAYTIME • Ages 12 & Up

Welcome to Playtime Co.! Don't mind the toys, they are all harmless . . . mostly! This in-world Orientation Notebook to the viral video game *Poppy Playtime* teaches gamers everything they need to know to be the very best employees. Filled with lore straight from the game's creators, handwritten notes, incident reports, and so much more!

GUIDE
Poppy Playtime Orientation Notebook
PB: 9781339014951
144 Pages • Ages 12 & Up

Discover more titles, more AFK series, and more ways to play at scholastic.com/afk.

Resources and Further Reading

"Video Games Boost Brain Power, Multitasking Skills" by Michelle Trudeau, *NPR*
npr.org/2010/12/20/132077565/video-games-boost-brain-power-multitasking-skills

"Find Fun: How to recognize video games that engage kids of all ages in learning" by Emily Boudreau, Harvard Graduate School of Education gse.harvard.edu/ideas/usable-knowledge/21/06/find-fun

"Video game play may provide learning, health, social benefits" by Lisa Bowen, the American Psychological Association www.apa.org/monitor/2014/02/video-game

"How Video Games in the Classroom Will Make Students Smarter" by Jordan Shapiro, *Forbes*
www.forbes.com/sites/jordanshapiro/2015/03/30/how-video-games-in-the-classroom-will-make-students-smarter/?sh=1a3b78bf6d12

"A new venue for video games: K-12 classrooms" by Carolyn Jones, *EdSource*
edsource.org/2018/a-new-venue-for-video-games-k-12-classrooms/597100

"Away From Keyboard: Taking Gaming Offline" Scholastic On Our Minds Podcast
oomscholasticblog.com/podcast/away-keyboard-taking-gaming-offline

"How Video Games Can Train Your Brain to Be More Creative and Productive" by Marla Tabaka, *Inc.*
inc.com/marla-tabaka/how-video-games-can-train-your-brain-to-be-more-creative-and-productive.html

"Video Games Improve Creativity and Stimulate Imagination" by Gameaboo
gameaboo.com/video-games-improve-creativity-stimulate-imagination

"Children reap the benefits of video games" by Yvette Brazier, *Medical News Today*
medicalnewstoday.com/articles/307736.php

"Playing video games may 'enhance learning'" by Catharine Paddock, PhD, *Medical News Today*
medicalnewstoday.com/articles/319614.php

Reviews

"Just scary enough to make people feel braver for reading it."
—*Kirkus Reviews* review of *Piggy: Infected*

"Sinister and twisted, this Faustian page-turner enlightens as it frightens."
—*Kirkus* Reviews review of *Bendy and the Ink Machine: Dreams Come to Life*

"The scares are tween and teen appropriate, culminating in a standoff worthy of viral urban legends."
—*School Library Journal* review of *Five Nights at Freddy's: The Silver Eyes*

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Diary of a Minecraft Wolf Art © 2023 Scholastic Australia.
Diary of a Roblox Pro Art © 2022 Scholastic Australia.
Five Nights at Freddy's Art © 2023 by Scott Cawthon.
Piggy Art © 2023 MiniToon Inc.
Poppy Playtime Art ©2024 Mob Entertainment, Inc.

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