

Make Any Game Educational

Every game has potential for learning! Sure, games made for in-school learning have been around a long time. But these aren't the only types of games you can use in your classroom. Instead, consider the educational value in some of the more popular games that your students (and you!) already play at home. To do this, think of games as experiences rather than instruction — as field trips, not textbooks. Not all games are school-appropriate, but you can approach any game from an educational perspective.

Tips for Game-Based Learning in the Classroom



- **Use the games your students already play.**
 - Start with the games your students (or you!) already like playing. Use after-school play as a litmus test for engagement.
 - Consider titles with the potential to drive deep, critical thinking.
- **Treat games like experiences, not instruction.**
 - Prep just like you would for a field trip or a film screening. Set some context, then explore with your students.
 - Resist the urge to offer instruction too soon; help students reflect and unpack the experience afterward.
 - Even if students stray off course, that's bound to bring opportunities for great learning. Also, don't forget about board games! Find what works best for you.
- **Use inaccuracies to drive inquiry.**
 - Many games come with inaccuracies, if not exaggerations or metaphors. Use these to your advantage.
 - As students play, help them see any inaccuracy as a learning opportunity. Have students keep track of what doesn't seem right, then follow up with research comparing the game's point of view with reality.

Suggested Tools



Gone Home

Profoundly thoughtful narrative game fosters empathy, self-reflection.

www.commonsense.org/education/game/gone-home



Kerbal Space Program

Design and launch a rocket into space in realistic astrophysics sim.

www.commonsense.org/education/game/kerbal-space-program



Sid Meier's Civilization V

Legendary strategy game is a hit with history buffs in school and out.

www.commonsense.org/education/game/sid-meiers-civilization-v