ADVENTURES ARE
BETTER SHARED!



# THE LANGUAGE OF GAMING

## KEY TERMS FOR VIDEOGAME-BASED FACILITATION IN ADULT EDUCATION

Co-funded by
the European Union

Adventures are better shared! A guide for educators and facilitators in videogame education
**Gamingway!**

project code: 2024-1-IT02-KA210-ADU-000246576

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



**Co-funded by the European Union**

# The language of gaming

## About this glossary

**The Language of Gaming** is an educational resource developed within **Adventures are Better Shared! A guide for educators and facilitators in videogame education**, co-funded by the European Union through the **Erasmus+ programme** in the field of **adult education**. The project was designed to strengthen educators', tutors' and facilitators' familiarity with **commercial videogames** and their potential **to support interaction**, **participation and learning**, including in work with adults at risk of social isolation.

The glossary complements the project's educational programme and methodological manual, **Playing to Connect**. **Its focus is the vocabulary that underpins the five thematic areas of that programme**: videogames as interaction; gaming, life skills and active imagination; gaming, anxiety and isolation; tools and spaces for videogame-based education; and co-gaming in educational settings.

Co-funded by the European Union

# The language of gaming
## About this glossary

More specifically, **this resource brings this terminology together in an accessible reference for approaching the topics explored through the project's workshops and educational exchanges**, involving **Close in the Distance** (Italy), **Rafíþróttasamband Íslands** (Iceland) and **Sverok** (Sweden). It also connects with the **Narrative Surveys**, which collect players' experiences and reflections on the place of gaming in their lives, relationships and personal development.

Read alongside the narrative collection and the methodological manual, **the glossary supports the passage from listening to players' experiences**, **to understanding their language**, **to designing and facilitating activities informed by both**.

Co-funded by
the European Union

# The language of gaming
## How and why to use it

Looking at the specific features of our project's main deliverables, this glossary is designed to be used alongside the methodological manual **Playing to Connect**, available in four languages (English, Italian, Icelandic and Swedish), helping educators, tutors and facilitators **understand the gaming-related vocabulary encountered throughout the manual**.

**Readers can consult it when an unfamiliar expression appears** in a player's account, when approaching a new game or platform, or when preparing one of the manual's practical activities.

**This familiarity is a practical component of digital readiness: it supports the ability to recognise and use aspects of contemporary digital culture within adult education**.

Co-funded by
the European Union

# The language of gaming
## How and why to use it

### How can the glossary support the practical activities?

**Playing to Connect** contains activities involving shared construction, avatars and narrative perspectives, digital routines, safe gaming environments and guided co-gaming. These are designed with a focus on **non-formal**, **experiential and group-based learning**. As a methodological and practical handbook, it assumes a certain familiarity with the vocabulary, platforms and forms of interaction that characterise contemporary gaming culture.

The glossary complements these activities by **clarifying the vocabulary** associated with the selected game, its communication tools and its modes of participation. Educators can therefore use it to prepare explanations and identify terms that participants may need to understand. During the activities, these terms can also provide a starting point for discussion, with participants contributing examples from their own experience.

Co-funded by
the European Union

# The language of gaming
## How and why to use it

### Where and why can it be used?

For example, in line with the approaches presented in our **handbook**, this educational resource can be used in **individual tutoring**, **educator training and group workshops**, whether face-to-face, online or blended.

**It can therefore be consulted both when preparing a session and during the activity itself, helping educators adapt their explanations to participants' different levels of familiarity with gaming and digital environments**.

Co-funded by
the European Union

# Structure and contents

## Thematic areas

**The glossary groups key terms into five thematic areas, covering games and gameplay, narrative experiences, online communities and the conditions for accessible and safe participation:**

- **Games, genres and modes of play**

Terms that help distinguish different types of videogames and ways of playing, including individual, multiplayer, cooperative and competitive experiences.

- **Gameplay, mechanics and player roles**

Words used to describe what happens during play: tasks, objectives, progression, resources and the roles players take within a team or shared activity.

- **Characters, stories and imagined worlds**

Vocabulary related to avatars, fictional settings, narrative choices and character development, supporting activities centred on imagination, perspective-taking and storytelling.

Co-funded by
the European Union

# Structure and contents

## Thematic areas

- **Communities, communication and participation**

Terms associated with online groups, shared spaces, communication tools and conventions, helping educators understand how players interact and organise their participation.

- **Access, safety and digital wellbeing**

Vocabulary relevant to the conditions surrounding play, including accessibility, accounts, privacy, moderation, monetisation and gaming routines.

These areas provide **a practical route through the vocabulary**, rather than rigid categories. A term may be relevant to several activities: understanding player roles, for example, can support both a cooperative task and a discussion about responsibility. **Readers can therefore approach the glossary through the area most relevant to their group**, the selected game or the educational purpose of a session.

Co-funded by the European Union

# Games, genres and modes of play

## Videogame genre

A category used to describe a game's main features, such as its challenges, actions or systems. Genres are useful starting points, but their boundaries overlap: a single game may combine exploration, combat, puzzles and role-playing.

**Example**: *A game described as an "action RPG" combines character development with combat that requires players to act in real time.*

## Single-player

A mode designed for "just" one player. Other characters may be present, but they are controlled by the game. In an educational activity, several participants can still discuss choices, observe or take turns while one person controls the game.

**Example**: *A group watches a narrative scene and discusses the available responses before the person holding the controller selects one.*

## Multiplayer

A mode in which more than one person participates in the same game. Players may cooperate, compete or do both. Multiplayer does not necessarily mean online: people can also play together using the same device or a local network.

**Example**: *Four people competing in a racing game and four people completing a shared mission are both taking part in multiplayer experiences.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Games, genres and modes of play

## Local multiplayer / couch co-op

Local multiplayer allows people to play together in the same physical setting, often on one device using separate controllers. They may share a screen or have individual views through split-screen. Couch co-op refers specifically to cooperative play in this setting.

**Example**: *Two participants play Overcooked! 2 on the same console, each controlling a different character.*

## Online multiplayer

A mode that connects players through the internet. Participants may be in different locations or sitting in the same room. Depending on the game, joining may require separate devices, accounts, copies of the game or subscriptions.

**Example**: *Participants join the same online world from their own computers and communicate through text or voice chat.*

## Cooperative play / co-op

A mode or activity in which players work towards a shared objective. Cooperation may involve dividing tasks, sharing resources, coordinating actions or helping others progress.

**Example**: *In Portal 2's cooperative mode, two players solve puzzles that require them to coordinate their actions. A shared objective creates opportunities for cooperation, although it does not guarantee equal participation.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Games, genres and modes of play

## Competitive play

Play in which individuals or teams pursue results measured against one another, such as winning a match, achieving a higher score or finishing first. Competition between teams can involve substantial cooperation within each team.

**Example**: *In Rocket League, teammates coordinate to score goals while competing against the opposing team.*

## PvE / PvP (Player versus Environment, Player versus Player)

PvE describes challenges involving game-controlled enemies or obstacles. PvP involves direct competition against other human players. A game may offer both, sometimes within the same mode.

**Example**: *A group fighting a computer-controlled boss is participating in PvE; two groups fighting each other are participating in PvP.*

## Role-playing game (RPG)

A genre in which players control one or more characters whose abilities develop through systems such as levels, skills, equipment or experience points. Many RPGs also place strong emphasis on story, exploration and character choices.

**Example**: *In Baldur's Gate 3, players develop characters with different abilities and make decisions during conversations and quests. The freedom to shape a character or change the story varies between RPGs.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Games, genres and modes of play

## Massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG)

An online role-playing game in which large numbers of players inhabit a shared, persistent world. Activities may include individual quests, small-group challenges and larger community events. Players do not necessarily interact with everyone at once.

**Example**: *In Final Fantasy XIV, a player can follow a story, join a group for a dungeon or participate in social activities. Preparing a short educational session requires selecting a manageable part of that wider experience.*

## First-person shooter (FPS)

A game centred on shooting, viewed primarily through the eyes of the controlled character. Depending on the title, it may involve individual play, cooperation or competition.

**Example**: *In Valorant, players see the action from a first-person perspective and coordinate with teammates against another team. In discussions of technical performance, "FPS" can also mean frames per second.*

## Multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA)

A genre in which teams control characters with different abilities and compete to achieve objectives on a defined battlefield, usually including the destruction of an opposing base.

**Example**: *In League of Legends, players combine individual decisions with team coordination. Understanding a match requires some familiarity with its roles, objectives and specialised vocabulary.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Games, genres and modes of play

## Battle royale

A competitive format in which players or teams attempt to remain in the game while opponents are progressively eliminated. The playable area often becomes smaller, bringing remaining players closer together.

**Example**: *In Fortnite Battle Royale, players compete alone or in teams to be the last player or team remaining as the playable area gradually shrinks.*

## Sandbox

A game or mode offering considerable freedom to experiment, build or choose personal objectives within its rules. Sandbox play may coexist with missions, survival challenges or other structured goals.

**Example**: *In Minecraft Creative, participants can design a shared meeting place. For a facilitated activity, the educator can introduce a specific task within this otherwise open format.*

## Open world

A game structure that allows players to explore a large connected environment with substantial freedom over where to go and what to do. An open world may still contain a main story, restricted areas and requirements for progression.

**Example**: *In Genshin Impact, players can explore beyond the immediate route of a quest. For a short group activity, agreeing on a meeting point and a limited area helps keep the task manageable.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Gameplay, mechanics and player roles

## Gameplay / game mechanics

Gameplay is what players do and experience while playing. Game mechanics are the rules and systems that make those actions possible, such as building, trading, taking turns or managing resources.

**Example**: *In Minecraft, placing and removing blocks are mechanics; deciding together how to build a meeting place is part of the gameplay.*

## Quest / mission / objective

An objective is a goal to achieve. A quest or mission gives players a task or sequence of tasks, sometimes connected to a story. These may involve exploration, dialogue, construction or combat.

**Example**: A group agrees to complete one cooperative mission as the focus of a facilitated session.

## Level / progression / XP

Progression describes advancement through a game. Experience points (XP) often contribute to a character's level, unlocking abilities or content. "Level" can also mean a stage or area of a game.

**Example**: *An activity may require characters to reach a particular level first, so a new account might not provide immediate access.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Gameplay, mechanics and player roles

## Resources / inventory / loot

Resources are materials, currency or supplies used in play. An inventory stores a player's items. Loot refers to items obtained through activities such as defeating enemies, opening chests or exploring.

**Example**: *Players share limited materials and decide which parts of a joint construction to prioritise.*

## Team roles: tank / healer / DPS / support

Some games divide responsibilities into roles. A tank typically draws enemy attention and withstands attacks; a healer restores health; DPS refers to damage per second and, by extension, a damage-dealing role. Support helps teammates through protection, enhancements or other assistance. The distinctions vary between games.

**Example**: *A team succeeds by coordinating complementary responsibilities rather than asking everyone to perform the same task.*

## Respawn / checkpoint / wipe

Respawn means returning to play after being eliminated. A checkpoint is a point from which progress can resume. A wipe occurs when an entire team is defeated during an encounter. The consequences depend on the game.

**Example**: *After a wipe, a group discusses what happened and agrees on a different approach before trying again.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Characters, stories and imagined worlds

## Avatar / player character

An avatar is a player's representation within a digital environment. A player character is a character controlled by the player, whether created and customised or already defined by the game.

**Example**: *Participants discuss what choosing a character allows them to do or explore, without assuming that the character represents their real personality.*

## NPC (Non-player character)

A character controlled by the game rather than by a human player. NPCs may provide information, offer quests, become companions or act as opponents.

**Example**: *A conversation with an NPC introduces a disagreement that participants can discuss before choosing how to respond.*

## Narrative / lore / worldbuilding

Narrative refers to how a story unfolds and is presented. Lore is the background knowledge of its fictional world, including histories, traditions and beliefs. Worldbuilding is the creation of that setting and its internal rules.

**Example**: *Before discussing a scene, the facilitator briefly explains the conflict and relevant customs so that newcomers can follow it.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Characters, stories and imagined worlds

## Dialogue options / branching narrative

Dialogue options are responses available during a conversation. A branching narrative follows different paths depending on choices or actions. Not every dialogue option changes the story: some only provide information or alter the tone of an exchange.

**Example**: *Participants compare possible responses to a character asking for help and discuss their reasons before selecting one.*

## Agency / role-playing / perspective-taking

Agency is the scope to act and influence events within a game. Role-playing involves acting through a character or assumed role. Perspective-taking means considering a situation from another viewpoint. These can overlap, but controlling a character does not automatically involve all three.

**Example**: *A group considers what a character knows, wants or fears, then discusses which choice would make sense from that position.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Communities, communication and participation

## Gaming community / guild / clan

A gaming community brings together people around shared games or interests. A guild or clan is a more defined group within that wider community, often with its own name, rules and regular activities.

**Example**: *Members meet weekly to play together, help newcomers and organise shared tasks.*

## Party / lobby / matchmaking

A party is a group assembled to play together. A lobby is a space where players gather before a session. Matchmaking is the system that places players together, often according to factors such as skill, role or availability.

**Example**: *Participants form a party before entering a match; depending on the settings, other places may be filled by players outside the workshop.*

## Server / channel / Discord

A game server hosts an online game environment. On Discord, a communication platform, a server is a shared space organised into text or voice channels. The same word therefore describes different kinds of digital space.

**Example**: *A group plays on a Minecraft server while using a separate Discord voice channel to coordinate.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Communities, communication and participation

## Text chat / voice chat / ping / emote

Text chat uses written messages; voice chat uses spoken communication. A ping signals something within the game, such as a location or danger. An emote expresses a reaction through a gesture, animation or symbol.

**Example**: *A participant marks a meeting point with a ping, allowing others to follow without spoken instructions.*

## Streaming / streamer / "chat"

Streaming broadcasts gameplay or other content live to an audience. A streamer presents the broadcast, while viewers may interact through an accompanying chat. Watching or commenting does not necessarily mean joining the game itself.

**Example**: *During an activity using a recorded stream, participants distinguish communication between players from exchanges between the streamer and viewers.*

## Community guidelines / netiquette / moderation

Community guidelines set expectations for behaviour in a shared space. Netiquette refers to conventions of respectful online interaction. Moderation involves applying rules and responding to problems, usually through designated people and platform tools.

**Example**: *A facilitator explains how participants can report an offensive message and who will respond if a discussion becomes hostile.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Access, safety and digital wellbeing

## Accessibility / accessibility settings

Accessibility concerns whether people can use a game or participate in an activity with their different needs and abilities. Relevant settings may include subtitles, text size, control remapping or alternatives to colour-based information. Available options vary between games.

**Example**: *Before a session, the facilitator checks whether participants can read the interface and use the controls comfortably.*

## Account / username / privacy settings

An account provides access to a game or platform and may store progress, purchases and personal information. A username identifies its holder to others. Privacy settings control aspects of visibility and contact, depending on the service.

**Example**: *Participants check what others can see on their profiles and who can send them messages or invitations.*

## Mute / block / report

Mute silences a person or communication channel. Block restricts contact or interaction, depending on the platform. Report sends a complaint for review; it does not necessarily produce an immediate response.

**Example**: *A participant mutes disruptive voice chat and informs the facilitator, who helps them decide whether further action is needed.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Access, safety and digital wellbeing

## Free-to-play / microtransactions / pay-to-win

Free-to-play games can be accessed without buying the base game, although some features may cost money. Microtransactions are purchases within a game. Pay-to-win describes systems where spending money provides a substantial competitive advantage.

**Example**: *Before selecting a free game, the educator checks whether the planned activity requires paid content.*

## Loot box / gacha / battle pass

Loot boxes and gacha systems provide randomised rewards, accessed through play, virtual currency or purchases, depending on the game. A battle pass offers rewards through a progression track, often time-limited and with free and paid tiers.

**Example**: *An educator checks whether accessing a particular character depends on random rewards before making that character part of an activity.*

## Digital wellbeing / screen time / gaming routines

Digital wellbeing concerns how digital activities fit with a person's needs and everyday life. Screen time measures time spent using screens; gaming routines describe recurring habits around play. Duration alone does not explain the quality or consequences of an experience.

**Example**: *Participants map when and why they play, considering enjoyment, social contact, rest and other commitments.*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Beyond the game

## A broader contribution to digital literacy

As outlined in the previous sections, the main function of **The Language of Gaming** is to support educators, tutors and facilitators in using **Playing to Connect**. While the handbook provides a methodological framework and practical formats for videogame-based activities, the glossary helps readers navigate the vocabulary of the games, platforms and interactions involved.

**The two resources can therefore be used together when approaching videogame-based facilitation or preparing to replicate and adapt an activity**. For example, readers can start from a format in the handbook, consult unfamiliar terms in the glossary and return to the activity with a clearer understanding of its requirements.

**At the same time, the glossary can also be used independently, as an introductory resource on contemporary communication, digital vocabulary and virtual cultures**.

Co-funded by
the European Union

# Beyond the game

## A broader contribution to digital literacy

Terms such as **server**, **chat**, **streaming**, **privacy settings** or **moderation** describe practices that extend beyond a particular videogame. **Becoming familiar with them contributes to the broader task of digital literacy**: understanding the environments people use, how they communicate and what opportunities or difficulties they may encounter.

**For adults working with young adults, this familiarity can also support everyday dialogue**. When someone speaks about their online community, a shared activity or an uncomfortable interaction, understanding the vocabulary makes it easier to follow their account and ask relevant questions. The glossary offers a starting point for that conversation, which can then be clarified and enriched through the person's own experience.

Co-funded by
the European Union

# Beyond the game

## A broader contribution to digital literacy

Finally, this knowledge also connects with **civic awareness in digital spaces**. Understanding community rules, privacy and moderation helps people consider how shared environments are organised, what responsibilities members have and how exclusion or inappropriate behaviour can be addressed.

**Used alongside the handbook or on its own, the glossary thus contributes to a wider educational purpose**: helping adults engage more confidently and thoughtfully with contemporary **digital life**.

Co-funded by
the European Union

**Close in the Distance**
Palermo, Milan, Online

in partnership with

**Rafíþróttasamband Íslands**, Reykjavík, Iceland
**Sverok**, Stockholm, Sweden

This glossary is distributed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)
**creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0**

© 2025-2026 – Close in the Distance, Rafíþróttasamband Íslands, Sverok

Co-funded by the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



Co-funded by
the European Union