

Gaming or Gambling: Glossary

AAA games

These are games developed by large studios with big budgets. AAA (Triple-A) games are paid-for - but after loot boxes became popular in free-to-play games, AAA started to include loot boxes and other extra paid-for features, leading them to be known as AAA+.

Cryptocurrency

An alternate form of currency that is entirely digital and based on a secure cataloguing system such as blockchain. Cryptocurrency is different from traditional currency in that it's decentralised — i.e. not controlled by a bank or another authority, but by its users.

CS:GO

Counter Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO) was the game that kickstarted the skin gambling trend. The game rewarded players with skins (looks for the characters), which the developers say they expected players to trade so as to strengthen the community. Since it's launch players and third party sites have created external online hubs where skins can be gambled.

F2P games

Free-to-play (F2P) games such as Fortnite or Warframe cost nothing to download but make money through loot boxes and other microtransactions. In the last few years, the surge in free-to-play games has made loot boxes common.

Gambling-like features

Some features found in games, like loot boxes, have a chance element to them, however, because the prize in a loot box is not currently considered by regulators to be worth 'real money' and they cannot be cashed out for 'real money' within the game then technically they are not classed as gambling in the UK.

As features, like loot boxes, share many of the same elements and may encourage similar behaviours as officially recognised gambling - we refer to them as 'gambling-like'.

Loot boxes

Virtual 'treasure chests' that may - or may not - contain items that are of value for the player. In some loot boxes, players may know the kinds of items they may get but they often won't have any indication of the item or its potential value. Therefore, players are often encouraged to keep buying until they get what they want which raises concerns that children can develop problematic 'gambling-like' behaviours.

PEGI

The Pan European Game Information (PEGI) is the body that determines age ratings for games in Europe. It was established to help parents make informed decisions about which games to buy. PEGI age ratings are based on the content of the game and games that simulate traditional gambling will have a higher age rating of 12, 16 or 18. However, 'gambling-like' features are not explicitly referenced in this. PEGI ratings include information on whether a

game includes 'in-game purchases' but not if players know exactly what they are buying or if it is done via loot box and other gambling-like features.

Skins

Virtual items such as costumes, weapon 'camos' (camouflage) or banners that players can buy or win to customise their in-game character. They're mainly cosmetic and rarely have any real impact on gameplay.

Skin gambling

Players can 'gamble' with skins on casino-like third-party websites: the skins have value based on their rarity. As skin gambling allows players to cash out and exchange 'real money' it is regulated the same as traditional forms of gambling. However, due to the fast-changing nature of the online world, many unregulated skin gambling sites are being set up and these do not have any age-verification or other checks to prevent children from accessing them or gambling.

Virtual currency

A digital currency. Virtual currency is different from crypto-currency mainly in that it can only be spent within a game, for example, to buy items for use while playing. They are often, but not exclusively, bought using real money. Examples would be V-Bucks in Fortnite, Apex Coins in Apex Legends or Gold in Candy Crush.

Want to speak to someone about gambling?

If you are looking for help, advice or support in relation to your or someone else's gambling, please go to [BeGambleAware.org](https://www.begambleaware.org) or contact the National Gambling Helpline on 0808 8020 133.

Find out more about Gaming or Gambling at parentzone.org.uk/gaming-or-gambling