

# HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

## ADDICTIVE FEATURES OF APPS & GAMES

### Lesson Overview:

Students will explore how apps and games are intentionally designed to keep users engaged. Through discussion, reflection and a Circle of Viewpoints thinking routine, students will examine addictive features such as streaks, notifications, rewards, loot boxes, leaderboards and algorithms, while considering different perspectives including the user, designer and friend.

### Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- identify addictive features used in apps and games
- explain how these features influence behaviour and emotions
- consider different viewpoints about online experiences
- reflect on balanced technology use

### Key Words:

Algorithms, streaks, notifications, rewards, loot boxes, leaderboards, persuasive design, digital wellbeing.

### Lesson Resources:

[Lesson Slides](#), [Worksheet](#)

## Curriculum Links

### Digital Technologies

- Investigate how digital systems and online platforms collect, use and share data, and how this influences user experiences and behaviours ([AC9TDI6K03](#))
- Plan, create and communicate ideas and information safely using agreed protocols and responsible behaviours ([AC9TDI6P06](#))

### English

- Create written and spoken texts to express ideas and viewpoints for different purposes and audiences ([AC9E5LY06](#) / [AC9E6LY06](#))

### Health and Physical Education

- Investigate how emotional responses and personal behaviours can influence health, wellbeing and relationships ([AC9HP6P06](#))
- Practise strategies to seek help, manage challenges and support wellbeing in different situations, including online environments ([AC9HP6P08](#))

### LESSON SLIDES

## Introduce:

- Re-watch the Thrive Online segment discussing addictive features in apps and games.
- Ask students:
  - “Why do you think apps and games want people to keep using them?”
  - “Have you ever lost track of time online?”
  - “What features make games or apps hard to stop using?”
- Students Turn & Talk:
  - “What were the different addictive features Marty & Fadzai mentioned?”
- As a class, unpack the features:
  - streaks, notifications, leaderboards, loot boxes, rewards and algorithms
- Discuss how these features are intentionally designed to encourage users to play for longer or to return to the apps and games.

## Explore:

- Students choose one addictive feature from the class discussion and consider how different people might think or feel about this
- Introduce the Circle of Viewpoints thinking routine:
  - The Tech Designer
  - The User
  - The Friend
- Model one example together as a class (e.g. notifications or streaks)
- Students complete the worksheet by reflecting on:
  - why a designer may include the feature
  - how the feature may make a user feel
  - how a friend may notice unhealthy behaviour.

## Reflect:

- Students complete the reflection prompt: “Imagine you had a meeting with an app or game developer who designs addictive features. What would you say to them?”.

**Exit Ticket:** “One thing I can do to use apps or games more responsibly is...”