Scratch 3: Frequently Asked Questions

(By Mr Smith with help from students and staff)

Background: Scratch was designed 10 years ago at Massachusetts University. It is the world's most popular coding site for students in primary schools. Blocks are linked together to create a program. The latest version of Scratch was released on January 2nd 2019. https://scratch.mit.edu Scratch is FREE and an account can be created to save work online.

FAQ from staff and students with whom I work

Does Scratch 3 now work on the iPad? Yes, it has been rewritten so it works well on Apple devices. It also performs well on Chromebooks, Windows Surface laptops, other laptops and tablets.

What age do children have to be to start using Scratch 3? I have used Scratch with students from Year 2 onwards. However, with children this age it had to be very structured and paced appropriately. I usually work with students from Yr 4-6 on Scratch and use Scratch Junior with Years 1-3. This is FREE and has 9 activities that can be split between the age groups taught.
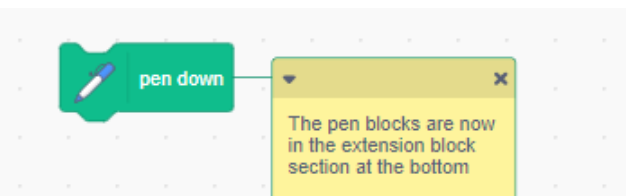
How can I get started if I don't know anything? There are lots of useful tutorials plus some ready made lessons. In addition there are some activity guides and useful help cards to print out.

Can you have lots of characters (sprites) on the screen? Yes, you can choose as many sprites as you want. It is best to choose just a few to start with. You can rename the sprites.

Are some of the sprites animated? Yes, in fact you can see the animations more easily now by hovering over the sprite before loading it. They are animated by having more than one 'costume'. As the costumes change the sprite appears to move and hence is animated.
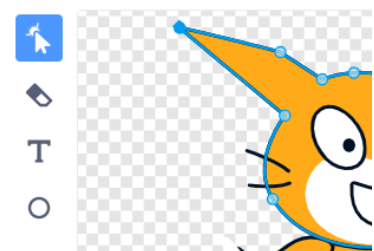
I can't find the pen options so the sprite can trace a shape. They are in the blue section at the bottom (extension blocks) which is used to add extra blocks.

What is different about Scratch 2 and 3? Lots of things. Here are 3 to help you get started.

1. The layout is slightly different and includes more white space. It looks more modern.
2. There are more options, such as more sprites, more backgrounds, character editing is easier and there are extension blocks that allow more things to be achieved.
3. It is now possible to connect to more external devices to allow input and output to take place.

Can you edit the characters (sprites)? Yes. Go to costumes, click on the reshape icon (arrow with line), click where you want to reshape it and drag the little circles to change the character. You can also rotate + flip the shapes or move the different parts of the character around. For some sprites you may need to ungroup the shapes to edit each part separately. You can also move objects forwards or backwards.
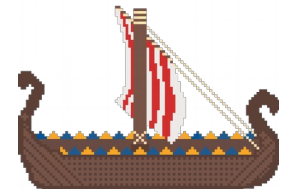
Are there any new blocks? Yes, there are many. For example, a <u>glide</u> block (in motion section) to move easily to a random position on the screen or to the mouse pointer.

Can you import your own backgrounds and sprites into Scratch3? Yes, as before you need to save an image and then import it by using the symbol shown here. For sprites use .PNG format so the sprites have transparent backgrounds. For backgrounds use .JPG or .PNG
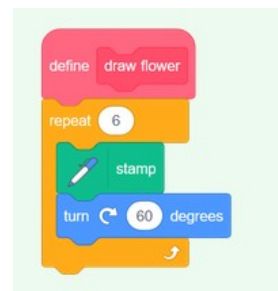
Is Scratch 3.0 available in multiple languages? Yes, click on the "globe" icon in the top navigation bar and then click on the dropdown menu to select from over 40 languages.

Can you design your own sprites to import? Yes, here is a Viking boat designed by AmazingICT for a project in one of our 10 schools. EHere is an <u>example</u> from Randlay School.
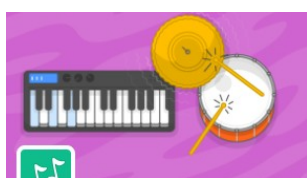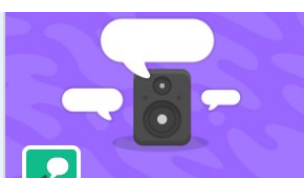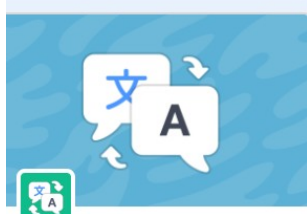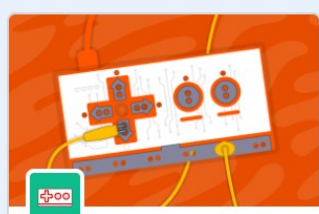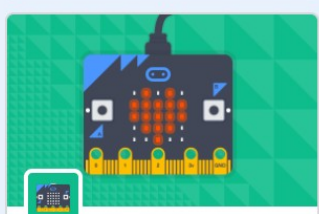
Can the new version support literacy work in schools? Yes, there are so many different sprites and backgrounds that students can easily create a mythical story, a fable or dialogue linked to a topic such as esafety. The backgrounds can be coded to change automatically.

Can you create your own blocks? Yes, it is easy on Scratch 3. You <u>make your own block</u> and then <u>define</u> the block to make it do something (e.g. draw a flower) This block can then be used to create lots of flowers in a garden by using the draw flower block more than once. *Code Club* have produced a useful lesson on this <u>here</u>. I have made <u>a working example</u> using two simple blocks to draw cats.

What are extensions? This is an exciting development as you can now add extra blocks that enable you to link with other services or products. For example, you can translate text within your Scratch projects or program physical devices such as Micro:bit, MakeyMakey boards and LEGO robotics kits.

Music
Play instruments and drums.

Pen
Draw with your sprites.

Video Sensing
Sense motion with the camera.

Text to Speech
Make your projects talk.
Requires 🛜   Collaboration with Amazon Web Services

Translate
Translate text into many languages.

Makey Makey
Make anything into a key.

micro:bit
Connect your projects with the world.

LEGO MINDSTORMS EV3
Build interactive robots and more.