



Deploy BestieQuest to Railway - Quick Start



Fastest Deployment Path

Railway is the easiest platform for full-stack Node.js + PostgreSQL apps.



Prerequisites

- Railway account (sign up at <https://railway.app/>)
 - Your downloaded `kids_story_app` folder
 - Abacus AI API key (for story generation)
-



Deployment Steps

1. Create Railway Account

1. Go to: <https://railway.app/>
2. Click "Start a New Project"
3. Sign up with GitHub

2. Create New Project

1. Click "New Project"
2. Select "Empty Project"
3. Name it: `bestiequest`

3. Add PostgreSQL Database

1. Click "+ New" button
2. Select "Database"
3. Choose "PostgreSQL"
4. Wait for provisioning (~30 seconds)
5. Railway automatically provides `DATABASE_URL`

4. Deploy Your Backend

Option A: From GitHub (Recommended)

1. Push your code to GitHub:

```
bash
cd kids_story_app
git init
git add .
git commit -m "BestieQuest app"
gh repo create bestiequest --private --source=. --push
```

2. In Railway:

- Click “+ New”
- Select “GitHub Repo”
- Choose your repository
- Root directory: `/nodejs_space`

Option B: From Local Files

1. Install Railway CLI:

```
bash
npm install -g @railway/cli
```

2. Login:

```
bash
railway login
```

3. Link project:

```
bash
cd kids_story_app/nodejs_space
railway link
```

4. Deploy:

```
bash
railway up
```

5. Configure Environment Variables

1. Click on your service
2. Go to “Variables” tab
3. Add these variables:

```
ABACUSAI_API_KEY=your_api_key_here
NODE_ENV=production
PORT=3000
```

Note: `DATABASE_URL` is automatically provided by Railway!

6. Configure Build Settings

1. Go to “Settings” tab
2. Set **Build Command**:

```
bash
npm install && npm run build
```

3. Set **Start Command**:

```
bash
node dist/main.js
```

4. **Watch Paths:** `/nodejs_space`

7. Run Database Migration

1. In Railway dashboard, click on your service
2. Go to “Deployments” tab
3. Click on latest deployment

4. Click "View Logs"
5. Wait for build to complete
6. In "Settings" → "Run Command":

```
bash
```

```
npx prisma migrate deploy
```

OR use Railway CLI:

```
railway run npx prisma migrate deploy
```

8. Get Your App URL

1. Go to "Settings" tab
2. Under "Domains", Railway provides:
 - Default: `bestiequest-production.up.railway.app`
3. Test it: `https://your-app.up.railway.app/health`
4. Should return: `{"status": "ok", ...}`

9. Add Custom Domain

1. In "Settings" → "Domains"
2. Click "Custom Domain"
3. Enter: `bestiequest.co.za`
4. Railway shows DNS instructions
5. At your domain registrar, add CNAME:
 - Type: CNAME
 - Name: @
 - Value: `your-app.up.railway.app`
 - TTL: 3600
6. Wait for DNS propagation (5-30 minutes)
7. Railway auto-provisions SSL certificate

10. Test Your App!

1. Visit: `https://bestiequest.co.za`
2. Should see your PWA homepage
3. Test story generation
4. Install as PWA on phone

Verification Checklist

- ☐ Railway project created
- ☐ PostgreSQL database added
- ☐ Backend deployed
- ☐ Environment variables set
- ☐ Database migrated
- ☐ Health check works: `/health`
- ☐ API works: `/api/items`
- ☐ Frontend loads

- [] Story generation works
- [] Custom domain connected
- [] SSL certificate active
- [] PWA installs on phone

Costs

Railway Pricing:

- **Free Trial:** \$5 credit (lasts ~1 month for this app)
- **Paid:** \$5 minimum per month
- **Usage-based:** ~\$5-10/month typical for this app size

What's included:

- PostgreSQL database
- SSL certificates
- Custom domains
- Automatic deployments
- 99.9% uptime

Common Issues

Build fails:

```
# Check logs in Railway dashboard
# Usually missing dependencies
# Fix: Ensure package.json is correct
```

Database connection fails:

```
# Railway auto-injects DATABASE_URL
# Check it's not overridden in your .env
# Verify Prisma schema is correct
```

App won't start:

```
# Check start command is: node dist/main.js
# Verify build completed successfully
# Check logs for errors
```

Next Steps

1. Monitor Performance

- Railway dashboard shows metrics
- Check response times
- Monitor database usage

2. **Setup Keep-Warm** (Optional)

- Railway doesn't sleep containers on paid plans
- Free trial might sleep after inactivity
- Use UptimeRobot (free) to ping every 5 min

3. **Backup Database**

```
bash
```

```
railway run pg_dump > backup.sql
```

You're Live!

Your BestieQuest app is now running on Railway!

Your URLs:

- Production: `https://bestiequest.co.za`
- Railway URL: `https://your-app.up.railway.app`
- API Docs: `https://bestiequest.co.za/api-docs`
- Health: `https://bestiequest.co.za/health`

Enjoy your deployed app! 💜✨