

Fizz Buzz



Fizz Buzz is a fast mental maths counting game that builds

- multiplication fluency
- pattern recognition
- attention & concentration

It works especially well as

- a lesson starter
- a transition activity
- a quick revision game
- an energiser (especially last lesson of the day or in a Friday lesson)

Basic Rules

Learners must stand and then count aloud: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, ... each learner saying one number at a time. On the numbers that fit the selected condition they must say “**Fizz**” or “**Buzz**” or “**Fizz Buzz**” instead of the number itself. Each time someone makes a mistake, they must sit down and the counting starts again from 1 by the next person.

Rules for **Buzz**:

- Select a single condition and then have the class count numbers out loud starting at 1 but saying “**Buzz**” instead of the number when the number fits the condition.

Rules for **Fizz Buzz**:

- Select two conditions and then have the class count numbers out loud starting at 1 but saying “**Fizz**” for numbers that fit the first condition, “**Buzz**” for numbers that fit the second condition and “**Fizz Buzz**” for numbers that fit both conditions.

Examples

① If your selected condition is prime numbers, then all prime numbers become “**Buzz**”.

It would go like this:

What learners need to say ...																	
1	Buzz	Buzz	4	Buzz	6	Buzz	8	9	10	Buzz	12	Buzz	14	15	16	Buzz	...
Tracking the numbers ...																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	...

② If your two selected conditions are **multiples of 3** and **multiples of 5**, then

- multiples of 3 become “**Fizz**” (3, 6, 9, 12, **15**, 18, 21, 24, 27, **30**, ...)
- multiples of 5 become “**Buzz**” (5, 10, **15**, 20, 25, **30**, 35, ...)
- multiples of both become “**Fizz Buzz**” (15, 30, 45, ...)

It would go like this:

What learners need to say ...																	
1	2	Fizz	4	Buzz	Fizz	7	8	Fizz	Buzz	11	Fizz	13	14	Fizz Buzz	16	17	...
Tracking the numbers ...																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	...

Other ideas for criteria to use on their own or in combination are:

Multiples of 3 to multiples of 12; Squares; Cubes; Powers of 2; numbers that can be written as a product of two prime numbers; ... *You can get as creative as your class can manage* 😊

Ideas for how to run **Fizz Buzz** with a class:

Whole-Class at their Desks

Learners stand at their desks and take turns counting, following the order of learners indicated by the teacher. The first person must be aware that they will go again once the last person in the class has called their number.

Whole-Class in a Circle

Learners stand in a circle and go round the circle taking turns counting.

In both scenarios, if someone

- says a number when they are meant to say “**Fizz**” or “**Buzz**” or “**Fizz Buzz**”, or
- says “**Fizz**” or “**Buzz**” or “**Fizz Buzz**” when they’re meant to say a number, or
- hesitates too long

they sit down. The last learner standing wins.

Group-Version for bigger classes (adapt for more or fewer learners)

- split the class into 4 groups
- spread the groups into the four corners of the classroom, each forming a circle so they’re in an order
- play the game in each of the 4 groups simultaneously, encouraging softly spoken responses
- stop as soon as you have 2 learners still standing in each group
- the last 2 learners in each group still standing then come together to play a final round

The last learner standing from this group wins.

Fast-Paced Challenge Version

Increase speed gradually, including being stricter about hesitation.

Fun Variation

Movement Fizz Buzz is great for energy and focus.

- **Fizz** = jump
- **Buzz** = clap
- **Fizz Buzz** = jump & clap

Working Memory and Cognitive Load

Fizz Buzz is mentally demanding because learners must:

- keep counting
- test divisibility
- remember rules
- monitor previous responses
- speak quickly
- concentrate to know when it’s their turn

Although the arithmetic is simple, the thinking load is high.

This is why learners often make mistakes even when they know their multiplication tables.

Fizz Buzz develops attention control, processing speed and mental flexibility.

