

Countdown
by Joseph Clarke

Age: Teenagers / Adults
Level: Beginner (A1) - Pre-intermediate (A2)
Time: 60 minutes
Objective: to practise numbers; to introduce vocabulary related to simple calculations
Key skills: listening
Materials: students' mobile phones, the PowerPoint presentation (optional), access to YouTube

Note: This lesson is designed to offer alternatives to the overused game Bingo. Depending on the level of the students, the activities can be made more or less difficult, by using lower or higher numbers and by using easier or more difficult calculations.

You can play this game without using the PowerPoint presentation, if you prefer.

Procedure**Lead-in**

1. Show students slide 2 of the PowerPoint presentation. The students type the following numbers into the calculator on their mobile-phones.

0.1134

2. Instruct the students to turn their phones upside-down (demonstrate).
3. Ask the students what word they can see.

Key:

hello

Calculation dictation (teacher–students)

1. Show the students the next slide, with the following mathematical symbols, and elicit the right words for each.

+ (plus)

- (minus)

x (times)

= (equals)

2. Practise the pronunciation by modelling the calculations on the next slide and asking the students to repeat.

$$2 + 4 = 6$$

$$3 \times 9 = 27$$

$$7 - 3 = 4$$

$$12 + 36 = 48$$

Note: You can use more difficult calculations or numbers for higher-level students.

3. Show students slide 5. Explain to the students that you are going to read another calculation, but this time they must type what they hear into their mobile-phone calculators.
4. Dictate a calculation. For example, four times three plus eighteen minus eleven equals?
5. Ask the students for the correct answer.
6. Repeat several times, using different calculations, to make sure that the students understand both the numbers and the vocabulary related to calculations.

Calculator dictation (pairs)

1. Put the students in pairs and show them slide 6. They are going to repeat the activity together. Ask them to write two calculations each and keep them hidden from their partners.
2. While the students are reading their calculations out to their partners, monitor and offer assistance.

Countdown (teacher–students)

1. Show slide 7. Ask the students if they can count down from 10 to 0 (or from 20 to 0 for higher-level students).
2. Explain to the students that there is a very famous British TV programme called Countdown. Tell the students that, in the programme, contestants must do very difficult calculations within a time limit of 30 seconds.

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3. Show the video (see slide 8).
www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3I2lafp9LY
4. Now, inform the students that you are going to play a game of Countdown.
5. Choose whether to have your students play the game in teams (pairs or groups) or individually.
6. Explain to the students that you are going to reveal a set of numbers and a target number (offer definitions for difficult terms) and that they must try to use the numbers to make a calculation that equals the target number.
7. Give an example on the board. For example, your numbers are 3, 10, 9 and 4 and the target number is 35. (Answer: 3 times 10 plus 9 minus 4)
8. Play the game using the countdown clock on YouTube (see slide 9). www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9MytO0O_q0

This page does the work for you by generating numbers and a target, and revealing the correct calculations afterwards.

happysoft.org.uk/countdown/numgame.php
9. Encourage the students to raise their hands when they think they have the answer (if they know before the time runs out). Get them to read out their calculations, using the correct vocabulary.
10. Keep track of who is getting the answers right the quickest.
11. Reveal the winner!