

Topic Numbers and the First World War

Level A2

Time 1 hour 15 minutes

Aims

- To develop students' knowledge of big numbers in English
- To give practice opportunities to use and process numbers in English
- To raise awareness of the First World War

Introduction

- This lesson can also be used as a number revision activity for intermediate students.

Preparation: make enough copies of **Worksheets 1 and 2** for every student in the class. **Worksheet 3** has **Student A** and **Student B** versions due to a jigsaw reading. You will need to divide the number in the class by two to determine the number of copies required.

For example, for a class of 10 students, you would need:

10 x **Worksheet 1**

10 x **Worksheet 2**

5 x **Worksheet 3: Student A version**

5 x **Worksheet 3: Student B version**

A PowerPoint file with answers ('Numbers and the First World War: PowerPoint presentation') is provided – use is optional.

Warmer – Number Game: Fizz/Buzz (10-15 mins)

- If there is space, ask the students to stand in a circle. Count around the circle from 1 to 20 - each student says a number in turn. The purpose is to establish that each student says their own number only.
- Tell students they will count again, but this time every number that is a multiple of three should be replaced with "fizz", Count from one to about 30 or longer if they need more practice.
- *one - two - **fizz** - four - five - **fizz** - seven - eight – **fizz** - etc.*
- Tell the students to count again but also include "buzz" for multiples of five, When they get to 15 (divides by 3 and 5), elicit that they need to say "fizz/buzz". Continue to at least 30.
- *1 - 2 - **fizz** - 4 - **buzz** - **fizz** - 7 - 8 - **fizz** - **buzz** – 11 – **fizz** – 13 – 14 – **fizz/buzz** - etc*
- Split students into small groups (but **not** multiples of three or five). Tell them to practice fizz/buzz. If they are good with numbers, tell them to do fizz/buzz backwards from 100.

Task 1 – Big numbers (10 mins)

- Ask students to estimate how many people live in their country, town and city. Ask whether they think their city/country is big, small, quite big, etc. Encourage discussion on relative sizes.
- Ask whether students think London is a big city. How many people live there? (Answer: more than 8 million, which is big, but many cities are bigger.)

- Ask students to write 8,000,000 in digits. Then ask how many digits they used (7), how many zeros (6) and where they put the commas. Elicit that, working from the right, there is a comma after each group of three digits.

Distribute **worksheet 1**. Give students a couple of minutes to work through **Task 1a**, then check with the whole class, drawing attention to the following:

- Native speakers usually say 'a hundred, a thousand' rather than 'one hundred, one thousand'.
- Remind students that dots are only used for decimals (e.g. 1.25). Commas are used for whole numbers (e.g. 8,000,000)

Answers to Task 1a (on PowerPoint slide 2)

*one 1 - ten 10 - a hundred 100 - a thousand 1,000 - ten thousand 10,000 -
a hundred thousand 100,000 - a million 1,000,000*

Drill the numbers in **Task 1b**, focussing on stress and use of 'and'. Then ask the students to write the numbers in digits.

Answers to Task 1b (on PowerPoint slide 3)

1. 168
2. 10,520
3. 560,000
4. 320,000,000
5. 44,444

Task 1c is an extension for fast finishers.

Task 2 – Big numbers practice (10 mins)

- Write a single digit number on the right side of the board and say it, e.g. 8.
- Invite a student to come to the board, add a number to the left and say both numbers together, e.g. 78
- Ask a second student to add a number on the left and say the three digit number, e.g. 978
- Ask another student to come to the board and add a number to the left. Remind them to add a comma if necessary, e.g. 6,978
- Continue into millions

E.g. 8 - 78 - 978 - 6,978 - 36,978 - 236,978 - 5,236,978 etc.

- Ask the students to work in pairs and practice, taking turns to add a digit and say the whole number.

Task 3 – First World War vocabulary (10 mins)

- Ask students if they know anything about the First World War. If appropriate, ask the students if their countries were involved. Establish that it started in 1914. Write this on the board and elicit that we say "nineteen fourteen" for years and not "one thousand, nine hundred and fourteen"
- Tell the students that they are going to learn about life 100 years ago. Ask them if they can describe life 100 years ago. Were there planes? Were there cars? *Answer: There were planes*

and cars but they had recently been invented and were not common. Encourage students to use language they know to talk about life in the past

- Hand out **Worksheet 2** (or instruct students to turn over if double-sided). Pictures and vocabulary are also on **PowerPoint slide 4**
- Ask students to check the vocabulary and talk in pairs about the pictures
- There is an additional question for fast finishers – ‘Do you think the First World War was a modern or old-fashioned war?’
- Nominate students to describe individual pictures. Encourage class discussion.

Task 4 – Writing the numbers in words (10 mins)

- Ask students to write the numbers in words, and then work in pairs to match the numbers with First World War facts.
- Remind students to use ‘and’ when writing and speaking.
- Check as a whole-class activity (also on **PowerPoint slide 5**)

Answers

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| a. 489 | four hundred and eighty-nine |
| b. 1,566 | one thousand, five hundred and sixty-six |
| c. 800,000 | eight hundred thousand |
| d. 541,300 | five hundred and forty-one thousand, three hundred |
| e. 8,904,467 | eight million, nine hundred and four thousand, four hundred and sixty-seven |

1. b
2. d
3. a
4. c
5. e

Task 5 – First World War numbers dictation (10 mins)

- The students will listen for the gist *before* getting the worksheet. Tell them they will listen to a text with some big numbers. They need to tell you what it is about (but don’t need to remember the numbers at this stage). Read the text:

The First World War began in **nineteen fourteen** and ended in **nineteen eighteen**. We don’t know exactly how many people died but it was about **sixteen million**. In total, **five million, seven hundred and four thousand, four hundred and sixteen** British soldiers fought in the British Army. Another **two million, four hundred and eighty-eight thousand, six hundred and forty** soldiers came from India, Canada, and Australia to fight with the British army. The biggest number of soldiers came from Russia – **fifteen million, seven hundred and ninety-eight thousand**.

- Ask students what the text was about. (Possible answers: the First World War, the number of soldiers, the number of deaths, the dates).

- Distribute **Worksheet 3**. NB Give a **Student A version** and a **Student B version** to alternate students (as a jigsaw activity follows in **Task 6**). Note that all students have the same version of Task 5.
- Give the students a couple of minutes to read the text, then read it two more times. Students gapfill the numbers.

Answer to Task 5 (also on PowerPoint slide 6)

*The First World War began in **1914** and ended in **1918**. We don't know exactly how many people died but it was about **16,000,000**. In total, **5,704,416** British soldiers fought in the British Army. Another **2,488,640** soldiers came from India, Canada, and Australia to join the British army. The biggest number of soldiers came from Russia - **15,798,000**.*

Task 6 – Numbers information exchange (10 minutes)

Show **PowerPoint slide 7** (or direct students' attention to the pictures on **Worksheet 3**). Tell them they will read about two topics and ask them to predict what the topics will be from the pictures. Ensure each pair has an A and B worksheet. Tell the students to read their own text and answer their partner's questions, then to ask their questions and fill the gaps.

Cooler

Encourage whole-class discussion about the First World War. You could ask:

- Whether the students have seen any films about the war (Which films? What happened?)
- Whether any of their family were involved in the war
- What they think it must have been like to have been alive at the time of the First World War.