

Maths mental / oral starter games

Who wants to be a mathematician - same as 'Who wants to be a Millionaire', just with maths questions only.

Gladiators - give two children a sword (a paint brush or ruler), display some numbers on the whiteboard, give the two children a question with an answer that is on the whiteboard and the child who points to it first with their 'sword' is the winner.

Around the world - one child stands behind the chair of another child who is sitting down. Ask them both a mental maths question and the one who answers it correctly first goes to stand behind the next child. Repeat.

Gunfighters - form teams (boys and girls, different house teams) and children form 2 lines. Ask a mental maths question and the children at the front are the 'gunfighters' - the first one to answer correctly gets a point for their team and both children go to the back of their respective teams.

Buzz-off, sit down - children stand in a circle and you count up or down in a sequence e.g. count up in 10s from 3. If a child gets an answer wrong or takes too long they have to sit down. When you have gone completely around the circle you say 'buzz' pointing at one child, 'off' pointing at the next child along, 'sit' pointing at the next child along and 'down' at the next child along, who then has to sit down. Continue the game with a different sequence e.g. going down in 5s from 175.

With all of these games try to match children based on their ability. For example with around the world start on the lowest ability table and work round, or with buzz-off, sit down have teams. Otherwise if the same children lose and win all the time they will lose motivation and interest.