



BUCKET BALL

Dynamic team game with decision-making to add a twist

OBJECTIVES

- Students will practice group decision making and goal setting
- Students will experiment with forming a collaborative team
- Students will assess their own skills

MATERIALS

- 3 buckets, bowls, or hoops per team
- Boundary line (tape or rope)
- 30+ tossable items (balls, crumpled paper, beanbags, etc....)

TIME

- 30 min



LESSON INTRO

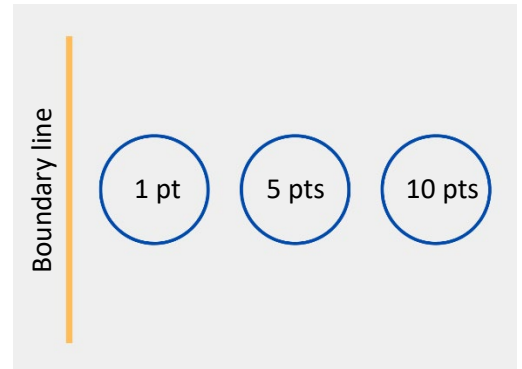
This fun (or frustrating) activity gets students collaboratively strategizing how to get the highest score. They will need to assess tossing skills, make decisions on the cost-benefit of bucket placement, consider the positioning of their teammates, and communicate under pressure.

With clear framing and reflection from the facilitator, students will be able to consider ways they productively planned, set goals, and worked collaboratively – and consider where they might apply this experience to a real team, later.

LESSON STEP BY STEP

1. Split the group into small teams of 3-5 students.
2. Share the goal with students: Help them practice teamwork skills, problem solving, and decision-making skills.
3. Ask students to list some attributes of great teams and strategies for group decision making. Write these up on the board for reference later.
4. Mark a boundary line on the floor and place three buckets, bowls, or hoops in a line perpendicular to the rope, spaced about 1 yard, 2 yards, and 3 yards from the boundary. These can be closer or farther depending on how large your buckets are and how throwable your objects are. Each team will have their own line-up of buckets in front of them.
5. Teams stand at the boundary line and are given an equal number of tossable items.

6. The goal for each team is to record the highest score possible by tossing as many items into the buckets as they can.
7. Each bucket is worth a different number of points:
 - 1 point for closest bucket
 - 5 points for middle bucket
 - 10 points for furthest bucket
8. Teams will get three, one-minute rounds with several minutes of planning in between each round.
9. Give teams time to plan. Review a few rules:
 - Teams can decide how and where to position teammates on both sides of the boundary rope to retrieve missed balls, but as soon as a round starts, no one is permitted to swap sides.
 - The people who are on the bucket-side of the boundary can retrieve the balls that miss the buckets, but cannot assist any item into a bucket.
 - Balls that make it in a bucket must stay in the bucket for that round to be scored.
10. Once planning is complete, start the first one-minute round.
11. Time the round and count the score for each team. Allow planning time between each round and continue for three more rounds.
12. At the conclusion of the third round, survey the results and debrief as desired using reflection suggestions below.



VARIATIONS

1. Teams can use the following scoring rules and matrix to calculate their points:
 - 1) Team guesses how many points they can make and record in box #1
 - 2) For any points made OVER their prediction, they only count as half points.
 - 3) For any points made BELOW their prediction, they lose one full point.

Prediction	10
Actual Points Made	15
Total Score	12.5

10 points made in initial prediction + 5 extra points divided in half (2.5) = 12.5 total points

Prediction	10
Actual Points Made	8
Total Score	6

10 points made in initial prediction, minus difference between predicted and actual score (2) = 6 total points



2. If you do not have enough buckets for multiple teams or if you want to increase the level of challenge, you can have all teams conduct the rounds on the same set of buckets. This will provide a higher level of communication and physical challenge as teams attempt to navigate around one another.

FACILITATOR TIPS AND NOTES

1. Good FRAMING of this activity can be critical to helping students focus on the skills you want them to practice versus getting stuck on winning or losing the point battle.
2. Observe teams throughout their process and take note of their strategies, communication, and team development. You can use these observations as examples when reflecting together on the experience.

REFLECTION & WRAP UP

1. Instead of focusing on the “winning score,” showcase where teams were able to improve their score round to round. Ask teams about what they did that helped them be successful.
2. Revisit the qualities of a good team and strategies for good decision-making.
 - Can students identify any examples of those ideas in their teams?
 - Would they change or add anything to the lists based on their experience?
3. Ask: What conflicts came up for the group? Did you resolve any conflicts (even minor ones)? How?
4. Ask: Based on your experience in this activity, share something you want to do (or not do) again in future group tasks that you’re part of.

NOTES

- **Source:** Adapted from *Pick and Choose*, an activity on the [Playmeo](#) site. Check out their fabulous resources.
- **Educational Standards:** CASEL: Self Awareness, CASEL: Social Awareness, CASEL: Responsible Decision-Making, P21: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, P21: Communication and Collaboration