

Kahoot!

A Revolution in Quizzing

By Dylan, Natalie, and Laura

What is Kahoot!?

[Kahoot!](#) is an online game-based student response system (GSRS) commonly used in schools for formative assessments, studying/review, and homework. Both teachers and students can create their own multiple-choice quiz games for free, provided they have a compatible device like a laptop or smartphone. It is similar to products such as [iClicker](#), which uses multiple-choice questions to quickly assess learning; however, Kahoot! quizzes are explicitly games, with the competition aspect being a major feature. [This competitive aspect has been shown to increase engagement](#), which helps to explain why Kahoot! is so popular: currently, [there are 1.1 billion active players](#). Because Kahoot! is so widely used, it has become something of a cultural phenomenon, with [Facebook groups](#), a [subreddit](#), and a wealth of [memes and videos](#).

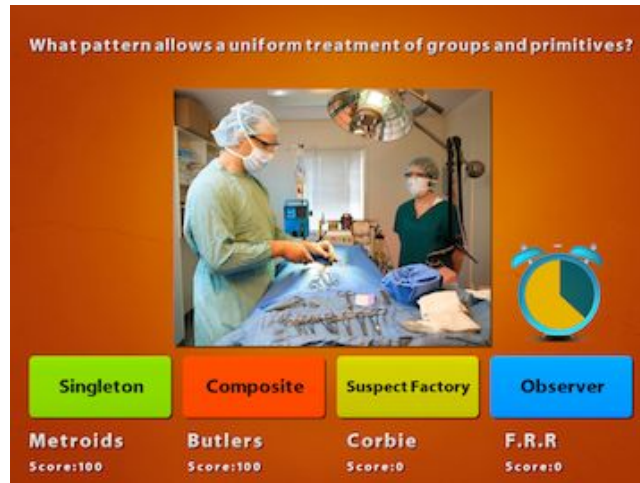
When you win in Kahoot
but the teacher said that
was just a practice round



A Kahoot! meme.

The Kahootening: A History

Kahoot! [began in 2006](#) as [Lecture Quiz](#), a project spearheaded by Alf Inge Wang at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). The bones of what would be Kahoot! were all there: multiple-choice quiz making and deployment, a competitive team aspect, and even the same color scheme.



Lecture Quiz screenshot showing four teams competing on a multiple-choice quiz.

In 2012, Lecture Quiz became Kahoot!, and went from a research project to a marketable product. The founders of Kahoot! the company [had past experience in developing games for companies](#), and [one had worked with Wang in graduate school](#). They got in touch with Wang and collaborated with him to get their startup running based on his research. Kahoot! was introduced to the public in [September of 2013](#) in what was essentially its current form.

Since its introduction, Kahoot! has become very widely used both in schools and in other educational settings, such as [corporate trainings](#). Kahoot! also bills themselves as a viable option for some non-educational applications, such as [at-home trivia games](#).

Because it's so widely used, many studies have been conducted to assess how effective Kahoot! really is. There are some mixed results on whether students learn more when using Kahoot!; some early studies [show no significant learning gain](#), but no loss either. Several more recent studies, however, do [show an increase in learning](#). Furthermore, Kahoot! is consistently shown to increase student [motivation](#) and [engagement](#), making Kahoot! a powerful educational tool.

Kahooting Peripherals: Cost and Accessibility

Kahoot!'s basic service is free for both teachers and students to use, although there are paid options that provide more support and features, including student performance data. Subscriptions are relatively cheap, with monthly prices ranging between [\\$3 and \\$6 per teacher](#) on the plan, and so schools may find that purchasing plans is a cheap and effective way to increase student engagement in their classrooms, provided they can budget for that.

That said, Kahoot! requires that every student has a compatible device. Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD) policies at schools can help make this easy to achieve, but even so, [poorer students are less likely to have a Kahoot!-ready device, and schools in low-income districts are less likely to be able to afford enough devices to fill in that gap](#). So while Kahoot! is billed as a free service,

there are hidden costs that can prevent students from accessing it or prevent schools from being able to use it.

Provided you have access to the requisite technology, Kahoot! can be accessible to students with disabilities. The quiz framework is written in [HTML5/CSS](#), which means any web browser can run it, and many screen readers work with it. [Kahoot!'s accessibility policy](#) exists and is only mostly vague; they say they are committed to accessibility for everyone. Their [support site](#) says that their quizzes are compatible with many screen readers; text is zoomable and media is mutable; and depending on how you build your quiz, you may be able to have captioned media, but that burden is placed primarily on the teacher or student making the quiz. Some have found that, with a good screen reader and a lot of patience, [Kahoot! can be viable](#) for visually impaired students, although implementation is far from seamless.

Kahoot Crashing: Teenagers Are Assholes

Kahoots are, by design, very open: anyone, anywhere in the world, who has the access code for your Kahoot can join it. This can be used to network classrooms from across the world, called a [connected Kahoot](#), and when done carefully, [it can be a great way to connect your students](#) with other people and cultures.

But this feature can also present as a bug: [if a thousand people have your Kahoot access code, they can all join and cause chaos](#). And because the bulk of Kahoot! users are teenagers with smartphones, using Kahoot! can end up being more of a gamble than teachers had bargained for—especially considering that users create temporary handles when joining a Kahoot, and [while there are profanity filters and safe name generators, those are not difficult to outsmart](#).

And humans are not the only Kahoot crashers: [there are bots](#) written to crash Kahoots, able to create huge numbers of users and completely bring down a Kahoot. Currently, [the maximum number of users on a Kahoot is 4,000](#), which is easy for a bot to exceed. And depending on a school's bandwidth, a smaller number can still cause enough lag that a Kahoot becomes impossible to run.

Kahoot! is aware of this, and seem to be [trying to put measures](#) in place to prevent it, but the Internet is a [Red Queen's race](#), so Kahoot crashing may always be a potential risk. `

In conclusion: Kahoot! is pretty okay.

There are plenty of data showing that Kahoot! increases motivation, engagement, and learning, so from a purely pedagogical standpoint, Kahoot! is full of pros. But when it comes to accessibility, it has some cons. In a classroom with a high percentage of visually impaired students, students with sensory processing disorders, or students who are highly sensitive, another platform may be preferable. But for many, many students and teachers, [Kahoot! is a very fun and effective product](#)—as long as all participants are acting in good faith.

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