

VAT, Percentages, Currency Formatting

60 minutes

ICT Specialism 3: Spreadsheets

Outcome M3.U2.1

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

In this lesson, you will format currency in euro with two decimal places and avoid common percentage errors. You will create a VAT calculator for your project using at least five items.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
M3.U2.1	Create spreadsheets involving different types of data such as VAT, percentages, currency, tax, time and dates, and enter formulas to generate results.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Format currency in euro with two decimal places
- Avoid the 0.23 versus 23% percentage trap
- Build a net-to-gross VAT calculator with at least five Irish-rate items

BEFORE THE BELL

- Prepare the board with examples of 0.23 and 23%.
- If students already have costs listed for their Something Real project, ask them to have that list to hand for independent practice; if not, the fallback enterprise costs printed on the independent practice card will keep them moving.
- Confirm the class working standard VAT rate (23% unless you update it from Revenue or Citizens Information).
- Open a blank spreadsheet on the classroom screen before this step.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

5 min	introduction	Introduction
6 min	content	Key concepts
20 min	activity	Step-by-step task
4 min	content	Common issues
15 min	activity	Independent practice
5 min	content	Reflection
5 min	summary	Lesson summary

TEACHING MOVES

- Demo live through the first VAT formula; leave autofill, currency (two simple ranges), and the live check as student steps.
- Project key concepts one row at a time; do not require silent reading of the full snapshot first, because the percentage trap needs the talking time more than the table does.
- Circulate during independent practice to monitor for percentage formatting issues and confirm the banked file is sm3_vat_calc / sm3_vat_calc.xlsx, not the practice file.
- Optional: run the matching worksheet as a 3-minute check at the start of independent practice or as an exit ticket.
- Use whole-class discussion for the reflection section.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students enter 23 and apply percentage format resulting in 2300%. Clear the cell and enter 0.23 instead.
- Students format C2:C6 as % before filling, leaving blank rates. Fill 0.23 from C2 to C6 first, then format.
- VAT amounts display with excessive decimal places. Adjust the cell format to two decimal places.
- Forgetting to use formulas for calculations. Ensure all VAT and gross values use cell references.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Provide a partially completed template with the first two rows filled in.
- Support: Allow students to work in pairs for the step-by-step task.
- Extension: Only after five euro rows pass check, add a SUM total or a teacher-approved sixth rate row.