Word Bubbles and its sequel, Word Bubbles Rising, have been played millions of times by Lumosity users around the world. Now we'd like to share the science behind these engaging exercises.

What is verbal fluency?
At its core, Word Bubbles is a verbal fluency exercise. Verbal fluency refers to the ability to quickly access your mental vocabulary, selecting appropriate words when
talking or writing. If you've ever struggled with a word on the tip of your tongue, searched for a witty comeback, or tried persuade someone, then you understand the importance of verbal fluency.

More specifically, Word Bubbles falls into the category of phonemic fluency, or fluency with words that begin with a certain letter or sound. The other category, semantic fluency, is fluency with words of a certain semantic type, such as animals or foods.

**Verbal fluency stays strong throughout life**

Unlike many other cognitive abilities, research has shown that verbal fluency performance remains relatively stable throughout much of adulthood. Lumosity's neuroscientists have confirmed this trend within Lumosity's database of cognitive game scores by comparing Word Bubbles scoring patterns to patterns in other games.

At the 2011 Entertainment Software and Cognitive Neurotherapeutics Society (ESCoNS) meeting in San Francisco, Lumosity scientists presented data from over 80,000 members who trained with Word Bubbles, Memory Matrix, Memory Match, and Raindrops. Initial Word Bubbles performance peaked in the late 20s and stayed high through the 40s, falling gradually from then on.

Source: Lumosity
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