



Maths

Problem

Objectives: To make valid observations of a potato. To measure length, width, and circumference with estimation and accurate measurement techniques. To communicate findings clearly.

Materials required:

- One potato per student
- Ruler
- Measuring tape
- Balance scale
- Small labelling stickers

Give each student a potato. Instruct students to observe their potato carefully and note any special attributes it may have. Try to get pupils to focus and record how many 'eyes' their potato has. Pupils should estimate the length, width and circumference of the potato and record their estimates. They should follow up by selecting the appropriate measuring tools and accurately measure the length, width and circumference. Pupils should then compare their estimate with the actual measurement obtained and report their findings to the class.

Note: The 'eyes' of the potato are the indentations in the potato where the new shoots will grow if planted in the ground.

Key questions for pupils should include:

1. How will we measure the length of the potato?
2. Why can we not use a ruler to measure the circumference of the potato?

Key questions to discuss in the class should include:

1. How did your estimation compare with the actual measurements?
2. How does the size of your potato compare with others in your class?

All data should be recorded by the children.

The assignment may include a formal written comparison, an oral presentation, or both.

After the observation activity concludes, have pupils place a small sticker with their initials on the bottom of their potato. Put all potatoes in the box or basket and mix them up. Challenge pupils to correctly identify their own potato as it is held up before the class for examination. If the pupils have difficulty in identifying their potato, the teacher can measure or weigh the potatoes and offer that information as a hint. Pupils will be able to distinguish their potato by a process of elimination.

