

POTATO GAMES

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Students take part in a potato and spoon race at Jells Park Primary School.

In Term 4 2014, Year 3 and 4 students at Jells Park Primary School embarked on a six week maths unit entitled *The Potato Pentathlon*. The idea was crafted by the Year 3 and 4 teachers on a planning day with a focus on participating in more real life maths beyond the classroom, to further engage students in mathematics.

The unit tied in perfectly with our integrated topic of the Commonwealth Games and also became part of our literacy sessions.

The students were asked to bring a potato to school in the third week of Term 4 and then began the first event titled the *Pre-event warm-up: Paying your weigh*, which involved students weighing their potato and then showing ways to pay for their potato according to a price set by their teacher (e.g. 1 gram = 3 cents).

Over successive weeks, each class had selected one of the remaining five main events, they included:

- high jump
- potato and spoon race
- the long roll

- potato archery
- weighing in.

Each week a designated event was held with specific follow up task. One of the great aspects of the unit was that the follow up maths could be modified according to the student's ability, which allowed the teachers to extend and simplify according to the students understanding of the mathematical concepts each week.

Some of the mathematical concepts covered included:

- different methods to pay for an item
- working out change
- the four operations
- measuring height
- percentages
- fractions
- graphing
- measuring distance
- estimation
- data trends
- probability.

The students were highly engaged in the unit and we only had a few potato casualties!

It was great to get outside and compete in a range of fun events and then come back to the classroom and investigate the maths embedded in each activity.

Jell's Park Primary School is an MAV accredited Mathematics Active School.

Do you have a great maths unit to share? *Common Denominator* is a great place to publish activities and units of work that engage your students.

If you'd like to contribute an article, please contact Jennifer Bowden, jbowden@mav.vic.edu.au.

You don't have to be a brilliant writer, you just need to be able to communicate your ideas - we'll look after the rest.