

Classroom Olympics

Overview

The students will participate in several classroom “Olympic-type” events where they will apply measurement skills.

Essential Elements

- The marks or numbers on a ruler are important for describing or quantifying a measurement.
- To quantify the length of an object one must count units.
- The repeated application of a unit is used to quantify the length of an object or distance between two points.
- Measurement is approximate, not exact and can be estimated.
- It is the same distance from point A to point B as from point B to point A.

Materials

For the class:

- paper plates
- plastic straws
- cotton balls
- large dish sponge
- plastic container for water
- balance
- Unifix cubes
- Teddy Bear Counters
- four film canisters (see *Management 6*)
- various measuring tools (see *Management 2*)
- scissors
- masking tape
- event folders (see *Management 3*)
- optional: award medallions (see *Management 7*)

Management

1. Set the various events up at stations (see *Event Directions*). Be sure to mark starting lines and to include materials and measuring tools.
2. Provide different measuring tools at each station depending on the level of your students. Some may need to use Unifix cubes, their *Two-Colored Tape Measures*, others a direct measure using string, and others may be ready to use customary units such as metric measuring tapes, rulers, etc.
3. Prepare event folders by gluing directions for each station on a file folder to be displayed there.
4. Invite a cross-age tutor to facilitate each station.
5. This activity is designed to offer the students the opportunity to apply their measurement skills through an activity based on a classroom application of the world Olympics.
6. All film canisters should be opaque and have lids. Label the canisters: A, B, C, and D. Make them have distinguishable masses. For example: Leave one film canister empty. Fill the other three with varying amounts of salt, sugar, or sand—one-third full, two-thirds full, and completely full.
7. Optional: Duplicate the award medallions on cardstock, color them to represent bronze, silver, and gold, and attach to yarn or ribbon to offer the first, second, and third place winners in each event.

Procedure

1. Lead the class in a discussion about the world Olympics. Use the fact pages and bring in newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and Internet sites for review.
2. Explain that the students are going to use their measurement skills to find out how well they can do in a classroom version of the Olympics.
3. Give each student the recording sheets to record results.
4. Have them refer to the recording sheets while you describe each event as noted on each event folder. Discuss the materials and the procedure for completing and recording the results of each event.
5. Explain that during the event they only get one try and that they need to record the results of this one attempt.
6. Divide the class into small groups. Set up rules for changing stations so that each group of students has enough time to complete each task. (You may want to give the students a practice time for each event before holding the actual events.)

Event Directions*1. Cotton Ball Shot Put*

Stand at the tape line on the floor. Using one hand, throw one cotton ball as far as you can. Use the measuring tool provided to find the distance your cotton ball traveled from the throw line to where it landed. Record the results on your recording sheet.

2. Giant Step

Put both feet on the starting line on the floor. Take one giant step forward. Have a partner use his or her finger to mark the spot in back of your forward heel. Use the measuring tool provided to find the length of your giant step. Record the results on your recording sheet.

3. Paper Plate Discus Throw

Throw the paper plate like a discus (or Frisbee) from the throw line marked on the floor. Use the measuring tool provided to find the distance the plate traveled from the throw line to the place where the plate stops on the floor. Record this distance on your recording sheet.

4. High Jump

Stand next to the chalkboard or a wall. Stretch your arm high in the air, keeping your feet flat on the ground. Use a piece of chalk to mark the highest point you can reach on the chalkboard (or on the piece of paper covering the wall). Place a piece of chalk in one hand. Jump as high as you can and make a mark on the chalkboard (or the piece of paper covering the wall) with the chalk. Using the measurement tool provided, measure the distance between the two marks to find the height of your jump. Record this height on your recording sheet.

5. Side Step

Stand with both feet together. One foot should be on the line marked on the floor. Take a giant step with one foot to the side. Have a partner use his or her finger to mark the inside spot where your stepping foot lands. Measure the width of your step using the measuring tool provided. Record this width on your recording sheet.

6. Straw Javelin

Throw a straw using an overhand motion as far forward as you can. Have a partner watch for and mark the place where your straw first hits the ground. Use the measuring tool provided to find the distance between the throwing line and this point. Record this distance on your recording sheet.

7. Teddy Bear Handfuls

With one try, grab as many Unifix cubes as you can with one hand. Place these cubes in one side of a balance. Find the mass of these cubes using the Teddy Bear Counters. Record this measurement on your recording sheet.

8. *Sponge Squeeze*

Place a sponge in a bowl of water. Wait for it to soak up lots of water. Using only one hand, remove the sponge and hold it over one of the buckets on the balance. Squeeze the sponge to get as much water out that you can with only one squeeze. Measure the mass of this water using the unit of measure that is provided. Record this measurement on your recording sheet.

9. *Find the Mass Race*

Use the balance to find the mass of each canister. Record your measurements. Use the letters on the canisters to describe their order from lightest to heaviest. You have only one minute to complete this event.

Discussion

1. Who was the Olympic champion in each event?
2. Compare your results to the champions.
3. How much farther did the champion throw the cotton ball shot put than you did? ...step in his/her giant step forward than you did? ...throw the paper plate discus than you did? ...jump than you did? ...side step than you did?
4. What was the mass of the Unifix cubes? What unit did you compare them to?
5. What was the mass of the water you squeezed from the sponge? Did anyone else squeeze as much water as you did? Who squeezed the most? How much more did he or she squeeze out than you did?
6. What did you need to know about to use the measuring tools? Explain how you used them.
7. Why is it important to say what measuring unit you used?

Extensions

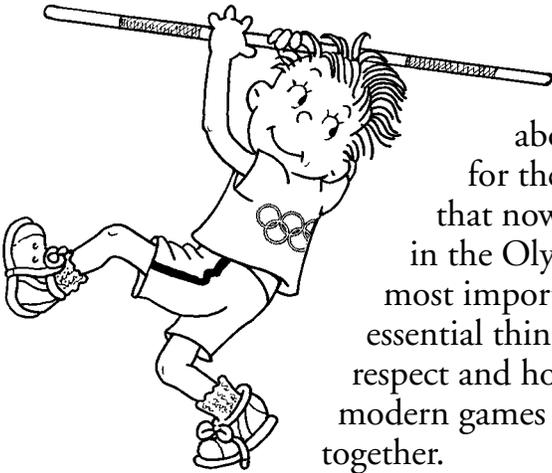
1. Add other events to the Olympic day where the students use other measurement skills such as keeping time or measuring the distance around something, etc.
2. Go to the Internet and search for either “Summer Olympics” or “Winter Olympics” for current information on the last and next scheduled Olympic events.

History: Ancient Games



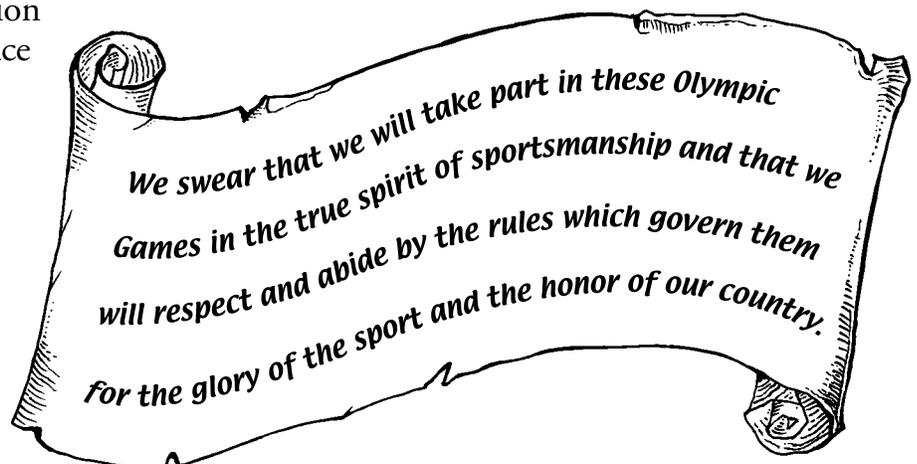
Traditionally the accepted date of the first Olympiad is 776 BC, but there is reasonable certainty that they were held considerably earlier than that. These festivities were held in Olympia, Greece where a stadium and a temple to Zeus were built. On selected occasions “a day of games” was held to honor a god or a dead hero. Only males were allowed to participate and events originally included a foot race (also called the stadium race), a long distance foot race, wrestling, and the pentathlon which was a combination of five events. The ancient games ceased to take place after 392 AD because they were viewed by Christians as a pagan ritual.

Modern Olympic Games

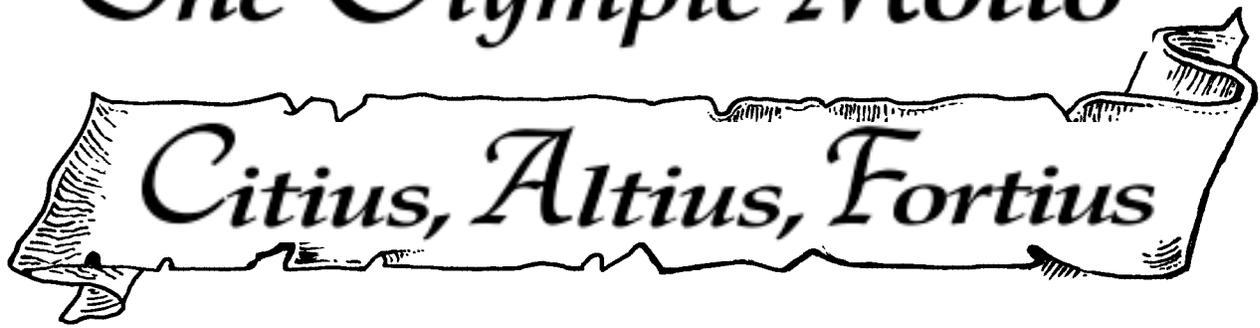


Credit for the revival of the Olympic Games goes to Pierre de Coubertin, a French baron who felt strongly about bringing together representatives from many nations for the purpose of peaceful competition. He posed these words that now make up the Olympic creed: “The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.” With respect and honor to Greece, the land of the original games, the first modern games were held in Athens in 1896 where nine countries came together.

Different countries host summer and winter events for our present day Olympic Games. The Olympics are on a four year rotation with the summer event taking place two years after the last winter event. Recent Summer Olympic Games hosted over 160 countries competing in over 30 Olympic sports. Winners in each event earn gold, silver, and bronze medals for their performances. Each athlete makes this pledge:

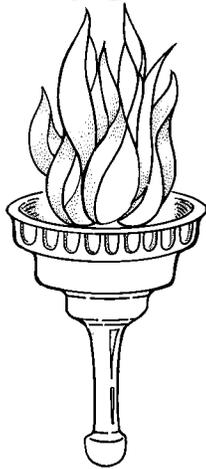


The Olympic Motto



This Latin phrase means swifter, higher, stronger. These words are used to build healthy attitudes and winning spirits in preparation for competition.

The Olympic Flame



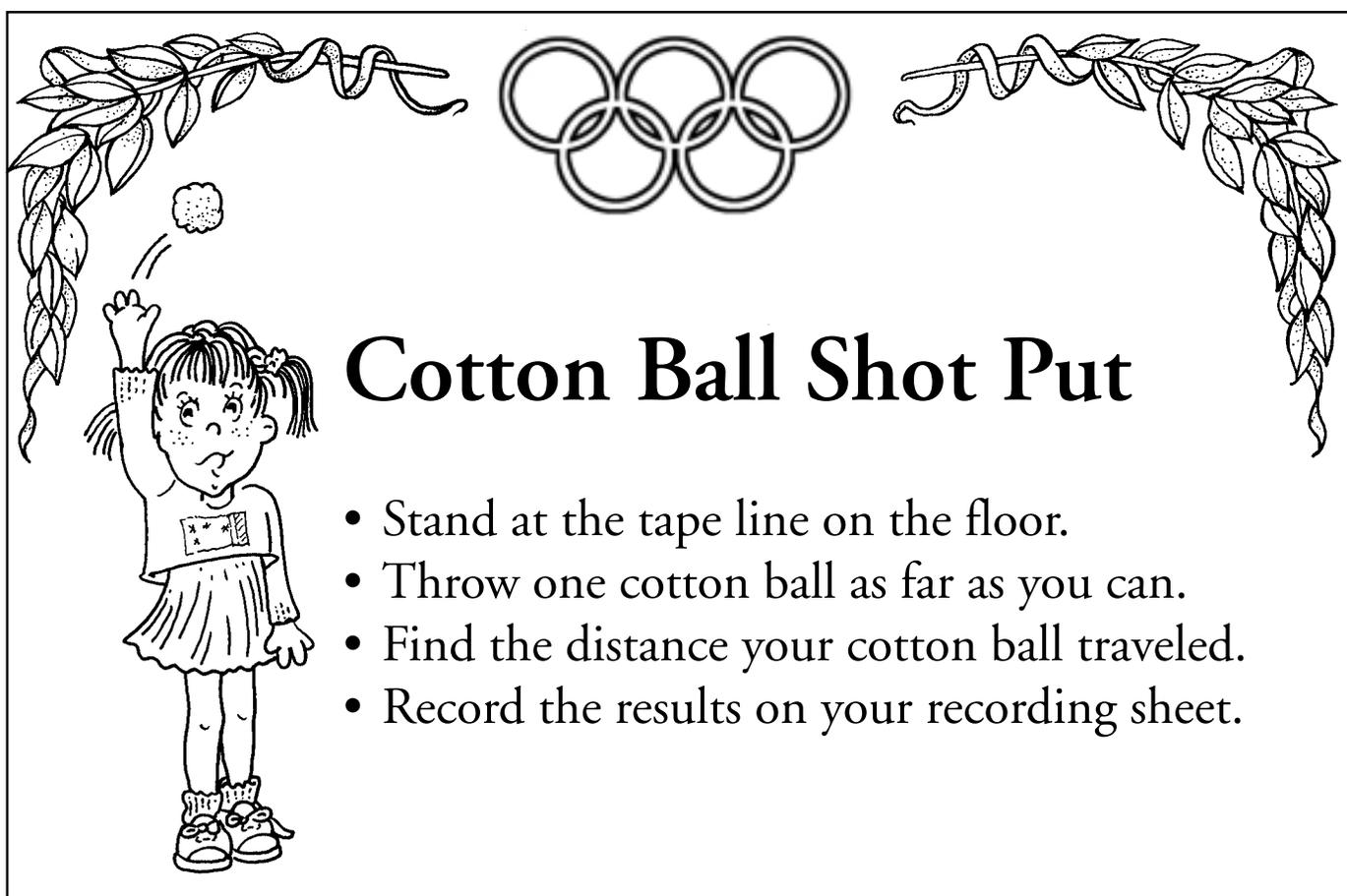
The Olympic Flame is lit by the Olympic torch during the opening ceremonies. The flame is a symbol of peace and is lit first in the temple of Zeus in Olympia. It is then carried hand to hand by thousands of relay runners from many countries to the stadium of the city hosting the games. It is kept lit even if it has to be carried by plane or ship. To carry the torch into the stadium is a great honor to the carrier.

The Olympic Symbol



Five interlocking rings represent the five major continents of the world. Their colors in order from left to right are: blue, yellow, black, green, and red. These colors are special because at least one of them appears in the flag of every nation of the world. These colorful rings are joined together to remind us of the sporting friendship that unites us all.







Giant Step

- Put both feet on the starting line on the floor.
- Take one giant step forward.
- Mark the back of your forward heel.
- Find the length of your giant step.
- Record the results on your recording sheet.



Paper Plate Discus Throw

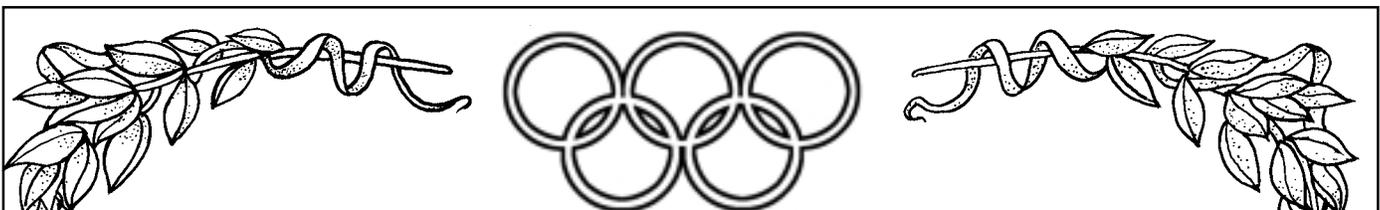
- Throw the paper plate from the throw line.
- Find the distance the plate traveled.
- Record this distance on your recording sheet.





High Jump

- Stand next to the chalkboard.
- Stretch your arm up while keeping both feet flat on the ground.
- Mark the highest point at which you can reach.
- Jump as high as you can and make a chalk mark on the board.
- Measure the distance between the two marks.
- Record this height on your recording sheet.

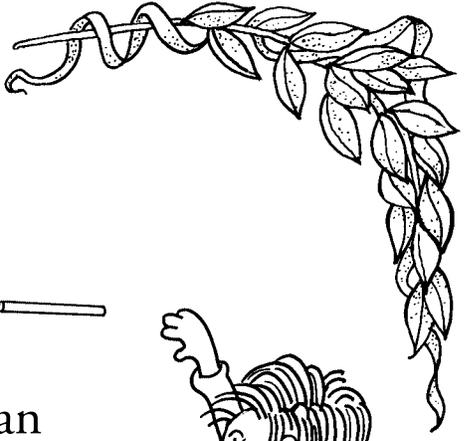



Side Step

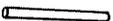


- Stand with both feet together with one foot on the line.
- Take a giant step with one foot to the side.
- Mark the inside spot where your stepping foot lands.
- Measure the width of your step.
- Record this width on your recording sheet.



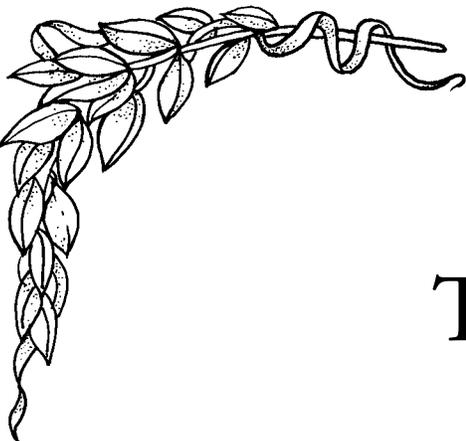


Straw Javelin



- Throw a straw as far as you can using an overhand motion.
- Have a partner watch for and mark the place where your straw first hits the ground.
- Find the distance between the throwing line and this point.
- Record this distance on your recording sheet.






Teddy Bear Handfuls

- With one try, grab as many Unifix cubes as you can with one hand.
- Place these cubes in one side of a balance.
- Find the mass of these cubes using the Teddy Bear Counters.
- Record this measurement on your recording sheet.





Sponge Squeeze

- Place a sponge in a bowl of water and let it soak up lots of water.
- Using only one hand, squeeze the water from the sponge into a balance pan. Get as much water out that you can with only one squeeze.
- Measure the mass of this water using the unit of measure that is provided.
- Record this measurement on your recording sheet.




Find the Mass Race



- Use the balance to find the mass of each canister.
- Record your measurements.
- Use the letters on the canisters to describe their order from lightest to heaviest.
- You have only one minute to complete this event.

Classroom Olympics



Olympian _____



Cotton Ball Shot Put

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____



Giant Step

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____



Paper Plate Discus Throw

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____

Classroom Olympics



Olympian _____



Cotton Ball Shot Put

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____



Giant Step

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____



Paper Plate Discus Throw

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Classroom Olympics



Olympian _____



High Jump

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____



Side Step

Unit of Measure _____

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Straw Javelin

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Olympian _____



High Jump

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____



Side Step

Unit of Measure _____

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Straw Javelin

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____

Classroom Olympics



Olympian _____



Teddy Bear Handfuls

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____



Sponge Squeeze

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____



Find the Mass Race

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____

Classroom Olympics



Olympian _____



Teddy Bear Handfuls

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____



Sponge Squeeze

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____



Find the Mass Race

Unit of Measure _____

My Results _____