

Tatami Mat Measuring

Target Grades: 3 and 4
Standards of Learning
Math 3.14, 3.18
Math 4.13

Overview

Students use paper cutouts to measure a Japanese room the old-fashioned way—by the number of tatami mats that will fit inside.



Objectives

- Students will recognize that a tatami mat is a rectangle and that half a tatami is a square.
- They will have experience estimating and measuring an area using a nonstandard unit.

Essential Question(s):

How are tatami mats used in Japan?

Management

- Class session or free time activity
- Individuals or partners

Materials

- Scissors
- Pencils

Preparation

Photocopy Tatami Mat Measuring (AP #5) and Paper Tatami (AP #6) for each student or group. Leave activity sheets and scissors out for a free time activity.

Activity

1. Students read the information and follow the directions on the Tatami Mat Measuring activity sheet. They may work on their own or with a partner.
2. After they manipulate the paper tatami and believe they have found the solution, suggest that they trace the paper tatami in the worksheet “room” to show the solution.

Assessment

Students will be able to show the correct configuration of tatami in a 6-mat tea room. They will recognize that the $4\frac{1}{2}$ -mat configuration is a square.

Variations

- If you have a roll of 3' wide butcher paper and a yardstick, students can measure and cut out paper tatami to full scale (3' x 6') and use them to measure a space in tatami mat units. This is best done in a hallway or in a room where furniture can be moved out of the way.
- Another option is to have the children arrange the paper tatami to create the flooring for a $4\frac{1}{2}$ -mat or 6-mat tatami tea room.