

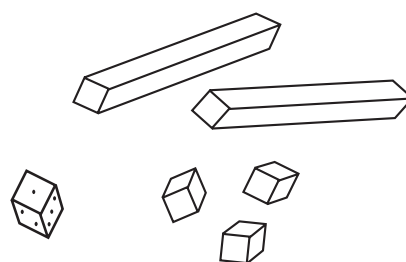
Try This:
Activity 3

Cuisenaire Rods

Rod Race

This is a game for two to four players. You will need a die, and a supply of orange and white rods. Draw a Rod Race game board, at least 20 cm long, like the one shown. Make one race track for each player.

1. On your turn, toss the die, count the number of dots rolled, and line up, end-to-end, that many one-centimeter rods on your track on the game board.
2. As soon as you can, exchange ten white rods for one orange rod.
3. After you finish all exchanges, state out loud the length of your train in centimeters.
4. Take turns doing steps 1 through 3.
5. The first player to reach the finish line wins.



Mathematical Potential

Rod Race helps build connections between measurement and place value. Since the orange rod measures 10 cm, and in fact is a decimeter long, it is easy to determine that the length of a train with two oranges and three whites is 23 cm. You could expand this understanding by using meter sticks to find that 10 orange rods are as long as one meter. You could then use this information to measure a chalkboard, for example, to find it is about as long as two meter sticks, three orange rods, and five white rods, or 235 centimeters.

In the Classroom

Although students can be introduced to the Rod Race game at any time, it can be beneficial to first do some simple measurement activities. Give each student a number of rods and explain that a white rod measures one centimeter. Have students find the centimeter length of other color rods.

Ask students to estimate how many white rods or centimeters long their shortest finger is. Then using the white rod, have them measure. Repeat this by having the students measure other parts of their hands, for example, their palms, their handspan, the length from the tips of their longest fingers to their wrists. Have students use their hands to measure the length and width of a sheet of paper. Then, measure it with Cuisenaire Rods.

Finally, ask students to find something on their hands that measures about one centimeter and something that measures one decimeter. Perhaps, on your hand, a fingernail and the width of your palm works. For students, what will work depends on their size. Point out that they now have readily available tools for estimating measurement in centimeters and decimeters.