

## TOPIC: Waxpool General Store – Scale (Weights and Measures)

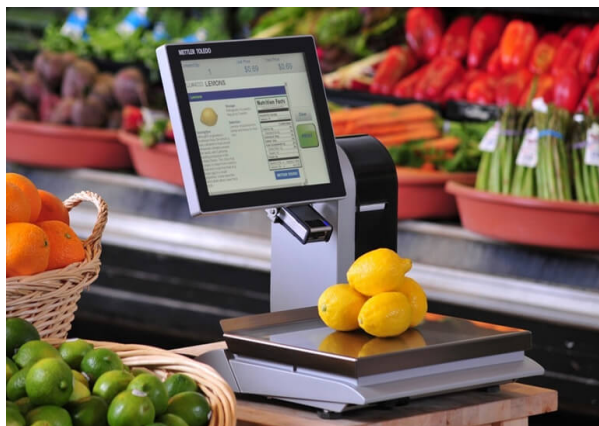


What could this be?

It is a scale found in the Waxpool General Store. A scale is a form of measurement. It measures how much something weighs in pounds or ounces. It is one of many ways farmers use to get a fair price for their goods they grow.

If you were shopping in the Waxpool General store this would be used to weigh your needed supplies. Fruits, vegetables, cheese and meat must be weighed on the scale in order to find the price of each item. How much something cost depends on the weight. For instance if you would like to buy a pound of ham or 10 ounces of beans you would place those items on the scale and measure what is needed. The farmer earns his profit and nothing is wasted.

Today most of our groceries are prepackaged in cans, bags or boxes in ounces or pounds labeled with a set price. However you can still find scales in the produce section and the deli section. They look like this.



Have you have seen one of these? This next time you are at the grocery see if you can weigh some apples on the produce scale.



Take a peek in your kitchen cabinet and look at the label of a bag of beans, or can of tomatoes. Can you see where it tells you how many ounces or pounds there is? How about a package of chicken. Farmers still grew and raised all of these for us but they delivered them to a factory for prepackaging before the chicken arrived to the store.

### **2-Pan Balance Scale**

One of the different types of scales that farmers used were 2-Pan Balance Scales. In order to use this scale, you would also need blocks of weights, which were usually labeled with how heavy they are.



Do you see how this scale has 2 pans exactly aligned with each other at the top? That's because the weight on the right is exactly the same as the weight on the left, and this scale is in equilibrium. The middle point in between the two pans is called the fulcrum.



If you wanted to buy 1 pound of candy, the store clerk would put 1 pound of weights on the scale. But that makes one side heavier than the other and that heavier side would go down. The goal is to put the scale back in equilibrium, so the clerk will keep adding candy to the empty pan until it is even again! If there is one pound of weights on one pan and the scale is balanced, then there must be one pound of candy on the other pan! Would you like to use this scale?

In the attached activity, you will try to make your own Balance Scale and measure weights.

### **Books to Read**

- *Measurement Mania* by Lynette Long – download from the Loudoun County Public Library: <https://bit.ly/2x3zQXA>
- *Millions to Measure* by David Schwartz – borrow from the Loudoun County Public Library: <https://bit.ly/2Vd85En>

## Hands on Activity

### Supplies

- A coat hanger with notches on top
- 24 inches of twine, string or yarn
- 2 paper or plastic cups
- Items around the house (beans, small toys, fruit, coins, etc.)

1



2



3



4



5



Use the objects you have gathered around the house and experiment with balancing out both sides of the scale so that the hanger is straight. In these pictures 3 Legos weighed the same as 7 pennies.



### **Discussion Items**

- Do you have a scale at your house?
- How is it different?
- What are some other forms of measurement?
- Is this something a farmer might use as well?