



Teaching Fractions - Egg Russian Roulette - Jimmy Fallon's Game

TEACHING FRACTIONS

With David Beckham and Jimmy Fallon

by Ryan Tindale

What do David Beckham, Jimmy Fallon, and a carton of eggs have in common? Any idea? If you're thinking David and Jimmy might share in the enjoyment of frying eggs, you're wrong. Combining the soccer legend, Tonight Show host, and twelve eggs, serves up a delectable fractions lesson. I sense your curiosity, so let me tell you how and then tell you why.

The five minutes before and after recess are always transition times in our school when students eat their snacks. After a ninety minute Literacy or Math block, they start switching gears while they eat and it's a great time to serve up some laughter. Cue over 200 games from Jimmy Fallon's Tonight Show YouTube channel. Two years ago, the 3 – 5 minute games became a regular in my classroom while students chowed down on the surprises packed by Mom. One morning recess, I found the Egg Russian Roulette game with Fallon and Beckham, and after a quick preview, it was consumed as the morning's laughter. The game is simple: there are one dozen eggs placed neatly in a carton. Eight are hardboiled and four are raw. Fallon always starts with the guest, so Beckham chooses one of the unmarked eggs and with the same nerve of a six-year-old learning to ride a bike, smashes it against his head. Then Fallon has a turn with shaky hands. The loser of the game is the one who gets two raw eggs. So they start going back and forth, and the students in the class are now climbing over each other to see what's going to happen next. The four minute video finishes with a boom of laughter as the raw, wet egg trickles down the loser's nose, and the students head out for recess. A day or two later, it hits me. The whole dozen is a denominator and the four raw eggs and eight hard boiled eggs could be the part or numerator. Bingo! I've got a fractions lesson. As the video unfolds, every hit dishes out a new fraction whether it's $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{3}{7}$, or $\frac{6}{9}$ and $\frac{5}{8}$. I made up a quick worksheet asking students to think about equivalent fractions, converting decimals and percent, and working with ratios. Some inquiry and other questions start coming too, asking students:

- When would be the best time to enter the game? Support your reason with data.
- What do you notice about the hard boiled column for throws 4 to 8?
- Can you put every fraction in simplest form?
- Why does one column go up and the other go down?
- How are $\frac{2}{6}$ and $\frac{3}{9}$ similar?
- Find two equivalent fractions for each fraction on the worksheet.

Here comes the homework. When they filled out and analyzed the worksheet, I happily announced they could choose one of the six other videos where Fallon plays against Hollywood celebrities such as Edward Norton and Anna Kendrick and fill in the worksheet for homework, watching and recording how the fractions changed, and recording their observations and inquiry questions as they went. This was one activity where Mom and Dad were happily invited to share in the homework, I was told. That answers how smacking eggs on your heads could teach fractions. Here's why I did it and maybe you can relate.

I grew up in a great home with good parents, annoying brothers and a big, supportive neighbourhood. I enjoyed school, enjoyed school teams, and enjoyed school recesses. I received only one detention when I was in the fifth grade for throwing popcorn in the school cafeteria at a girl I liked. You might say I was a recipe for a kid who would excel in school. Not so picturesque. Including 15 years of school, I earned 90%+ nearly every year in gym, but got Cs and Ds in virtually everything, else with an occasional B popping up. The fact is I had little interest in getting that A. I can also admit that no project ever really ever clicked with me, no lesson was ever really memorable, nor did any of my 10+ teachers in elementary school and the two dozen in high school ever really impact me. Not until university do I start getting excited to go to class. Circumstances, maturity, investment, and other things changed which pushed me to hurry to class to get a good seat so I could get that A.

Fast forward to today. Did you click with any of your students last year enough to make them remember you when they're an adult? Did you hand out a project last year that they'll tell their own children about in 20 years? Hopefully it's positive. As teachers, we have a wonderful opportunity to gift experiences to our students they can carry with them for many years. We can change upsetting perceptions of school and teachers. We can get them excited about learning. Maybe last year was an exceptionally hard year and I hope this year will be brighter. Consider one lesson, one unit, one project that you might make a little more exciting than last year. And you may even want to try Egg Roulette yourself. My grade 5s and I did. Watch it here: bit.ly/eggroulettefractions.

Have a good 2015/16 school year!

Ryan's website offers many more creative lesson ideas for your classroom. His newest resource coming out September 2015 is a 25+ page ebook with 10 lesson ideas based on 10 Jimmy Fallon games. The BLM for the Egg Roulette fraction lesson is included in this resource. Find it on Ryan's website: teachingsmarter.wix.com/home

