

### Divide and conquer candies.

Well, Halloween came and went as it does every year, leaving a house full of sweets! We had a lot of fun yesterday. I told my children that I wasn't going to buy them costumes this year. They had to find bits and pieces around the house and make do. It worked out really well, actually. One of my sons used a simple sheet to be a non-scary ghost. He ended up getting too hot under it, and not wearing it at all. My daughter dressed as a gypsy, and my other sons dressed as a Swat man, and an ugly clown. So, Tiong, to answer your question about whether my oldest is still into scary, dark stuff, I think the answer is no. So we set off around the neighborhood, knocking on doors, ringing bells, and hoping for treats. Most people in our neighborhood weren't in, so we drove to a busy area, where the houses are closer together, and the general atmosphere is one of a close community. You should have seen some of the houses! Talk about decorated! One lady opened her front door to hand out candies, and as I looked inside her large family room, I could see that she had decorated the entire ceiling with fake spiders webs, and purple and black bats and bugs. Normally, those who make an effort to decorate, just do the outside of the house. But, as they say here, she had 'gone the whole nine yards' (which means that she had taken the idea of decorating very seriously, and almost overdone it. The streets were packed with people dressed up in all sorts of costumes. There was even a tall man (one of the dads) dressed up as a deer. One house that we went to had scary statues in several places, spooky music playing, and eery lights. As we approached the candy bucket, I touched one of the statues, "Hey, he feels almost real," I said to my kids. They squeezed his arm and poked him, and at that moment he turned his head towards me. Ahhh! He was real! "How can you stand so still?" I asked him. He just shrugged. Thankfully there were some very pretty houses to stop at as well. Pumpkin carving is quite an art form, you know. And some of these neighbors were excellent at it. All in all, it was a fun and successful evening. Then came the mathematics. As soon as my children got home, they spread out their candies, grouped them, counted them, traded them, and even noticed mathematical patterns with them. Of course, as the evening went on, the groups got smaller and smaller.

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: to make do, the whole nine yards, eery, to shrug.

1. We only have potatoes and green beans to eat. We'll just have to make do.
2. My mother went the whole nine yards for Halloween. She decorated, dressed up, and held a party.
3. That abandoned house in the field looks quite eery, especially at night.
4. He never answers a question; he just shrugs his shoulders and says nothing.