

Converting from one unit to another

We will use the method of dimensional analysis, sometimes called the factor-label method.
... or, the "drag and drop" method!

Dimensional analysis uses conversion factors to change between one unit and another

What's a conversion factor? A simple equality.

Example

$$12 \text{ in} = 1 \text{ ft}$$

Conversion factors in metric

In the metric system, conversion factors between units may always be made from the metric prefixes!

For example, "kilo-" means 10^3

$$k = 10^3$$

so

$$k_m = 10^3 m$$

$$k_g = 10^3 g$$

$$k_s = 10^3 s$$

$$k_L = 10^3 L$$

Just apply the prefix to the base unit!

How do we actually USE a conversion factor?

Convert 15.75 m to cm $1 \text{ cm} = 10^{-2} \text{ m}$

$$15.75 \cancel{\text{m}} \times \frac{1 \cancel{\text{cm}}}{10^{-2} \cancel{\text{m}}} = 1575 \text{ cm}$$

* Similar to...

If $X = 2$, then

$$\frac{X}{2} = 1$$

$15.75 / \boxed{\text{EE}}^{-2}$.. on TI-83

* This fraction equals one, so multiplying by it does not change the VALUE of the number, only its UNITS!

Convert 0.01893 kg to g $1 \text{ kg} = 10^3 \text{ g}$

$$0.01893 \cancel{\text{kg}} \times \frac{10^3 \cancel{\text{g}}}{1 \cancel{\text{kg}}} = 18.93 \text{ g}$$

DRAG AND DROP

- Drag the part of the factor that contains the unit you want to get rid of (cancel out) to the BOTTOM.

- Then, drag the other half of the factor to the TOP

Convert 14500 mg to kg

$$\text{mg} = 10^{-3} \text{g}$$

$$\text{kg} = 10^3 \text{g}$$

$$14500 \text{ mg} \times \frac{10^{-3} \text{ g}}{\text{mg}} \times \frac{\text{kg}}{10^3 \text{ g}} = \boxed{0.0145 \text{ kg}}$$

Convert 0.147 cm² to m²

$$\text{cm} = 10^{-2} \text{m}$$

Tip: Don't put squared or cubed units directly into metric conversion factors.

$$0.147 \text{ cm}^2 \times \frac{10^{-2} \text{ m}}{\text{cm}} \times \frac{10^{-2} \text{ m}}{\text{cm}} = \boxed{1.47 \times 10^{-5} \text{ m}^2}$$

(0.0000147 m²)

Note: When converting a squared or cubed unit, remember to apply each conversion factor two (for squared) or three (for cubed) times, because

$$\text{cm}^2 = \text{cm} \times \text{cm}$$

$$\text{cm}^3 = \text{cm} \times \text{cm} \times \text{cm}$$

8.45 kg to μg $\text{Kg} = 10^3 \text{g}$ $\mu\text{g} = 10^{-6} \text{g}$

$$8.45 \text{ kg} \times \frac{10^3 \text{g}}{\text{kg}} \times \frac{\mu\text{g}}{10^{-6} \text{g}} = \boxed{8450000000 \mu\text{g}}$$

($8.45 \times 10^9 \mu\text{g}$)

88100 kHz to MHz $\text{kHz} = 10^3 \text{Hz}$

$\text{Hz} = \text{s}^{-1}$ (Frequency)

$\text{MHz} = 10^6 \text{Hz}$

$$88100 \text{ kHz} \times \frac{10^3 \text{Hz}}{\text{kHz}} \times \frac{\text{MHz}}{10^6 \text{Hz}} = \boxed{88.1 \text{ MHz}}$$

Convert 38.47 in to m, assuming 2.54 cm = 1 in

$$2.54 \text{ cm} = 1 \text{ in}$$

$$1 \text{ cm} = 10^{-2} \text{ m}$$

$$38.47 \cancel{\text{ in}} \times \frac{2.54 \cancel{\text{ cm}}}{1 \cancel{\text{ in}}} \times \frac{10^{-2} \cancel{\text{ m}}}{1 \cancel{\text{ cm}}} = \boxed{0.97771 \text{ m}}$$

Convert 12.48 km to in

$$2.54 \text{ cm} = 1 \text{ in}$$

$$1 \text{ cm} = 10^{-2} \text{ m}$$

$$1 \text{ km} = 10^3 \text{ m}$$

$$12.48 \cancel{\text{ km}} \times \frac{10^3 \cancel{\text{ m}}}{1 \cancel{\text{ km}}} \times \frac{1 \cancel{\text{ cm}}}{10^{-2} \cancel{\text{ m}}} \times \frac{1 \text{ in}}{2.54 \cancel{\text{ cm}}} = \boxed{491300 \text{ in}}$$

Accuracy and Precision

- two related concepts that you must understand when working with measured numbers!

Accuracy

- how close a measured number is to the CORRECT (or "true") value of what you are measuring
- "Is it right?"
- checked by comparing measurements against a STANDARD (a substance or object with known properties)

Precision

- how close a SET of measured numbers are to EACH OTHER
- "Can I reproduce this?"
- checked by repeated measurements

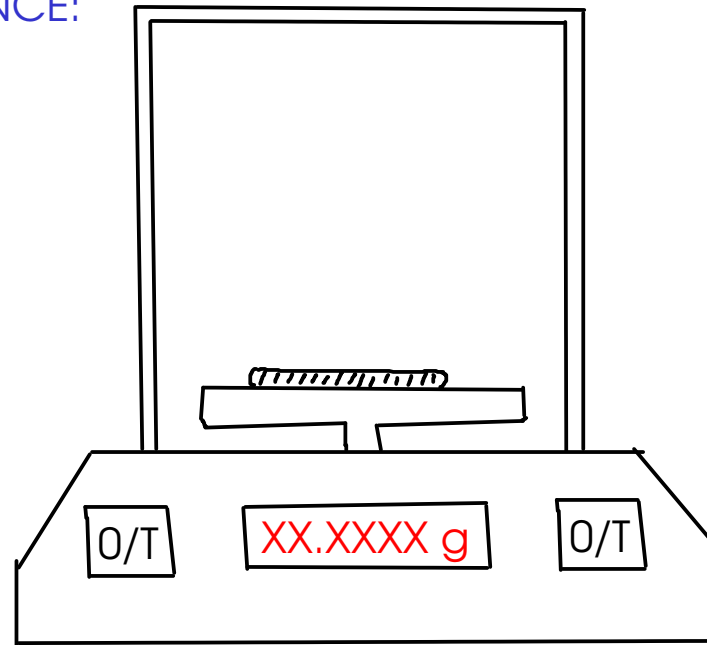
More on precision

Every measurement contains some amount of ERROR, or some amount of deviation from the true value of what is being measured.

RANDOM ERROR is the variability in a measurement that cannot be traced back to a single cause. Random errors cause measurements to fluctuate around the true value, but can be averaged out given enough measurements.

When reporting measurements, we want to indicate how much random error we think is present. How?

We'll go to the lab and measure the mass of a metal ring using an ANALYTICAL BALANCE:



Our classroom experiment: Results

Mass of ring (g)	
42.1063	42.1064
42.1063	42.1065
42.1059	42.1065
42.1074	42.1064
42.1061	
42.1068	
42.1062	
42.1060	
42.1062	
42.1054	
42.1064	

(15 measurements)

Overall average

$$\bar{x} = 42.10632 \text{ g (unrounded)}$$

$$= \underline{42.1063} \text{ g } (\pm 0.0001 \text{ g})$$

CERTAIN DIGITS: Appear in nearly all repeats of the measurement

UNCERTAIN DIGITS: Vary.. Variation caused by estimation or other sources of random error.

When reading measurements from a scale, record all CERTAIN digits (read directly from scale) and one UNCERTAIN (or estimated) digit.

When using a digital device, record all the displayed digits.

Significant figures

SIGNIFICANT FIGURES are a way to indicate the amount of uncertainty in a measurement.

The significant figures in a measurement are all of the CERTAIN DIGITS plus one and only one UNCERTAIN (or estimated) DIGIT

Example:

From our classroom experiment,

42.1063 g

This digit was estimated by the balance (it varied between measurements). This is an UNCERTAIN digit.

These digits were obtained in nearly all measurements of the ring. They are CERTAIN.

THIS MEASUREMENT HAS SIX SIGNIFICANT FIGURES!

Determining significant figures

When you read a measurement that someone has written using the significant figures convention, you can tell how precisely that measurement was made.

$$1.47\text{(3)} \text{ g} \pm 0.001$$

This was measured to the nearest +/- 0.001 g
The last digit is always UNCERTAIN (or estimated)

$$2\text{(1)} \text{ m} \pm 1$$

$$37.2\text{(6)} \text{ kg} \pm 0.01$$

Some other examples

$$3.207\text{(6)} \text{ g} \pm 0.0001 \text{ g}$$

$$27.3\text{(1)} \text{ m} \pm 0.1 \text{ m}$$