

### Metric Measures

The metric system is a way of measuring things. The main units in the metric system are:

Unit	Abbreviation	What it measures
Metre	m	Length/distance
Litre	l	Capacity/volume
Gram	g	Mass (weight)

The UK uses a mix of metric and imperial measures, for example the imperial units “miles” and “pounds” are commonly used.

Even within the metric system, you will have seen other units, for example you might buy a bottle of water that is 500 ml (millilitres). Whatever you are measuring, the prefix in front of “metre,” “litre,” or “gram” tells you how big it is. The prefixes that are used in everyday measurements are:

**Milli = 1/1000th**

**Centi = 1/100th**

**Kilo = 1000**

So a kilometre (km) is 1000 metres and a kilogram (kg) is 1000 grams, whereas a millimetre (mm) is 1/1000<sup>th</sup> of a metre and a millilitre (ml) is 1/1000<sup>th</sup> of a litre. Another way of saying this is there are 1000 ml in a litre.

So, by learning only the above prefixes you will know:

**Length**

1 m = 1000 mm

1 m = 100 cm

1 km = 1000 m

**Capacity**

1 l = 1000 ml

1 l = 100 cl (alcohol is

often measured in cl)

**Mass**

1 kg = 1000 g

1 g = 1000 mg (medicines

are often measured in mg)

The metric system can be easier to work with because everything is in multiples of 10, 100, 1000 etc. With the imperial system, there are lots of different conversions to memorise (e.g. 12 inches in a foot, 5280 feet in a mile, 16 ounces in a pound, etc) but with the metric system you only need to learn what the prefixes milli, centi and kilo mean to do conversions within the metric system.

*All the best, Chloe*