

UNITS OF MEASURE

Identifying Units of Measure

When you need to measure an object, you must decide if you are:

- ✓ Measuring in length, weight, or capacity
- ✓ Choosing the unit that makes sense to measure the object
- ✓ Measuring in the customary system or the metric system

The customary system measures in these units:

- Length:**
- inch (in.):** about the length of a pen cap
 - foot (ft):** about the length of a textbook from top to bottom
 - yard (yd):** about the height of a chair from the top to the floor

Weight:



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Capacity:

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- quart (qt):** the size of a regular milk carton
- gallon (gal):** the size of a plastic jug of milk

Example:

Which customary system unit would you use to measure the distance from your school to your house?

- a) inches
- b) tons
- c) miles
- d) gallons

Think about what needs to be measured, the distance between two places. Now you know you need a unit of length, but inches is too small of a unit for longer distances.

The correct answer here would be c) miles.

The metric system measures in these units:

Length: millimeter (mm): about the thickness of a piece of string
centimeter (cm): about the width of your fingernail
meter (m): a little more than a yard
kilometer (km): a little more than half a mile

Weight: gram (g): about the weight of a paperclip
kilogram (kg): about the weight of a textbook

Capacity: liter (L): a little more than a quart

Example:

Which metric unit would you use to measure the weight of a grape?

- a) gram
- b) meter
- c) liter
- d) kilogram



PREVIEW

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Think about what needs to be measured, the weight of a single grape. Now you know you need a unit of weight, but kilograms are used for heavier objects.

The correct answer here would be a) grams.