

Unit Conversions and Problem Solving with Metric Measurement

In Module 2, we use length, mass, and capacity in the metric system to convert between units using place value knowledge. We will explore the patterns in the place value system through metric unit conversions, and will use mixed unit conversions to prepare for fraction and decimal operations to come.

Mass	
kg	g
1	1,000
6	
	8,000
15	
	24,000
550	

A typical fill-in-the-blank conversion table in Module 2

Metric Units of Length

Centimeter	meter	kilometer
length of staple	height of counter-top	distance from the school to the train station

Learning real-life representations of metric units is an important part of internalizing and understanding metric conversions.

What Came Before this Module:

Students deepened their understanding of the patterns in the place value system by working with numbers up to one million.

What Comes After this Module:

In Module 3, students start with applying multiplication and division to contexts such as area and perimeter to set the stage for multiplication and division of multi-digit whole numbers.

Key Words to Know

Kilometer: km, a unit of measure for length

Mass: the measure of the amount of matter in an object

Milliliter: mL, a unit of measure for liquid volume

Mixed units: e.g., 3 m 43 cm

Capacity: the maximum amount that something can contain

Convert: to express a measurement in a different unit

Kilogram (kg), gram (g): units of measure for mass

Length: the measurement of something from end to end

Liter: (L) unit of measure for liquid volume

Meter (m), centimeter (cm): units of measure for length

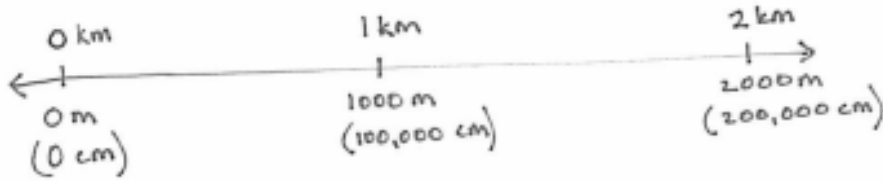
Weight: the measurement of how heavy something is

+ How you can help at home:

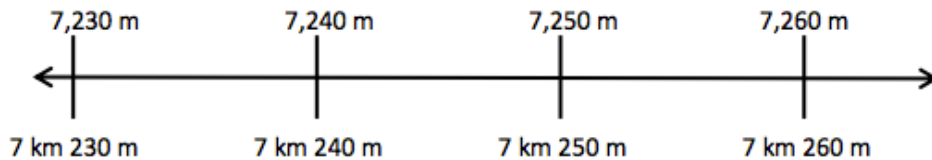
- If you have metric measurement tools at home, encourage your student to measure objects around the house
- Continue to talk about place value patterns with your student, e.g. how many 10s in 100? How many 100s in 1000?
- Review the vocabulary words in this unit, especially the new metric measurement words

Key Common Core Standards:

- **Solve problems involving measurement and conversion of measurements from a larger unit to a smaller unit**
 - Know relative sizes of measurement units within one system of units including kilometer (km), meter (m), centimeter (cm); kilogram (kg), gram (g); pound (lb), ounce (oz); liter (l), milliliter (ml); hour (hr), minute (min), second (sec). Within a single system of measurement, express measurements in a larger unit in terms of a smaller unit.
 - Use the four operations to solve word problems involving distances, liquid volumes, and masses of objects. Represent measurement quantities using diagrams such as number line diagrams that feature a measurement scale.



(Above) A number line from Module 2 showing multiple metric conversions



(Above) A number line from Module 2 showing both single unit and mixed unit numbers

Spotlight on Math Models:

Number Lines

You will often see this mathematical representation in A Story of Units.

A Story of Units has several key mathematical “models” that are used throughout a student’s elementary years.

The number line is a powerful, flexible model that students can use in many ways. In this particular module, students use the number line to mark off regular intervals for the metric units they are working with. Typically number lines show one set of units, such as ones (1, 2, 3, 4...13, 14, 15) but number lines can list two different sets of units showing equivalencies to aid in converting. When students label both sets of units, it helps reinforce the equivalencies and conversion rates between units (see above).

As students move through the grades, number lines can be used to examine the relationships between numbers in ever more detailed ways, including decimals, fractions, and eventually positive and negative numbers. See how many number lines you and your student can spot around your home!

Sample Problem from Module 2:
(Example taken from Module 2, Lesson 5)

The potatoes Beth bought weighed 3 kilograms 420 grams. Her onions weighed 1,050 grams less than the potatoes.

How much did the potatoes and onions weigh together?

