



Le litre ~ le gramme ~ le mètre

kilo-	hecto-	deca-	g	¢	deci-	centi-	milli-
1000	100	10	m		0.1	0.01	0.001

### A revolutionary system

After the French Revolution in 1789, the new people in charge wanted to get rid of the old ways of doing things. It was a time of huge change in France. The monarchy was abolished and replaced by a system of government that tried to make life fairer for everyone.

### The metric system

The French defined a universal way of measuring and counting. They asked scientists to develop a decimal system of measurements, which means a system based on the number 10. This "metric" system was not popular straightaway, but its ease of use saw it gradually spread around the world. The invention of the meter and the kilogram were of particular importance. Today, most countries use the metric system of weights and measures, which presents multiples of 10, as you can see in 1,000 for kilogram, for example.

### The imperial system

Some older systems of weights and measures are still in use today, alongside or instead of the metric system. The imperial system was defined in the British Weights and Measures Act of 1824, and set as a standard throughout the British Empire. In Great Britain and the United States, scientists measure distances in centimeters, meters, and kilometers, but road signs still use the old, imperial system of feet and miles.

### A new, easier system: modern ways of measuring

For hundreds of years, different units of measurement were used to buy and sell goods. This could be chaotic, confusing, and open to cheating. To make things more fair and, as we learned, to help civilizations grow, rulers gradually began to introduce standard systems of weights and measurements.