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10 Ratio Reasoning with Measurement Conversions



Introduction

If you know the relationship between two different units of measurement, you can use ratios to convert a measurement from one unit to another.

The relationship between units is known as the **conversion factor**. For example, there are 12 inches in 1 foot. There are two conversion factors that relate inches and feet.

$$\frac{12 \text{ in.}}{1 \text{ ft}} \text{ and } \frac{1 \text{ ft}}{12 \text{ in.}}$$

When you use a conversion factor, you choose the form that has the unit you want to find in the numerator.

Convert 15 feet to inches using a conversion factor.

You have feet and you want to know inches. Choose $\frac{12 \text{ in.}}{1 \text{ ft}}$ for the conversion factor.

Multiply the measurement you have by the conversion factor. Notice that the units of feet cancel out. Then multiply the numerators to get the result in inches.

$$15 \text{ ft} \times \frac{12 \text{ in.}}{1 \text{ ft}} = \frac{15 \cancel{\text{ft}}}{1} \times \frac{12 \text{ in.}}{1 \cancel{\text{ft}}} = 180 \text{ in.}$$

There are 180 inches in 15 feet.

Sometimes more than one conversion factor is needed.

Convert 10 pints to ounces.

You need conversion factors to change pints to cups and cups to ounces.

$$\frac{2 \text{ c}}{1 \text{ pt}} \text{ and } \frac{8 \text{ oz}}{1 \text{ c}}$$

Multiply using the conversion factors. Cancel out units.

$$10 \cancel{\text{pt}} \times \frac{2 \cancel{\text{c}}}{1 \cancel{\text{pt}}} \times \frac{8 \text{ oz}}{1 \cancel{\text{c}}} = 160 \text{ oz}$$

There are 160 ounces in 10 pints.

Some common conversion factors are:

$$1 \text{ yd} = 3 \text{ ft}$$

$$1 \text{ mi} = 5,280 \text{ ft}$$

$$1 \text{ mi} = 1,760 \text{ yd}$$

$$1 \text{ c} = 8 \text{ fl oz}$$

$$1 \text{ pt} = 2 \text{ c}$$

$$1 \text{ qt} = 2 \text{ pt}$$

$$1 \text{ gal} = 4 \text{ qt}$$

You can put the conversion factors in any order to multiply.

Think About It

When you convert from a larger unit to a smaller unit, will your number be smaller or larger? What about when you convert from a smaller unit to a larger unit?



Focused Instruction

Use conversion factors to convert measurements between systems of measurement.

- ▶ A tube contains 128 grams of toothpaste. About how many ounces of toothpaste, to the nearest tenth of an ounce, does it contain? Use $1 \text{ oz} \approx 28.3 \text{ g}$.

How much toothpaste is in the tube? _____

Is this amount given in a customary unit or a metric unit?

What unit is the problem asking you to convert the amount to?

What system of measurement is this unit in?

About how many grams are in 1 ounce? _____

Write the conversion factor as a ratio of ounces to grams. _____

Write an expression to show the number of grams multiplied by the conversion factor. Include the measurement units. _____

What unit of measurement is canceled out in your expression?

What unit remains? _____

Solve the expression to find the number of ounces of toothpaste, to the nearest tenth of an ounce. _____

Conversion factors between systems are not typically exact numbers.

The conversion factor should have the units you want in the numerator.

Use conversion factors to change rates. Be sure the units cancel out. Look carefully at which units you put in the numerator and the denominator of the conversion factor.

- An average horse can run 15 miles per hour. A bird can fly 30 feet per second. Which animal travels at a faster rate?

Convert the horse's speed to feet per second to compare the rates.

Write a conversion factor to convert miles to feet.

Write a conversion factor to convert hours to seconds.

Write an expression to convert 15 miles per hour to feet per second. Cancel out units and multiply.

Which animal travels at a faster rate? _____

How many seconds are in a minute? How many minutes are in an hour?

Make sure the units cancel out. If not, you may have used the wrong conversion factor.

Use what you know about conversions to answer these questions.

- How many feet is 3,251 yards? _____
- A glacier moves 152 feet a year. How many inches a day does it move? Round your answer to the nearest whole number. _____
- A melon has a mass of 1.3 kilograms. To the nearest pound, about how many pounds is that? Use $1 \text{ kg} \approx 2.205 \text{ lb}$. _____

Solve the following problems.

- 1 A gallon of gas costs \$3.79. Olive oil costs \$6.99 for 16 fluid ounces. Which costs more per ounce? Explain how you arrived at your answer.

Convert to the same units before you compare.

- 2 A fish tank at an aquarium holds 216,000 gallons of water. The tank is filled at a rate of 1 gallon per second. How many days will it take to fill this tank?

60 seconds = 1 minute
60 minutes = 1 hour
24 hours = 1 day

Answer _____ days

- 3 Convert 18 feet per second to inches per minute.

How many conversion factors do you need to use?

Answer _____ inches per minute

Solve the following problems.

- 1 About how many pints of soda are in a 2-liter bottle? Use $1 \text{ L} \approx 33.8 \text{ fl oz}$.
 - A 2.11
 - B 3.64
 - C 4.23
 - D 8.45
- 2 A car travels 294 miles on a full tank of gas. The car's gas tank holds 14 gallons. How many yards per gallon can this car travel?
 - A 21
 - B 63
 - C 24,640
 - D 36,960
- 3 The speed of light is approximately 3,000,000,000 meters per second. What is the speed of light in kilometers per minute? Show your work.

Answer _____ km/min

- 4 If 1 inch is about 2.54 centimeters, how many inches long is an 8-centimeter piece of ribbon? Give your answer to the nearest hundredth.

Answer _____ inches

- 5 Four pounds of hamburger can be made into 12 patties of equal weight. Each patty will be weighed in ounces.

Part A Write the conversion factor for pounds to ounces.

Answer _____

Part B How many ounces do 4 pounds of hamburger weigh?

Answer _____ ounces

Part C To the nearest whole number, how many grams will each hamburger weigh? Use $1 \text{ oz} \approx 28.3 \text{ g}$.

Answer _____ grams

- 6 One knot equals one nautical mile per hour. One nautical mile equals 1,852 meters.

Part A What conversion factors are used to convert knots to meters per second?

Answer _____

Part B What is the speed, in meters per second, of a ship traveling at a rate of 9 knots? Show your work or explain how you know.

7 Mark True or False for each of the following statements.

50 feet = 4 inches

5 miles = 8,800 yards

477 feet = 1,431 yards

20 quarts = 10 gallons

4 pints = 64 fluid ounces

80 ounces = 6 pounds

4,500 pounds = $2\frac{1}{4}$ tons

True

False

8 The area of a living room is 30 square yards. The width is 10 feet.

Part A What is the width of the living room in yards?

Answer _____ yards

Part B What is the length of the living room, in inches? Show your work.

Answer _____ inches