Reading scales

Key learning

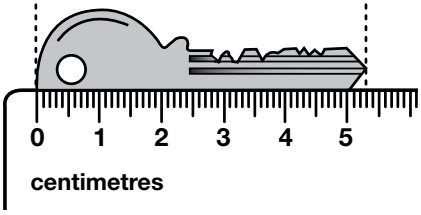
Read and interpret scales on a range of measuring instruments. Compare readings on different scales, and when using different instruments.

Check that your child can:

- read a scale on a thermometer, ruler, tape measure, jug and weighing scale;
- explain the units used when measuring;
- read a scale when only parts of it are numbered;
- create a scale to use to show measurements.

Notes for parents/carers

Children often find it difficult to read scales accurately. There are lots of opportunities to read scales in the home. Help your child to interpret scales in millimetres, centimetres and metres, millilitres and litres, grams and kilograms. Help them to read a measure when it falls between two unnumbered marks on a scale.



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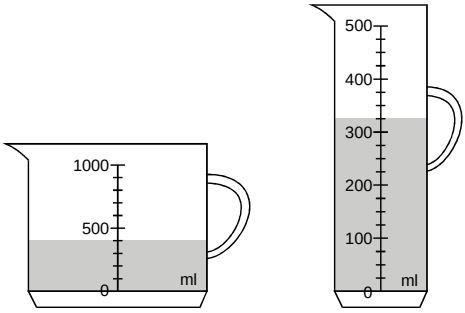
Questions to ask when measuring with your child

- How much does this weigh?
- What does each of these marks on the scale mean? Why are some marks bigger than others?
- Look at Jug B. What units are we measuring in? What does 300 mean on this scale?



Jug **A** Jug **B**

- How much more do you need to pour into Jug B to make the amount up to half a litre?
- This scale reads 650 g. What is that in kilograms?

Activities to carry out together

- Find out whether all of the doorways in your house are the same height and the same width.
- Compare the capacities of different containers by filling them with water and then tipping the water into a measuring jug.
- Take a set of containers and put them in order of capacity by estimating, then measure to find out their accurate capacities. Were there any surprises?
- Each of you estimates how much an apple weighs, then weigh it to see who was the more accurate.

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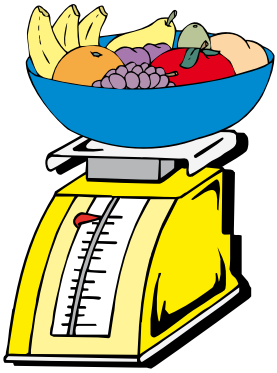
Try to find 'real' opportunities to give your child practical experience of measuring and reading scales in the home, such as:

- weighing ingredients for cooking;
- measuring up for new curtains;
- cutting a length of draft excluder to size, for use round a door;
- working out how many new, larger tiles would be needed round the bath;
- using a measuring jug to measure out quantities of liquid.



Listen to your child explaining something they have learnt in mathematics – this may help them understand even better.

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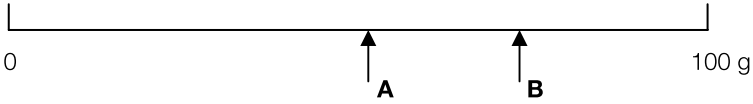
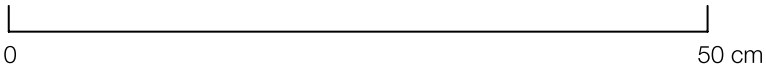
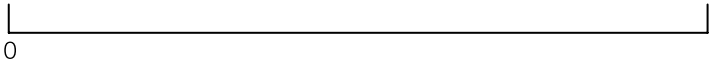
Example questions



The arrows A and B represent two measures made using the scale.
What are your estimates of these measures?



On the scale above, draw two arrows to show lengths of 35 cm and 13 cm.



One container holds 180 ml, another holds 340 ml. Create a scale of your own and use it to show these two measures.

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