

a selected number of conversions is necessary. With a little practice and repetition, nurses will be more comfortable with metric system vocabulary than with ounces, cups, gallons, pounds, inches, and yards.

The United States still uses the imprecise, old English system of measurement for popular purchases, such as food, fuel, lumber, fabric, and many other items.

In the metric system, the meter (m) is the *only* descriptor of *length*. It is a precise measurement that is modified by prefixes to change it by multiples of 10. In contrast, the English system uses various descriptors of length, including inches, feet, square feet, acres, and nautical miles.

To compare the English system, one must use a different unit. For example, 1 foot = 12 inches, 1 yard = 3 feet, 1 mile = 1,760 yards, and 1 nautical mile = 1.15 statute miles.

The metric system is used in the nursing field and in other measurement systems.

Essential Vocabulary sections concisely define terms introduced in each chapter.

ESSENTIAL Vocabulary

Apothecary System	Imprecise old English system of weights and measures. <i>Feet, yards, gallons, teaspoons, and cups</i> are apothecary terms. The system was formerly used for medication doses but has now been mostly replaced with precise metric system measurements for medications. The <i>grain</i> is the basic unit of weight in the apothecary system. <i>Apothecary</i> means “pharmacist.”
Base Units of Metric Measurement	Three base units are commonly used for metric measurement of medications to indicate weight (or mass), volume, and length: gram (g) , liter (L) , and meter (m) . ➤ Memorize these base units of measurement. The abbreviation for <i>liter</i> is capitalized, <i>L</i> , to avoid confusion with the number 1.
Household System of Measurement	Utensils used in the home, such as cups, teaspoons, tablespoons, droppers, etc. Their use can create a safety risk for measuring medication doses because of inconsistent capacities.
JCAHO	Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations, the accrediting body for health care organizations. The JCAHO issues a variety of directives, including some related to abbreviations and medication practices designed to improve patients’ safety.
Modern Metric System	Standardized international system of units and measurements based on powers of 10, established in France in the late 1800s and adopted for uniform measurement in most countries. Now used for most medication doses in the United States.
Units	Units in the metric system refer to a dimension, such as weight (or mass), volume, and length. Examples of metric units of measurement include kilogram (kg), microgram (mcg), milligram (mg), gram (g), liter (L), and meter (m). ➤ Write out the words <i>Unit</i> and <i>Units</i> ; do not use abbreviations such as U.

RAPID PRACTICE 3-1 Vocabulary Review

Estimated completion time: 10-15 minutes **Answers on page 000**

Directions: Study the vocabulary and write the answers in the space provided.

1 What is the name of the basic unit of weight in the apothecary system?

2 What are the three base units of the metric system? _____