

Common Prefixes

So you have some idea that a 1.2 **gigabyte** hard drive on your computer is preferable to a 500 **megabyte** hard drive, but you're not quite sure why. Or perhaps you've heard of curies, but don't know if **picocuries** are bigger or smaller, or by how much. This table will help! We give the prefix name, multiple it represents, decimal equivalent, common symbol, and the name in plain old English. To practice using these prefixes, see the [worksheet on converting units](#).

Multiple	Decimal equivalent	Prefix	Symbol	English
10^9	1,000,000,000	giga	G	billion
10^6	1,000,000	mega	M	million
10^3	1,000	kilo	k	thousand
10^2	100	hecto	h	hundred
10^1	10	deca/deka	da	ten
10^0	1	(none needed)	(n/a)	(n/a)
10^{-1}	0.1	deci	d	tenth
10^{-2}	0.01	centi	c	hundreth
10^{-3}	0.001	milli	m	thousandth
10^{-6}	0.000001	micro	μ (mu)	millionth
10^{-9}	0.000000001	nano	n	billionth
10^{-12}	0.000000000001	pico	p	trillionth

Published on 1996-04-16

Last modified on 2012-04-25