

Notes & Steps



Key idea

Capacity measures how much a container can hold. The common units are millilitres (mL), litres (L), and kilolitres (kL). $1000 \text{ mL} = 1 \text{ L}$, $1000 \text{ L} = 1 \text{ kL}$, and 1 mL of water weighs 1 g .

Steps

1. Identify the unit you have and the unit you need.
2. To convert $\text{L} \rightarrow \text{mL}$, multiply by 1000.
3. To convert $\text{mL} \rightarrow \text{L}$, divide by 1000.
4. For kL, multiply or divide by 1000 again.
5. Check: does your answer make sense? A bathtub is about 150 L , not 150 mL .

Common mistake

Confusing mL and L. A can of drink is 330 mL , not 330 L (that would fill several bathtubs). Always imagine the container.

Capacity benchmarks

- ▶ **1 mL:** a drop of water, a teaspoon
- ▶ **5 mL:** a standard teaspoon
- ▶ **250 mL:** a standard cup
- ▶ **330 mL:** a can of drink
- ▶ **500 mL:** a sports bottle
- ▶ **1 L:** a carton of milk
- ▶ **1.5–2 L:** a water bottle
- ▶ **5–10 L:** a bucket
- ▶ **100–200 L:** a bath
- ▶ **1 kL:** a small water tank
- ▶ **10 kL:** a swimming pool (small)

Try these

1. Convert 2.5 L to mL .
2. Convert 1500 mL to L .
3. How many 250 mL cups in a 2 L bottle?

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Example 1: L to mL

A bottle holds 1.75 L of water. Convert to mL.

$$1.75 \times 1000 = 1750 \text{ mL}$$

Example 2: mL to L

A jug contains 850 mL of juice. How many litres?

$$850 \div 1000 = 0.85 \text{ L}$$

Example 3: filling glasses

A 2 L bottle fills 250 mL glasses. How many?

$$2000 \div 250 = 8 \text{ glasses}$$

Example 4: kL conversion

A water tank holds 3.5 kL. How many litres?

$$3.5 \times 1000 = 3500 \text{ L}$$