

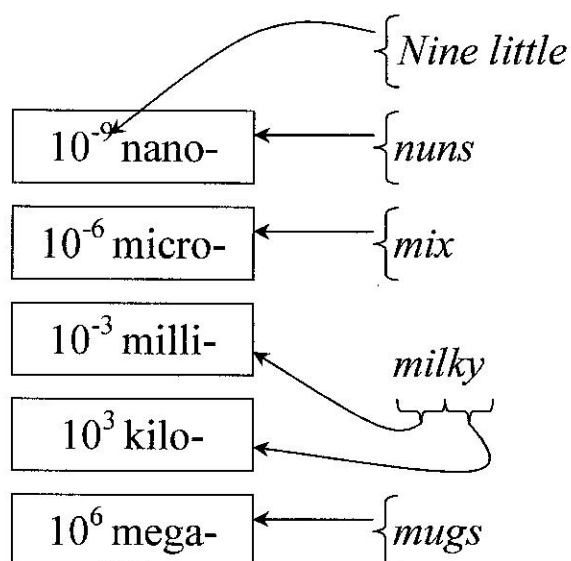
PREFIXES FOR THE SI UNITS

MULTIPLE	PREFIX	SYMBOL
$10^{12}$	tera- ['terə]	T
$10^9$	giga- ['dʒɪgə] / ['gɪgə]	G
$10^6$	mega- ['megə]	M
$10^3$	kilo- ['kilə(u)]	k
$10^{-2}$	centi- ['sentɪ] <sup>1</sup>	c
$10^{-3}$	milli- ['mɪli]	m
$10^{-6}$	micro- ['maɪkrə(u)]	$\mu^2$
$10^{-9}$	nano- ['næno(u)]	n
$10^{-12}$	pico- ['pi:kə(u)]	p

<sup>1</sup> The prefix centi- is only used in the centimetre; a hundredth of a gram would not be written as 1 cg but as 10 mg.

<sup>2</sup> Note that the abbreviation for micro is the Greek letter  $\mu$ . A common mistake is to confuse it with m (milli-) or M (mega-).

There are other prefixes even less common, used for extremely large and small quantities. For instance, 1 femtometre =  $10^{-35}$  m is a convenient unit of distance in nuclear physics. The international committee that makes decision about the SI has recently even added some new prefixes that sound like joke, e.g. 1 yoctogram =  $10^{-24}$  g is about half the mass of a proton.



'*Nine little nuns mix milky mugs*' is a mnemonic to help you remember the most important prefixes of the SI. The word 'little' is to remind you that the list starts with the prefixes used for small quantities and builds upward. The exponent changes by 3 with each step, except that of course we do not need a special prefix for  $10^0$ , which equals one.