PC1221 Fundamentals of Physics I

Semester-1, AY10/11

course website: http://www.physics.nus.edu.sg/~phytaysc/pc1221_10

Lectures 1 and 2

Introduction, Historical Overview and Measurement

A/Prof Tay Seng Chuan

Ground Rules

- Switch off your handphone and pager
- Switch off your laptop computer and keep it
- No talking while lecture is going on
- No gossiping while the lecture is going on
- Raise your hand if you have question to ask
- Be on time for lecture
- Be on time to come back from the recess break to continue the lecture
- Bring your lecturenotes to lecture

Introduction of Lecturer

A/Prof Tay Seng Chuan
Tel: 65168752
Email: scitaysc@nus.edu.sg
Office: S16-08-13, Dean's Office at Level 8
URL: http://www.physics.nus.edu.sg/~phytaysc

Current Duties in NUS:

Day: Associate Dean (Special Duties), Associate Professor (Physics), Head of Faculty IT Unit (Science), Co-coordinator for SM2/SM3 Programmes (MOE), Associate Director (Office of Alumni Relations) representing Temasek Hall. I am also a regular project mentor of Science Mentorship Programme for Secondary School students (MOE Gifted Education Programme).

Night: Assistant Master of Temasek Hall, Bursar, Resident Fellow (Block E).

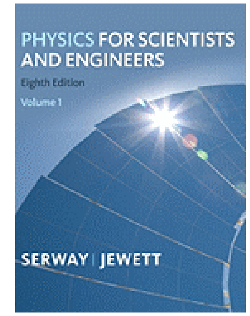
Consultation for PC1221

- Day: S16-08-13, Dean's Office at Level 8. By email (scitaysc@nus.edu.sg) or telephone call (65168752) for appointment. It is better to give a telephone call before you come to see me. I would appreciate that you will indentify yourself when you call me.
- Night: Temasek Hall, Block E, Unit E100. Please make appointment in advance if you need to consult me at night so that I will be waiting for you.

Assessments for this module

- 5 sets of lab report and 1 data analysis assignment– 20%
- 2 Tests (Closed Book) – 20%
  (Tentatively on Week 5 and Week 9)
- Final Exam (Closed Book) – 60%

Textbooks (Have been reserved at the Science library at Red Spot Section)



Main text: Physics for Scientists and Engineers, Volume 1 by Raymond A Serway, John W Jewett, 8th Edition, ISBN-13: 978-1-4390-4876-4, ISBN-10: 1-4390-4876-2, Brooks/Cole CENGAGLE LEARNING. Available at NUS Coop, behind LT27.

Complementary reference book:

Physics – Giancoli, ISBN 0-13-611971-9, Prentice Hall.

Contents

- This module is for students **without** Physics qualifications at GCE “A” level or its equivalent. You should not take this module if you have “A” level Physics or its equivalent
- In this module I will introduce you to only two main topics in Physics:
  - Mechanics
  - Thermodynamics

How we are going to do it

- 2 lectures/week
  (1 hour and 45 minutes/session)
- 1 Data Analysis session in week-2
- 5 Laboratory sessions (3 hours/session)
- 5 Tutorial sessions (45 minutes/session)
- 2 Tests (40 minutes each)
- Consultation
  (mass consultation and appointment)
- Final exam (2 hours)

Timetable: PC1221 Exam on 29 Nov 2010 Monday at 9am

Semester 1	Mon 2 August – Sat 4 Dec 2010	18 weeks
Orientation Week:	Mon 2 Aug – Sat 7 Aug 2010	1 week
Instructional Period: Week 1	Mon 9 Aug – Fri 13 Aug 2010 (a)	6 weeks
Week 2	Mon 16 Aug – Fri 20 Aug 2010	
Week 3	Mon 23 Aug – Fri 27 Aug 2010	
Week 4	Mon 30 Aug – Fri 3 Sep 2010	
Week 5	Mon 6 Sep – Fri 10 Sep 2010 (b)	
Week 6	Mon 13 Sep – Fri 17 Sep 2010	
Recess Week:	Sat 18 Sep – Sun 26 Sep 2010	1 week
Instructional Period: Week 7	Mon 27 Sep – Fri 1 Oct 2010	7 weeks
Week 8	Mon 4 Oct – Fri 8 Oct 2010	
Week 9	Mon 11 Oct – Fri 15 Oct 2010	
Week 10	Mon 17 Oct – Fri 22 Oct 2010	
Week 11	Mon 25 Oct – Fri 29 Oct 2010	
Week 12	Mon 1 Nov – Fri 5 Nov 2010 (c)	
Week 13	Mon 8 Nov – Fri 12 Nov 2010	
Reading Week:	Sat 13 Nov – Fri 19 Nov 2010	1 week
Examination:	Sat 20 Nov – Sat 4 Dec 2010	2 weeks

Schedule

- Lecture on Tuesday and Friday, 10am – 12noon, LT25.
- Examination (Closed Book): 29 Nov 2010 Monday at 9am
- Data analysis (computer class) will be conducted on week-2 at S13-04. All students are to attend and will have to hand in the assignments on time. For the subsequent weeks, please go to Physics year-1 lab at S12-04 to do Physics experiments and this is to be alternated with Physics tutorial.
- There are two main different schedules of lab/tutorial sequence (i.e., odd/even weeks or even/odd weeks).

Data Analysis (You can attend any session)

1. Tuesday (17th August), 2-5pm
2. Wednesday (18th August), 2-5pm
3. Thursday (19th August), 2-5pm
4. Friday (20th August), 2-5pm

(i) The venue is CSD laboratory 1, S13-04-16.
(ii) Students can attend any of the above sessions. No registration is required.
(iii) All students are required to submit this assignment by 30th August, 5pm to level 1000 Physics laboratory (S12-04-02).
(iv) For students taking more than one level 1000 Physics modules, they only need to submit one assignment.
(v) The assignment will be counted equivalently to one experiment towards the assessment of the laboratory component.

Schedule for Tutorial - PC1221

(Alternate week basis)

Time / Day	9 - 10	10 - 11	11 - 12	12 - 1	1 - 2	2 - 3	3 - 4
Monday							T1, T6
Tuesday							T2, T7
Wednesday							T3, T8
Thursday	T4, T9						T5, T10

Venue: Block S11-03-01 Physics Lab Instruction Room

T1, T2, T3, T4, T5: Tutorial on even weeks.

T6, T7, T8, T9, T10: Tutorial on odd weeks.

Schedule for Practical - PC1221

WEEK / Day	3, 5, 7, 9, 11 9 - 12 nn	4, 6, 8, 10, 12 9 - 12 nn	3, 5, 7, 9, 11 2 - 5 pm	4, 6, 8, 10, 12 2 - 5 pm
Monday			A1	A6
Tuesday			A2	A7
Wednesday			A3	A8
Thursday	A4	A9	A5	A10

Venue: Block S12, 04-02 Level 1 Physics Lab

Week-2 is for Data Analysis in Computer Lab at S13-04-16.

The Sequence in Semester-1 of AY10-11

Week	Date	PC1221
1	Mon 9/8 – 13/8 Fri *	X
2	Mon 16/8 – 20/8 Fri	Data Analysis
3	Mon 23/8 – 27/8 Fri	TUTORIAL 1 / PRACTICAL 1
4	Mon 30/8 – 3/9 Fri	TUTORIAL 1 / PRACTICAL 1
5	Mon 6/9 – 10/9 Fri *	TUTORIAL 2 / PRACTICAL 2
6	Mon 13/9 - 17/9 Fri	TUTORIAL 2 / PRACTICAL 2
	18/9 – 26/9	Recess
7	Mon 27/9 – 1/10 Fri	TUTORIAL 3 / PRACTICAL 3
8	Mon 4/10 – 8/10 Fri	TUTORIAL 3 / PRACTICAL 3
9	Mon 11/10 – 15/10 Fri	TUTORIAL 4 / PRACTICAL 4
10	Mon 18/10 – 22/10 Fri	TUTORIAL 4 / PRACTICAL 4
11	Mon 25/10 – 29/10 Fri	TUTORIAL 5 / PRACTICAL 5
12	Mon 1/11 – 5/11 Fri *	TUTORIAL 5 / PRACTICAL 5
13	Mon 8/11 – 12/11 Fri	
14	Sat 13/11 – 19/11 Fri	Reading week (preparation for examination)
15 & 16	20/11 - 4/12	Exam

*: Public holiday in the week. Please make up your session in other group.

Resources

- IVLE (Integrated Virtual Learning Environment): http://ivle.nus.edu.sg

  You can post questions there for discussion. All students are encouraged to contribute their answers.

  (IVLE is solely for academic discussion purpose.)

Expectations

- Attend all lectures, labs and tutorials
- Participate in IVLE discussion at least twice a week
- Lectures
  - Spend 30 mins reading the textbook and lecture notes on the topics to be covered in each upcoming lecture.
  - Spend 60 mins reading and practicing the questions in the textbook after the lecture.
- Tutorials
  - Prepared fully written answers for most of the questions at least one night before. You can be asked to show your solutions so please do your homework.

Expectations

- Laboratory
  - Read the Lab scripts before your scheduled sessions
  - Come with a spirit of wanting to learn
  - **Plagiarism is a serious offence in all NUS modules**
- Course website
  - Regularly access course website for up-to-date materials
  - Soft copy of lecturenotes will be uploaded <u>after</u> each lecture

Support Team at Physics Year-1 Lab

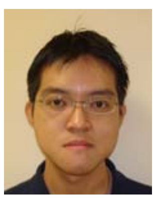
Mdm Pang Teng Jar
Lab In Charge

Mdm Cheong, Elaine

Mr Foong Chee Kong

Mdm Koh Siew Lee

Teaching Team



Mr. Lim Yen Kheng

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Tutor (except ?)

A/Prof Tay Seng Chuan

Lecturer for all, and Tutor for ?

Mr Kenneth Hong

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Lab Instructor (Assisted by Honours Year and Graduate Students)

End of Introduction

Any question?

Historical Overview

- Physics is a fundamental science
  - concerned with the basic principles of the Universe
  - foundation of other physical sciences
- Physics is divided into six major areas
  - Classical Mechanics
  - Relativity
  - Thermodynamics
  - Electromagnetism
  - Optics
  - Quantum Mechanics

Classical Physics

- Mechanics and electromagnetism are basic to all other branches of classical physics
- Classical physics developed before 1900
  - Our study will start with Classical Mechanics
    - Also called Newtonian Mechanics

Classical Physics, cont

Includes

- Mechanics
  - Major developments by Newton (1642 - 1727), and continuing through the latter part of the 19th century
- Thermodynamics
- Optics
- Electromagnetism
  - All of these were not developed until the latter part of the 19th century mainly because the apparatus was too crude or unavailable.

Modern Physics

- Began near the end of the 19th century
- Phenomena that could not be explained by classical physics, eg, when the speed of an particle is extremely fast (near speed of light)
- Includes theories of relativity (Albert Einstein, 1879-1955) and quantum mechanics

Classical Mechanics Today

- Still important in many disciplines, eg, bio-physics
- There is a wide range of phenomena that can be explained with classical mechanics, eg, traffic congestion along highways
- Many basic principles carry over into other phenomena and applications, eg, high speed computation, unmanned planetary explorations, manned moon landings, etc.
- Conservation Laws also apply directly to other areas such as in global warming, tidal wave etc.

Objective of Physics

- To find the limited number of fundamental laws that govern natural phenomena
- To use these laws to develop theories that can predict the results of future experiments
- Express the laws in the language of mathematics
- We want to put down the ideas in concrete form (in written words).

Theory and Experiments

- They should complement each other
- When a discrepancy occurs, theory may be modified, and usually not the other way around. We should not cheat in our experiment. It is also now a criminal offence to cheat in research work (misuse of public fund).

Theory and Experiments, cont

- Theory may apply to limited conditions only. It may not be able to explain all physical phenomena.
  - Example: Newtonian Mechanics is confined to objects traveling slowly with respect to the speed of light
- We should try to develop a more general theory. Why?

A specific explanation to a particular case may not be applicable to other cases.

Quantities Used

- In mechanics, three *basic quantities* are used
  - Length
  - Mass
  - Time
- We will also use *derived quantities*
  - Derived quantities can be expressed in terms of basic quantities

Standards of Quantities

- Standardized systems
  - agreed upon by some authority, usually a governmental body.
- SI – Systéme International
  - agreed to in 1960 by an international committee
  - SI system is used in this module
- Common denomination used is base 10. Why?

Length

- Units
  - SI – meter, m
- Defined in terms of a meter – the distance traveled by light in a vacuum during a given time of 1/299792458 second (announced in October 1983).

Table 1.1

Approximate Values of Some Measured Lengths

	Length (m)
Distance from the Earth to the most remote known quasar	1.4×10^{26}
Distance from the Earth to the most remote normal galaxies	9×10^{25}
Distance from the Earth to the nearest large galaxy (M 31, the Andromeda galaxy)	2×10^{22}
Distance from the Sun to the nearest star (Proxima Centauri)	4×10^{16}
One lightyear	9.46×10^{15}
Mean orbit radius of the Earth about the Sun	1.50×10^{11}
Mean distance from the Earth to the Moon	3.84×10^{8}
Distance from the equator to the North Pole	1.00×10^{7}
Mean radius of the Earth	6.37×10^{6}
Typical altitude (above the surface) of a satellite orbiting the Earth	2×10^{5}
Length of a football field	9.1×10^{1}
Length of a housefly	5×10^{-3}
Size of smallest dust particles	$\sim 10^{-4}$
Size of cells of most living organisms	$\sim 10^{-5}$
Diameter of a hydrogen atom	$\sim 10^{-10}$
Diameter of an atomic nucleus	$\sim 10^{-14}$
Diameter of a proton	$\sim 10^{-15}$

91 m

Mass

- Units
  - SI – kilogram, kg
- Defined in terms of a kilogram, based on a specific cylinder made of platinum-iridium alloy kept at the International Bureau of Standards in France

Table 1.2

Masses of Various Objects (Approximate Values)

	Mass (kg)
Observable Universe	$\sim 10^{52}$
Milky Way galaxy	$\sim 10^{42}$
Sun	1.99×10^{30}
Earth	5.98×10^{24}
Moon	7.36×10^{22}
Shark	$\sim 10^{3}$
Human	$\sim 10^{2}$
Frog	$\sim 10^{-1}$
Mosquito	$\sim 10^{-5}$
Bacterium	$\sim 1 \times 10^{-15}$
Hydrogen atom	1.67×10^{-27}
Electron	9.11×10^{-31}

~100 kg

Time

- Units
  - seconds, s
- Defined in terms of the oscillation of radiation from a cesium atom (stable for 20 million years)

(Cesium is used to make atomic clock)

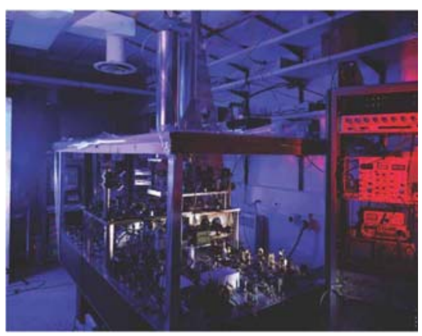


Table 1.3

Approximate Values of Some Time Intervals

	Time Interval (s)
Age of the Universe	5×10^{17}
Age of the Earth	1.3×10^{17}
Average age of a college student	6.3×10^{8}
One year	3.2×10^{7}
One day (time interval for one revolution of the Earth about its axis)	8.6×10^{4}
One class period	3.0×10^{3}
Time interval between normal heartbeats	8×10^{-1}
Period of audible sound waves	$\sim 10^{-3}$
Period of typical radio waves	$\sim 10^{-6}$
Period of vibration of an atom in a solid	$\sim 10^{-13}$
Period of visible light waves	$\sim 10^{-15}$
Duration of a nuclear collision	$\sim 10^{-22}$
Time interval for light to cross a proton	$\sim 10^{-24}$

$6.3\text{x}10^{8}/(3600\text{x}24\text{x}365)=19.98$ years

Calculate the ages of your parents in seconds.

Number Notation

- When writing out numbers with many digits, it is recommended that you space them in groups of three
  - No commas (comma is used in financial figure, eg: $45,000)
- Examples:
  - 25 100
  - 5.123 456 789 12

Reasonableness of Results

- When solving a problem, we need to check our answer to see if it seems reasonable. Eg: Your weight of 62.5345456 kg is an unnecessarily overloaded figure. Simply 62.5 kg will do!!

Systems of Measurements, cont

- US Customary
  - Length is measured in feet
  - Time is measured in seconds
  - Mass is measured in slugs

Prefixes

- The prefixes can be used with any base units
- They are multipliers of the base unit
- Examples:
  - 1 mm = 10^{-3} m
  - 1 mg = 10^{-3} g

Table 1.4

Prefixes for Powers of Ten

Power	Prefix	Abbreviation
10^{-24}	yocto	y
10^{-21}	zepto	z
10^{-18}	atto	a
10^{-15}	femto	f
10^{-12}	pico	p
10^{-9}	nano	n
10^{-6}	micro	μ
10^{-3}	milli	m
10^{-2}	centi	c
10^{-1}	deci	d
10^{3}	kilo	k
10^{6}	mega	M
10^{9}	giga	G
10^{12}	tera	T
10^{15}	peta	P
10^{18}	exa	E
10^{21}	zetta	Z
10^{24}	yotta	Y

Model Building

- A ***model*** is a system of physical components
  - Identify the components
  - Make predictions about the behavior of the system
    - The predictions will be based on interactions among the components and/or
    - Based on the interactions between the components and the environment
    - Model is evolving

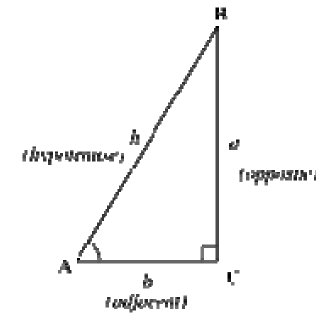
Model of Trigonometric Functions

$$\sin A = \frac{\text{opposite}}{\text{hypotenuse}} = \frac{a}{h}$$

$$\cos A = \frac{\text{adjacent}}{\text{hypotenuse}} = \frac{b}{h}$$

$$\tan A = \frac{\text{opposite}}{\text{adjacent}} = \frac{a}{b}$$

$$\tan A = \frac{\sin A}{\cos A}$$



Question: A high fountain of water is located at the center of a circular pool as in Figure. Not wishing to get his feet wet, a student walks around the pool and measures its circumference to be 15.0 m. Next, the student stands at the edge of the pool and uses a protractor to gauge the angle of elevation of the top of the fountain to be 55.0°. How high is the fountain?

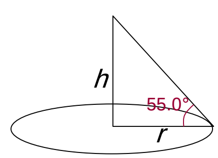
Answer:

$$2\pi r = 15.0\text{ m}$$

$$r = 2.39\text{ m}$$

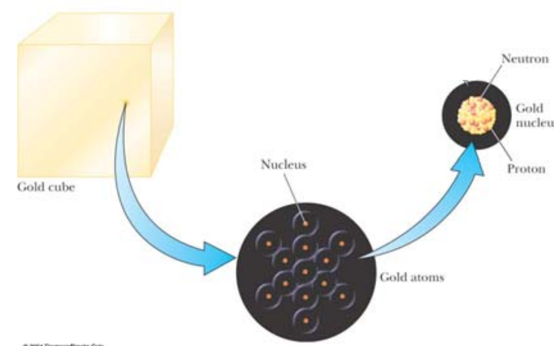
$$\frac{h}{r} = \tan 55.0°$$

$$h = (2.39\text{ m})\tan(55.0°) = \boxed{3.41\text{ m}}$$



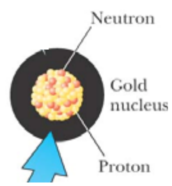
Models of Matter

- Some Greeks thought matter is made of atoms
- JJ Thomson (1897) found electrons and showed atoms had structure
- Rutherford (1911) discovered central nucleus surrounded by electrons



Models of Matter, cont

- Nucleus has structure, containing protons and neutrons
  - Number of protons gives atomic number
  - Total number of protons and neutrons gives mass number
- Protons and neutrons are made up of quarks



- There are 6 types of quarks, named as up, down, strange, charmed, bottom and top.
- The up, charmed and top quarks have electric charges of +2/3 that of the proton.
- The down, strange, and bottom quarks have charges of -1/3 that of the proton.
- Each proton has 2 up quarks and 1 down quark, and each neutron has 2 down quark and 1 up quark.

Can you explain why each proton has +1 unit of charge, and neutron has no charge?

Modeling Technique

- Important technique is to build a model for a problem
  - Identify a system of physical components for the problem
  - Make predictions of the behavior of the system based on the interactions among the components and/or the components and the environment

Density

- Density is an example of a ***derived*** quantity
- It is defined as mass per unit volume

$$\rho = \frac{m}{V}$$

- Units are kg/m^3

Table 1.5

Densities of Various Substances	
Substance	Density ρ (10^3 kg/m^3)
Platinum	21.45
Gold	19.3
Uranium	18.7
Lead	11.3
Copper	8.92
Iron	7.86
Aluminum	2.70
Magnesium	1.75
Water	1.00
Air at atmospheric pressure	0.0012

~ Mass of about 15 soldiers for 1 m^3 of water.

Atomic Mass

- The atomic mass is the total number of protons and neutrons in the element
- Can be measured in ***atomic mass units***, u
  - 1 u = 1.6605387 x 10^{-27} kg

Basic Quantities and Their Dimension

- Dimension has a specific meaning - it denotes the physical nature of a quantity
- Dimensions are denoted with square brackets
  - Length [L]
  - Mass [M]
  - Time [T]

Dimensional Analysis

- Technique to check the correctness of an equation or to assist in deriving an equation
- Dimensions (length, mass, time, combinations) can be treated as algebraic quantities
  - add, subtract, multiply, divide
- Both sides of equation must have the same dimensions

Dimensional Analysis, cont.

- Cannot give numerical factors: this is its limitation
- Dimensions of some common quantities are given below

Table 1.6

Units of Area, Volume, Velocity, Speed, and Acceleration

System	Area (L^2)	Volume (L^3)	Speed (L/T)	Acceleration (L/T^2)
SI	m^2	m^3	m/s	m/s^2
U.S. customary	ft^2	ft^3	ft/s	ft/s^2

Symbols

- The symbol used in an equation is not necessarily the symbol used for its dimension

  Eg: $x = v \times t$, i.e., distance = velocity × time
- Some quantities have one symbol used consistently
  - For example, time is *t*
  - Some quantities have many symbols used, depending upon the specific situation. For example, lengths may be x, y, z, r, d, h, etc.

Dimensional Analysis, example

- Given the equation: $x = \frac{1}{2} a t^2$, where *a* is acceleration (*v* / *t*, i.e., (L/T)/T), *t* is time, and *x* is distance
- Check dimensions on each side:

$$L = \frac{L}{T^2} \cdot T^2 = L$$

- The T^2's cancel each other, leaving L for the dimensions of each side
  - The equation is dimensionally correct
  - There are no dimensions for the constant ½.

Example. Newton's law of universal gravitation is represented by

$$F = \frac{GMm}{r^2}$$

Here *F* is the gravitational force exerted by one small object on another, *M* and *m* are the masses of the objects, and *r* is a distance. Force has the SI units kg·m/s². What are the SI units of the proportionality constant *G*?

Answer: Inserting the proper units for everything except *G*,

$$\frac{[m]^2}{[kg]^2} \times \left[\frac{kg\,m}{s^2}\right] = \frac{G[kg]^2}{[m]^2} \times \frac{[m]^2}{[kg]^2}$$

Multiply both sides by $[m]^2$ and divide by $[kg]^2$; the units of *G* are $\boxed{\frac{m^3}{kg \cdot s^2}}$.

Question. If an equation is dimensionally correct, does it always mean that the equation is correct?

Answer:

If an equation is dimensionally correct, it does not always mean that the equation is correct. E.g., 1 “monkeys” = 4 “monkeys” is dimensionally correct, but 1 is not equal to 4.

For an equation to be correct, it must first be dimensionally correct. E.g., 6 “monkeys” = 6 “apples” is dimensionally not correct so the equation is not correct.

Conversion of Units

- When units are not consistent, you may need to convert them to appropriate ones
- Units can be treated like algebraic quantities that can cancel each other
- See the inside of the back cover for an extensive list of conversion factors, eg,

  1 in. = 2.54 cm, 1 slug = 14.59 kg,

  1 gal = 3.786 L, etc.

Conversion

- Always include units for every quantity, you can carry the units through the entire calculation
- Multiply original value by a ratio equal to one
- Example $15.0\,\text{in} = ?\,\text{cm}$

$$15.0\,\text{in}\left(\frac{2.54\,\text{cm}}{1\,\text{in}}\right) = 38.1\,\text{cm}$$

Conversion

- Cross Multiplying Reasoning

  Example

$$1\ \text{in} = 2.54\ \text{cm}$$
$$15\ \text{in} = x\ \text{cm}$$

$$1 \times x = 2.54 \times 15$$
$$x = 38.1\ \text{cm}$$

Uncertainty in Measurements

- There is uncertainty in every **measurement** -- this uncertainty carries over through the calculations
  - need a technique to account for this uncertainty
- We will use rules for significant figures to approximate the uncertainty in results of calculations

Significant Figures

- A significant figure is one that is reliably known
- Zeros may or may not be significant
  - Eg, How accurate is 1500 kg in a measurement? Is the accuracy up to 1 kg, 10 kg, or 100 kg?
  - Those zeros used to position the decimal point are not significant. Eg, 0.00075
  - To remove ambiguity, use scientific notation
- In a measurement, the significant figures include the first estimated digit

Significant Figures, examples

- 0.0075 m has 2 significant figures
  - The leading zeros are placeholders only
  - Can write in scientific notation to show more clearly: 7.5×10^{-3} m for 2 significant figures
- 10.0 m has 3 significant figures
  - The decimal point gives information about the reliability of the measurement
- 1500 m is ambiguous
  - Use 1.5×10^3 m for 2 significant figures
  - Use 1.50×10^3 m for 3 significant figures
  - Use 1.500×10^3 m for 4 significant figures
  - On the safe side, we usually treat the number as 1.5×10^3 for 2 significant figures if there is no further information

Operations with Significant Figures – Multiplying or Dividing

- When **multiplying or dividing**, the number of significant figures in the final answer is the same as the number of significant figures in the quantity having the **lowest number of significant figures**.
- Example: 25.57 m x 2.45 m = 62.6 m^2 (not 62.6465)
  - This is because 2.45 m limits our result to 3 significant figures

Operations with Significant Figures – Adding or Subtracting

- When adding or subtracting, the number of decimal places in the result should equal the smallest number of decimal places in any term in the sum.
- Example: 135 cm + 3.251 cm = 138 cm (not 138.251 as 135 has no decimal place)
  - The 135 cm limits your answer to the units decimal value

Operations With Significant Figures – Summary

- The rule for addition and subtraction are different than the rule for multiplication and division of **measured data**.
- For adding and subtracting, the ***number of decimal places*** is the important consideration, eg, 101.3 + 3.624 = 104.9 (not 104.924 because 101.3 has 1 decimal place only), 123+5.35 = 128 (not 128.35 because 123 has no decimal place), 1.0001 + 0.0003 = 1.0004, 1.002-0.998 = 0.004 (1 significant digit).
- For multiplying and dividing, the ***number of significant figures*** is the important consideration, eg 8912.458 x 0.72 = 6400 (not 6416.96976 because 0.72 has 2 significant figures), 98.76/1.21 = 81.6 (not 81.6198347 because 1.21 has 3 significant figures.)

Rounding (Proposed New Model)

- Rounding can worsen the accuracy of calculation (the more rounded figures you use the worse is the accuracy) but why are we doing it. One of the reasons is that computation can be faster with less number of digits. So we have to come up with a scheme to manage the inaccuracy, i.e., to make the inaccuracy not too inaccurate. Our scheme is as follows:

1. Last retained digit is increased by 1 if the last digit dropped is greater than 5, eg: round 99.4**7** will give 99.5.
2. Last retained digit remains as it is if the last digit dropped is less than 5, eg: round 99.4**2** will give 99.4.
3. If the last digit dropped is equal to 5, the retained digit should be rounded to the nearest even number, eg: round 99.4**5** will give 99.4, and round 99.5**5** will give 99.6. We hope by doing so in the long run we can reduce the accumulation of arithmetic inaccuracy (the terms level out by themselves in the long arithmetic process).
4. Saving rounding until the final result will help eliminate accumulation of errors, i.e., don't do rounding during the intermediate steps.

This is the procedure we use and is different from what we have learnt in secondary school.

Notes:

- What is taught here is a **proposed** model.
- This does not mean that all calculations will have to adopt the new model. For example, the Microsoft Excel Software does not adopt the proposed new model.
- When the accuracy of data is not mentioned, we assume that the data is absolutely and infinitely accurate thus the rules mentioned in this chapter do not apply. E.g., 12.34 is treated as 12.3400000000...
- We apply the rules only when its application is instructed, i.e., when you are told to do so.
- In any models, rounding should be done only in the last step. All intermediate steps and all intermediate answers should not be rounded and all digits must be kept.