

Discussion:

How do we select the best unit for measuring a certain length?

Explain that selecting a unit depends on a number of factors:

- Firstly, the length being measured; we want a measurement that does not have either a very large or a very small number in it. For example, it is more convenient to say a person is 1.6 m or 160 cm tall, rather than 1600 mm or 0.0016 km.
- Secondly, industry standard is important. When several measurements are used together, it is less likely that mistakes are made if only one unit is used. For example, builders measure most lengths in millimetres, dressmakers use centimetre. (Use example of the Mars Climate Orbiter mission that burned up in the Martian atmosphere. There was a mix up with using different units and it travelled too fast, too close and was destroyed.)

Which of these length measurement units is best used in the following situations?

	mm	cm	m	km
Your GPS shows the destination				
You are cutting a piece of wood before sawing it.				
You are measuring your bedroom to work out the dimensions of the walls before painting it.				
Distance the postman travels in one day?				
Height of a building.				



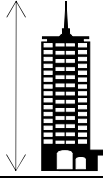
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ANSWERS

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