

Teaching Information - Area

Information for Teachers: Square Metric Units

There is some confusion among many people about how to name metric units of area.

The standard area units are the square meter, square centimeter, square millimeter, square kilometer and the hectare.

Apart from the hectare, each area unit is based on a square with a length unit on each side. The abbreviation for each unit includes the normal length abbreviation, followed by a superscript "2", showing that the unit has effectively been "squared".

The mistake a lot of children (and some adults) make is to read the unit names from the abbreviation, left to right: "centimeters squared", for example.

The correct way to read these units is to put the word "square" first, before the length unit name:

- mm² - sq
- cm² - sq
- m² - squa
- km² - sq

Lastly, the he

- ha - hect
- superscr



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quare"

Steps in co

- Use int
- Learn to measure, recognise and use square meters
- Visualise, recognise and use square centimeters
- Visualise, recognise and use square millimeters

For lists of other metric and customary units, see Wikipedia:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_System_of_Units
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_customary_units

Most countries in the world now use metric units of measure for area.

Explain to students that US spelling of several metric units is different to other countries, including Australia & the UK. The abbreviated version though, is the same in all countries.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| • square meter (USA) | square metre (Australia & UK) | m ² |
| • square centimeter (USA) | square centimetre (Australia & UK) | cm ² |
| • square millimeter (USA) | square millimetre (Australia & UK) | mm ² |
| • square kilometer (USA) | square kilometre (Australia & UK) | km ² |