

# NIE



## Did you know?

A 'LICK' was used by the Greeks to measure the distance from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the index finger. Today the word lick can refer to a small quantity or a bit (eg, a lick of paint).



### Number know-how

**Number measure**  
TODAY you may have weighed yourself, poured ½ cup of milk onto your cereal, checked the temperature outside to help you decide what to wear, decided on the size of a container for your lunch, found out how far it was to school and kept an eye on the time.

- To measure something you have to:
- select an attribute of the thing to be measured.
  - choose an appropriate unit of measure.
  - determine the number of units.

#### Try this

**Activity:** Make up your own unit of measurement. What are its strengths and weaknesses in terms of measuring an attribute?

**Activity:** In news stories, units of measurements may be used to refer to the size of things.

Write down what type of story or feature in the newspaper would use the following units of measurement: metres; kilograms; acres; litres; celsius; kilometre

**Activity:** Choose a page in the newspaper.

- Measure in sq cm the area of:
- the whole page
  - each advertisement on the page
  - each story

# THE NUMBERS GAME

NUMBERS play an enormous role in human society. Without them we would struggle to differentiate between things.

Numbers can be used to count, label, order, identify, measure and describe things.

The invention of numbers can be attributed to patterns in nature. Numbers systems developed from this and the need to measure things, trade, make maps and medicine and advance technologies.

#### Measuring up

Measurement is used in all aspects of daily life. We measure things every day: time, distance, size, weight, volume.

It's about finding a number that

shows the size or amount of something.

Measurement is a process that uses numbers to describe a quantity based on what we can observe.

Units of measurement provide standards making comparisons of measurements easier.

In past times, the body ruled when it came to measuring.

The length of a foot, the width of a finger and the distance of a step were all accepted measurements but these units of measure were not fixed.

So politicians and scientists did their best to remedy this situation by creating a uniform system of measurement, like the metric system we use today.

### FACTS & FIGURES

There are many measurement words that derive from body parts.

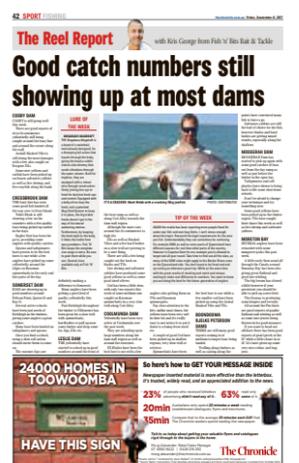
■ A cubit was a measurement based on the forearm length from the tip of the middle finger to the bottom of the elbow. The exact length varied according to whose arm was being used and could be from 45 to 55cm.

■ A span is the distance between the tip of the thumb stretched as far away as possible from the tip of the pinky. For most people a span is almost exactly half a cubit.

■ A fathom is the length of your outstretched arms, the distance between the tips of your middle fingers. It's about six feet (your own feet, that is). Water depth is measured in fathoms.

■ A hand is the width measurement of your four fingers where they meet the palm. This measurement is still used to calculate the height of horses.

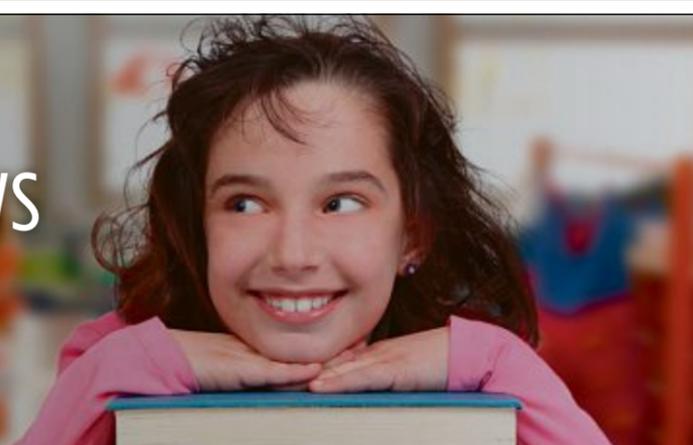
■ A handful served as a fairly repeatable measure of volume for dry goods such as grains, beans and seeds. Today we use the word handful in the informal sense of a little bit - what your hand can hold.



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