

THE MAJOR PREFIXES OF THE METRIC SYSTEM

Keep in mind that you will be expected to know how to deal with prefixes such as milli-, micro-, kilo-, etc. Hints on how to deal with those prefixes will not be provided during the exam. A list of the most common abbreviations is given below. This will not be on the equation sheet for the test.

Prefix	Abbrev.	Power of 10		Prefix	Abbrev.	Power of 10
centi-	c	-2		hecto-	h	2
milli-	m	-3		kilo-	k	3
micro-	μ	-6		mega-	M	6
nano-	n	-9		giga-	G	9
pico-	p	-12		tera-	T	12
femto-	f	-15		peta-	P	15

Note on pronunciation: In the written script for the film *Back to the Future*, the word “gigawatt” is misspelled as “jigowatt” and as a result the phrase “1.2 jigowatts” has been mispronounced ever since. It is just as well. The gigawatt is a unit of power and what is needed to get any machine to do anything is a minimum amount of energy. A gigawatt of power maintained for a femtosecond is a microjoule, so Doc would really have needed to specify both the power and time duration needed for his flux capacitor.