

# Why the United States isn't on the metric system.

Part 1 of 4

*Way back when, a group of Americans and Europeans are in a tavern, drinking mead.*

*A European: "Let's designate 0° as the temperature at which water freezes and 100° as the temperature at which it boils."*

*An American: "No, let's say 32° is where water freezes and 212° is where it boils."*

*All of the other Americans: "Yeah, that's much better. Let's do that."*

# Why the United States isn't on the metric system.

Part 2 of 4

*Way back when, a group of Americans and Europeans are in a tavern, trying to figure out a way to calculate distance.*

*A European:* "Let's call the measurement a 'meter,' and we'll divide that into 100 parts called 'centimeters.' We'll divide each centimeter into 100 parts again and call those 'millimeters.' Everything multiplies and divides by 10, so you'll be able to easily manipulate the number. For example, half of 400 meters is 200 meters, half of one meter is 50 centimeters. 20 centimeters is also 200 millimeters."

*An American:* "No, let's call the measurement a 'foot,' because all of our feet are exactly the same size. We'll divide each of those 'feet' into 12 'inches' and then divide each of those inches into 16 parts that won't really have a name. That way, we'll come up with easy-to-manipulate numbers like 13 feet, 9-9/16 inches. For example, everyone knows half of that is six feet, 10-25/32 inches."

*All of the other Americans:* "Yeah, that's much better. Let's do that."

# Why the United States isn't on the metric system.

Part 3 of 4

*Way back when, a group of Americans and Europeans are in a tavern, trying to come up with a way to determine weight.*

*A European: "Let's call the unit of measurement a 'gram.' 100 grams will equal a 'kilogram.' Manipulation is easy. For example, if I have a recipe that calls for 90 grams of flour and want to make half the recipe, I just divide 90 in half to get 45 grams. If it's 91 grams, I divide by two to get 45.5 grams or – are you ready? – 455 milligrams."*

*An American: "No, let's call the unit a 'pound' and divide it into 16 parts called 'ounces.' So, if something weighs 15 pounds, 9 ounces and I want to cut it exactly in half, I can calculate in my head that each piece needs to weigh seven pounds, 12.5 ounces."*

*All of the other Americans: "Yeah, that's much better. Let's do that."*

# Why the United States isn't on the metric system.

Part 4 of 4

*Way back when, a group of Americans and Europeans are in a tavern, trying to determine a way to measure liquids.*

*A European: "Let's call the unit of measurement a 'liter.' There'll be 100 'centiliters' in a liter, so it'll be really easy to scale an amount of liquid to meet any need. For example, half of 100 centiliters is 50 centiliters. If you need extra precision, we'll have a 'milliliter' – or one-one thousandths of a liter. For example, 1000 milliliters is 100 centiliters, and 100 centiliters is a liter."*

*An American: "No, let's call the unit of measurement a 'cup,' and 16 'tablespoons' will equal one cup. Three 'teaspoons' will equal one tablespoon. So, there are 48 teaspoons in a cup. If I want half of 3-2/3 cups of water, all I have to do is multiply 3.6667 by 48 and then divide that number by two to get 88 teaspoons, which is 1.8335 cups. I have a one cup measure, so all I need to do now is guess how much .8335 of a cup is. It's easy."*

*All of the other Americans: "Yeah, that's much better. Let's do that."*