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Chemistry &
The Scientific Method

The Foundations of Chemistry

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Why Chemistry?

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The Problem with Chemistry

General Chemistry can seem like a bunch of barely connected concepts about a bunch of strange little things (molecules) that you never directly observe.

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The Context of Chemistry

All of those seemingly unconnected concepts are really a series of questions that could be asked about the reactions and physical properties of molecules.

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EVERYTHING is Chemistry

All substances are constructed of molecules.
Chemistry is the study of those molecules.

This study has 2 main areas of study.

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The Physical of Chemistry

"What are their physical properties?"

1. State of matter (solid, liquid, gas)
2. Boiling point
3. Freezing point
4. Solubility in other liquids
5. Malleability
6. Electrical Conductivity
7. Heat Conduction
8. Tensile Strength

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The Chemical of Chemistry

What is the reactivity of the molecules?

1. Will they react to form new substances with A, B, or C?
2. How fast will that reaction occur?
3. Are the likely products more stable than the reactants?
4. What is the yield of the reaction? What limits the yield of the reactions?
5. Does the reaction create energy or require energy?
6. Does the reaction use electrons or generate electrons?
7. What is the structure of the new materials?
8. Are any byproducts generated by the reaction?

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The Difference?

Chemical properties (& changes) involve changes in COMPOSITION.

Physical properties (& changes) involve a constant composition.

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Example:

Boiling water physical
It's water when you start, it's water when you end


Cracking an egg physical
It's an egg when you start it's a (broken) egg when you finish

Boiling an egg chemical
A bit tricky – the protein in the egg is modified by the heat which is why it changes consistency. It's a new molecule!

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Water boiling – physical change




The diagram shows a glass kettle on a stove with steam rising from it. To the right, there are two molecular models of water (H₂O). The top model is labeled 'Before boiling' and shows three water molecules. The bottom model is labeled 'After boiling' and shows the same three water molecules, but they are now separated from each other, representing the transition from liquid to gas. A small text box at the top left of the diagram says: 'Water boiling is a physical change because the water molecules are not broken apart and reformed into new molecules.'

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Rust

Chemical change



The diagram shows a rusty nail. To the right, there are two molecular models. The top model is labeled 'Iron' and shows a cluster of iron atoms (represented by grey spheres). The bottom model is labeled 'Iron oxide' and shows a cluster of iron atoms (grey spheres) and oxygen atoms (red spheres) bonded together. A small text box at the top right of the diagram says: 'Rust is a chemical change because the iron atoms are combined with oxygen atoms to form a new substance.'

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Why they make you come here

The world is made up of molecules.

If you want to build a bridge, what properties must it have?
What properties must its parts have?

Life is about motion and change. What causes the changes?
What limits the changes? What could we do to improve the situation?

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Questions are more important than answers

Answers are fleeting and specific.

Questions can be asked over and over again.

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Chemistry is Questions

As we go through the course, try not to think of all the topics as isolated concepts.

All of our concepts are questions about molecules and their reactions or interactions.

The questions are central to every human pursuit as well as the very existence of life.

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Chemistry is about Every Thing

Chemistry is the most practical of sciences. Chemistry is rooted in the investigation of materials (real things) and their properties. As a result, other sciences rely on Chemistry for information about the "things" they study.

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Chemistry is about Measurement

An experiment requires measurement.

Measurement comes in two types:

1. Qualitative – Did you make the right stuff? Aspirin isn't insulin.
2. Quantitative – How much of something do I have (mass)? How big is it (volume)? Etc.

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We can't escape the numbers...

...except our numbers aren't really numbers!

[Are you intrigued? ☺]

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Numbers, Numbers, &
More Numbers

Making sense of all the
numbers

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UNITS! UNITS! UNITS!

- Joe's 1st rule of Physical Sciences - watch the units.
- The ability to convert units is fundamental, and a useful way to solve many simple problems.
- Units also provide the context for numbers.

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11

- Good number at the craps table.
- Bad number for an IQ.
- Okay number for a shoe size.

They are all "elevens" but they are each very different things.

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UNITS! UNITS! UNITS!

Numbers have no meaning without UNITS!
UNITS! UNITS!

The unit provides the context to the number.

A number is just a number, but a number with an appropriate unit is a datum (singular of data) - a piece of information.

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Data

11 pounds
11 dollars
11 points

These are better than just "elevens", these are data, the 11 has some context - but it could have more!

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Data

11 pounds of raisins vs. 11 pound baby vs.
11 pounds of sand

Our units are now even more specific, providing even greater context to the number, allowing better analysis of the meaning of the number.

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Chemical Units

- SI units - Systems Internationale - these are the standard units of the physical sciences (sometimes called the metric system).
- Units are chosen to represent measurable physical properties.
- Two types of units: "Pure" and "Derived".

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Pure Units

Represent indivisible physical quantities:

- Mass – expressed in "kilograms" (kg)
- Length – expressed in "meters" (m)
- Time – expressed in "seconds" (s)
- Charge – expressed in "Coulombs" (C)

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Derived Units

Derived units are combinations of pure units that represent combinations of properties:

- Speed – meters/second (m/s) – a combination of distance and time
- Volume – m^3 – combination of the length of each of 3 dimensions

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SI units

The official standard units are all metric units. The nice thing about the standard system is that the units are all self-consistent: when you perform a calculation, if you use the standard unit for all of the variables, you will get a standard unit for the answer without having to expressly determine the cancellation of the units.

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It's all about the DATA folks!

The goal in any experimental science is to use measurement and observation as arguments in support of a thesis.

Data is NOT an end unto itself.

Data is part of a narrative. To be a good scientist, you need to learn to use data to craft an argument.

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“Data” has a lot of subtlety

- “four”
- “4”
- “4.0”
- “4.00”
- “4.00 pounds”
- “4.00 pounds of carbon”
- “4.00 pounds of carbon in the brain of Tyrannosaurus”

In our everyday speak, we use these interchangeably. But they aren't!

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Accuracy

So, the green block is 2.4 inches long. This is 2 "significant digits" – each of them is accurately known.

Another way of writing this is that the green block is 2.4 +/-0.05 inches long meaning that I know the block is not 2.3 in and not 2.5 in, but it could be 2.35 or 2.45 inches (both would be rounded to 2.4 inches).

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Sig Figs

2.4 inches must always be written as 2.4 inches if it is data.

2.40 inches = 2.400 inches = 2.4 inches
BUT NOT FOR DATA!

The number of digits written represent the number of digits measured and KNOWN!

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Ambiguity

Suppose I told you I weigh 200 pounds.
How many sig figs is that?

It is ambiguous – we need the zeroes to mark positions relative to the decimal place. Even if that measurement is 200 +/- 50 pounds, I can't leave the zeroes out!

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How many significant figures are there in the number 0.006410?

Preceding zeroes are NEVER significant.

Trailing zeroes are significant IF YOU DON'T NEED THEM.

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SI units and Latin prefixes

Sometimes, SI units are written with a prefix indicating a different order of magnitude for the unit.

For example, length should always be measured in meters, but sometimes (for a planet) a meter is too small and sometimes (for a human cell) a meter is too large

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Latin Prefixes

M = Mega = 1,000,000 = 10^6
k = kilo = 1,000 = 10^3
c = centi = $1/100 = 10^{-2}$
m = milli = $1/1000 = 10^{-3}$
 μ = micro = $1/1,000,000 = 10^{-6}$

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To date

1. Accuracy
 1. Sig figs tell you how well you know the value of something
 2. Scientific notation allows you to express it unambiguously.

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Units! Units! Units!

What is it?
length, volume, weight, energy, charge...

How big is it?
inches? Feet? Yards? Miles? Parsecs?
nm, cm, m, km, Mm, Gm

What else could it be?
It's a foot long, what does it weigh?
It's a gallon big, what does it weigh?
Etc.

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Prefixes & Units

So, if I measure a planet and determine it to be 167,535 meters in circumference, this can be written a number of ways.

167535 m
 1.67535×10^5 m
 167.535×10^3 m = 167.535 km

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Conversion factors

That means:

1 ft = 3.6 Joes
1 ft = 0.3048 m

This would apply to any measurement of any object

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Dimensional Analysis

Also called the "Factor-label Method".

Relies on the existence of conversion factors.

By simply converting units, it is possible to solve many simple and even mildly complex problems.

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UNITS! UNITS! UNITS!

**It's always
all about the
units!**

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Conversion Factors

**IT IS THE
POWER OF
ONE!**

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Conversion Factors

Dimensional analysis treats all numerical relationships as conversion factors of 1, since you can multiply any number by 1 without changing its value.

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1 foot = 12 inches

This is really two different conversion factors - two different "ones"

$$\frac{1 \text{ foot}}{12 \text{ inches}} = 1$$
$$\frac{12 \text{ inches}}{1 \text{ foot}} = 1$$

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One is Most Powerful

"One" is the multiplicative identity – you can multiply any number in the universe by 1 without changing its value.

Multiplying by 1 in the form of a ratio of numbers with units will NOT change its value but it WILL change its units!

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The simplest Example

I am 73 inches tall, how many feet is that?

I know you can do this in like 10 seconds, but HOW do you do it?

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The Path

The first thing you need to ask yourself in any problem is....?

What do I know?

The second thing you need to ask yourself in any problem is....?

What do I want to know? (Or, what do I want to find out?)

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The Path

$$73 \text{ inches} \frac{7 \text{ feet}}{7 \text{ inches}} = 7 \text{ feet}$$

In this case, I know the conversion: 1 foot = 12 inches

$$73 \text{ inches} \frac{1 \text{ foot}}{12 \text{ inches}} = 6.08 \text{ feet} \approx 6.1 \text{ feet}$$

Only 2 significant figures! How do I know? Hang around for 10 minutes and I'll tell you.

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The Path

If I didn't know the 1-step path, I need to find a longer path, but each step along the way is identical. I eliminate ONE unit and create a NEW UNIT.

$$= 73 \text{ inches} \frac{? \text{ mm}}{? \text{ inches}} \frac{? \text{ miles}}{? \text{ mm}} \frac{? \text{ yd}}{? \text{ miles}} \frac{? \text{ feet}}{? \text{ yd}} = ? \text{ feet}$$

It's really just a whole series of multiplications by 1!

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Too Simple?

- As simple as that seems, the problems don't get any more difficult! There is more than 1 step, many different conversion factors, but the steps in solving the problem remain the same.

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Dimensional Analysis

1. Ask yourself what you know – with UNITS!
2. Ask yourself what you need to know – with UNITS!
3. Analyze the UNITS! change required.
4. Consider all the conversion factors you know (or have available) involving those UNITS!
5. Map the path.
6. Insert the conversion factors.
7. Run the numbers.
8. Celebrate victory!

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Another Example

□ If there are 32 mg/mL of lead in a waste water sample, how many pound/gallons is this?

Do we recognize all the units?

mg = 10^{-3} g
mL = 10^{-3} Liters

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Another Example

□ If there are 32 mg/mL of lead in a waste water sample, how many pound/gallons is this?

How would we solve this problem? What's the first thing to do?

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Calculating Sig Figs

2 different rules exist:

Multiplication/Division - the answer has the same number of sig figs as the digit with the least number of sig figs
Ex. $1.0 \times 12.005 = 12$

Addition/Subtraction - the answer has the same last decimal place as all digits have in common
Ex $1.1 + 2.222 + 13.333 = 16.7$ (16.655 rounded)

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Helpful Hints

- When adding numbers in scientific notation, be sure the decimal points are in the proper place
- You can only add numbers that have the SAME UNITS!

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Sample Problem

$6.24 \times 10^{-3} * 1.2406 \times 10^4 + 6 = 464.48064$
 $\approx 5 \times 10^2$

- only 1 sig fig because of the "6"
- I write the answer in scientific notation so I don't need zeroes as place markers (500)

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Units and Math

You can multiply together any two numbers you want:

My height is 73 inches, my weight is 100 kg

$73 \text{ inches} * 100 \text{ kg} = 7.3 \times 10^3 \text{ kg-inches}$

When you multiply, the units combine.

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Addition/Subtraction and Units

You CAN'T add any two numbers, because the units don't mix:

$73 \text{ inches} + 100 \text{ kg} = 173 \text{ ???}$

To add two numbers, they MUST have the same units!

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I have 48 cents in my pocket and \$32 in my wallet. How much money do I have.

I can't just add them together:
 $48 \text{ cents} + 32 \text{ dollars} = 80 \text{ ???}$

But I can if I give them the same units:
 $48 \text{ cents} * \frac{1 \text{ dollar}}{100 \text{ cents}} = 0.48 \text{ dollars}$

$32 \text{ dollars} + 0.48 \text{ dollars} = 32.48 \text{ dollars (or } \$32.48)$

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What is Density?

Density is the mass to volume ratio of a substance.

It allows you to compare the relative "heaviness" of two materials. A larger density material means that a sample of the same size (volume) will weigh more.

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Ratios are Conversion Factors

Density is the ratio of mass to volume.

So, if you want to convert mass to volume or volume to mass – it's the DENSITY!

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$$\text{Density of steel} = \frac{3 \text{ g steel}}{1 \text{ mL steel}}$$

It means 1 mL of steel has a mass of 3 g:
1 mL steel = 3 g steel

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Equalities are ratios – Conversion factors

1 mL steel = 3 g steel

$$\frac{1 \text{ mL steel}}{3 \text{ g steel}} = 1$$
$$\frac{3 \text{ g steel}}{1 \text{ mL steel}} = 1$$

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Conversion Factors

Powers of 1

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Sample problem

The density of aluminum is 2.7 g/mL. If I have a block of aluminum that is 1 meter on each side, then what is the mass of the block?

Where do we start?
We know the volume (length*width*height):
 $1 \text{ m} \times 1 \text{ m} \times 1 \text{ m} = 1 \text{ m}^3$

Where do we want to go?
Grams (or kilograms or cg or some unit of mass!)

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Building Blocks of Matter

- Chemistry is the study of **matter** - which is anything that has mass and takes up space. In other words, Matter is ANY-THING.
- Matter itself has a wide variety of properties. What these properties are and how these properties can be changed is important to the function of everything from a rock to a human being.

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Divisible vs. Indivisible

The world we see around us appears to be quite divisible – it can be divided into pieces of the whole.

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Divisible vs. Indivisible

- Consider a tree. It's made of "wood". But, what is wood?
- Chop down a tree, you can make a 2x4 board. A 2x4 is a piece of a tree.
- Cut up the 2x4, you can make toothpicks. Toothpicks are pieces of a 2x4 which is a piece of a tree.
- Grind up a toothpick, you get sawdust. Sawdust is a piece of a toothpick which is a piece of a 2x4 which is a piece of a tree.
- Things in nature are DIVISIBLE! But not infinitely so.

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Molecules

- A **molecule** (chemical compound) is the smallest unit of matter that maintains the identity of the parent. For glucose (sugar), the glucose molecule is the smallest unit of sugar that would still taste sweet. For wood, the molecule is cellulose.
- Molecules are made up of even smaller units called **atoms (elements)**. An atom is indivisible by any normal chemical or physical means. (To split it, you need to use nuclear means such as a high energy particle accelerator).

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Molecules

- Chemistry is all about how you arrange and rearrange atoms to make different molecules. Chemistry is also about the **physical properties** of the molecules themselves.
- Biology, Biochemistry, Materials Science, polymer science, engineering, and a wide variety of other disciplines all rely on Chemistry's ability to create and measure the properties of molecules.

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The Chemical vs. The Physical

- When we talk about the "physical properties" of materials, we are talking about molecules. Molecules are the smallest, indivisible units of matter that maintains the identity (and most properties) of that matter.
- When we talk about the "chemical properties" of materials, we are talking about atoms. Chemistry is often defined as the making or breaking of bonds to rearrange the atoms in a molecule.

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At ALL times, the total energy in the system is conserved (remains the same).

Total = kinetic + potential + heat

Heat is actually molecular kinetic energy

If you wanted to change the amount of energy in the system, you'd need to do WORK to add or subtract energy from the system (for example, carry the wrecked bike back up to the roof).

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Chemical Energy

We will, at various times, explore the energy changes involved in molecular interactions (sadly, we don't get to throw things off the building - we leave that to physicists.)

Stored chemical energy is a form of potential energy

Molecular motions are kinetic energy (heat)

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