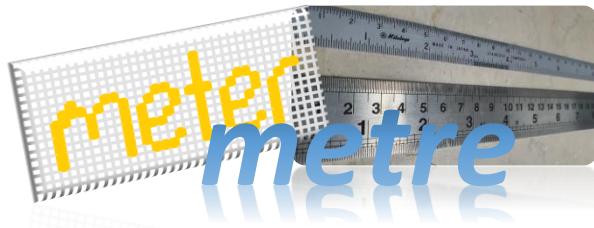


# Which is which, meter or metre?



Can you spot the difference between the words meter and metre? Well obviously, let's not talk about the spelling. Oftentimes, they are used interchangeably and many are oblivious what they really mean. Did you know that there is indeed an interesting story behind these words? Now, let's take a sneak peek as we unfold a few pages of history.

The word **meter** is used to refer a measuring device as in a thermometer, water meter, and sphygmomanometer for blood pressure monitoring, among others. In contrast, the word **metre** is the metric unit of length. This is used to refer to the unit of measurement for length as in 10 kilometres (can also be written as 10 km) distance or a cozy house with the floor area of 30 square metres ( $30 \text{ m}^2$ ).

But Americans used the word meter to refer both device and a unit of measurement. Though, they are following the International System of Units (SI) that states that the word “**metre**” is the unit of measurement for length, its implementation have limited by the United States Government Printing Office Style Manual, which follows Webster's Third New International Dictionary rather than the Oxford Dictionary. Thus, the spelling “meter” is used rather than “metre.”

The same spelling is widely used here in the Philippines because of their influence in our English language since we have been a US colony. Moreover, the Philippines got its independence with the freedom to choose and adopt international standards that is best suited for its citizens. One of such standards is the International System of units (or SI), the modern metric system of units used to standardize, harmonized the system of units, and ease the international trade and commerce.

Through the Republic Act 9236 otherwise known as the National Metrology Act of 2003, the Philippines has adopted the SI units. As such, the correct spelling to refer a unit of measure for length is “**metre**.” For example, a physical distance of 1 metre (can be written also as 1 m).

The mandatory use of SI units throughout the country aims to standardize the Philippines’ measurement system to protect the health and safety of its citizens from the harmful effects of inaccurate and fraudulent measurements.

Sources: