

How to “Read” a Ruler

Today you are going to learn, *once and for all*, how to “read” a ruler. (Remember, rulers, like books, are “read” from left to right.)

Part I.

Identifying the lines of a ruler

First, let’s take a close look at a typical ruler, the kind you’d find in any classroom or office. It is 12 inches, or one foot, long.



(The picture above is 55% the size of the actual ruler.)

We can see that this foot-ruler is divided, by lines, into twelve sections called *inches*; each inch is itself divided. The twelve inches are easy to identify; they are the longest lines with the numbers beside them.



Actually, the inches are always easy to “read” on any ruler no matter how many subdivisions—but then, we’ve all always known that it’s not the inches that make it hard to read a ruler. It’s the *smaller* subdivisions that are confusing. (That, and the fact those smaller subdivisions have something to do with fractions—which just about everybody hates!)