

Scale Drawings and Scale Factors

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 17

Have you ever used a map or looked at a blueprint? Then you have already worked with a **scale drawing**! The key idea is that every length changes by the same **scale factor**, so the picture stays perfectly proportional to the real thing. Once you know the scale, you can hop between drawing measurements and actual measurements with a quick multiplication or division. Maps, floor plans, model cars, video-game design—scale factors are everywhere once you start looking!

Key Concepts & Quick Review

Scale ratio: $\frac{\text{drawing length}}{\text{actual length}} = \frac{1}{n}$ (or stated as $1 \text{ cm} : n \text{ m}$, etc.)

Actual = drawing $\times n$. **Drawing** = actual $\div n$. **Scale factor** > 1 : enlargement. < 1 : reduction.

Examples

① A blueprint uses a scale of $1 \text{ cm} = 5 \text{ m}$. A wall measures 6 cm on the blueprint. What is the actual length of the wall?

Think It Through: The scale says every 1 centimeter on the blueprint stands for 5 m in real life. Since the wall measures 6 cm on the drawing, multiply by 5 to get the actual length: $6 \times 5 = 30 \text{ m}$. Scale drawings always compare the drawing measurement to the real measurement in a constant way.

Answer: 30 m

② A map has scale $1 \text{ in} = 25 \text{ mi}$. Two cities are 3.6 inches apart on the map. What is the actual distance between them? If a third city is 175 mi away, how far apart are they on the map?

Think It Through: When you go from map distance to real distance, multiply by the scale factor. So $3.6 \times 25 = 90 \text{ mi}$. When you go the other way, from real distance back to map distance, divide by the scale factor. That gives $175 \div 25 = 7$ inches. It helps to ask yourself whether the real object should be bigger or smaller than the drawing before you choose multiply or divide.

Answer: 90 mi apart; 7 inches on the map

Practice Problems

Use the given scale to find the actual or drawing measurement.

- On a scale drawing, 1 cm represents _____ 10 m . Find the actual distance represented by 4 cm .
- On a scale drawing, 1 cm represents 5 m . Find the actual distance represented by 7 cm .
- On a scale drawing, 1 in represents _____ 20 mi . Find the actual distance represented by 3 in .
- On a scale drawing, 1 cm represents _____ 10 m . Find the drawing length for an actual distance of 80 m .



5. On a scale drawing, 1 *in* represents _____ 25 *mi*. Find the actual distance represented by 4.5 *in*.
6. On a scale drawing, 1 *cm* represents 8 *m*. _____ Find the actual distance represented by 6 *cm*.
7. On a scale drawing, 1 *cm* represents 8 *m*. _____ Find the drawing length for an actual distance of 64 *m*.
8. On a scale drawing, 1 *in* represents _____ 30 *mi*. Find the actual distance represented by 2.5 *in*.
9. On a scale drawing, 1 *cm* represents _____ 15 *km*. Find the actual distance represented by 5 *cm*.
10. On a scale drawing, 1 *cm* represents 15 *km*. Find the drawing length for an actual distance of 90 *km*.
11. On a scale drawing, 1 *in* represents 50 *mi*. Find the actual distance represented by 3.4 *in*. _____
12. On a scale drawing, 1 *cm* represents 12 *m*. Find the actual distance represented by 9 *cm*. _____
13. On a scale drawing, 1 *cm* represents 12 *m*. Find the drawing length for an actual distance of 108 *m*. _____
14. On a scale drawing, 1 *in* represents 40 *mi*. Find the drawing length for an actual distance of 200 *mi*. _____
15. On a scale drawing, 1 *cm* represents 6 *km*. Find the actual distance represented by 7.5 *cm*. _____

Study Tips

- 👉 Always write the scale as a proportion: $\frac{\text{drawing}}{\text{actual}} = \frac{1}{n}$, then cross-multiply to find what you need.
- 👉 Keep **units consistent** — if the scale says “1 *cm* = 5 *m*,” make sure you measure the drawing in centimeters before multiplying.
- 👉 A scale factor greater than 1 means the drawing is **larger** than reality (a microscope view); less than 1 means it is **smaller** (a map).

Word Problems

16. An architect draws a house floor plan using a scale of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch = 1 foot. The living room measures $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches on the plan. Find the actual dimensions of the room and its actual area in square feet. _____
17. A nature reserve map uses the scale 1 *cm* = 3.5 *km*. A hiking trail appears as 8.4 *cm* on the map. A ranger station is 21 *km* from the trailhead. How long is the actual trail? How far is the ranger station on the map? If you hike the trail at 4 *km/hr*, how many hours will it take? _____



Answer Keys

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1) 40 <i>m</i></p> <p>2) 35 <i>m</i></p> <p>3) 60 <i>mi</i></p> <p>4) 8 <i>cm</i></p> <p>5) 112.5 <i>mi</i></p> <p>6) 48 <i>m</i></p> <p>7) 8 <i>cm</i></p> <p>8) 75 <i>mi</i></p> <p>9) 75 <i>km</i></p> | <p>10) 6 <i>cm</i></p> <p>11) 170 <i>mi</i></p> <p>12) 108 <i>m</i></p> <p>13) 9 <i>cm</i></p> <p>14) 5 <i>in</i></p> <p>15) 45 <i>km</i></p> <p>16) 14 <i>ft</i> × 11 <i>ft</i>; area 154 <i>sq ft</i></p> <p>17) Trail: 29.4 <i>km</i>; station: 6 <i>cm</i>; time: 7.35 <i>hr</i>.</p> |
|--|---|

Step-by-Step Explanations

Strategy: For Laws of Exponents, use exponent laws only when the bases and operations match the rule, combining, subtracting, or multiplying exponents according to the structure. A quick exponent-law check is whether the bases stayed the same when the rule required it.

Practice 1: $2^3 \cdot 2^4 =$ **Answer:** $2^7 = 128$

At the beginning of the practice, match the expression to the correct exponent law before simplifying the powers.

Practice 15: $(10^2)^3 =$ **Answer:** 1,000,000

For the second model problem, match the expression to the correct exponent law before simplifying the powers.

Word-problem notes:

16. Answer: $\frac{2^{20}}{2^{10}} = 2^{10} = 1,024$ kilobytes.

Quotient of Powers: $\frac{2^{20}}{2^{10}} = 2^{20-10} = 2^{10} = 1,024$.

17. Answer: $3^2 \cdot 3^4 = 3^6 = 729$ times the original value.

Product of Powers: $3^2 \cdot 3^4 = 3^{2+4} = 3^6$. $3^6 = 729$.



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