

Capacity and volume

We use the term capacity when talking about the measure of how much space there is available to hold something.

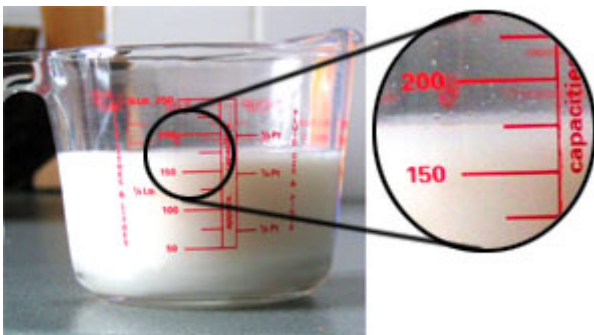


For example the capacity of:

- a jug
- a teacup or mug
- a food container
- a petrol tank

Capacity is the amount a container can hold.

But what about volume? This is something slightly different. Here's an example:



This **jug** has a capacity of 250 ml.

The **volume** of milk in the jug is 175 ml.

The **volume** of milk needed to **fill** the jug is 250 ml.

Can you see the difference? The volume is how much milk is in the jug.

Volume is a measure of the space taken up by something.

The metric units for capacity are **litres** (l), **centilitres** (cl) and **millilitres** (ml). Centilitre means one hundredth of a litre. Millilitre means one thousandth of a litre.

There are 100 centilitres in 1 litre.
There are 1 000 millilitres in 1 litre.

You measure capacity by reading from scales, such as the scales on the milk jug above. You can read about scales in the factsheet **Reading scales when measuring capacity**.

You can also use non-standard measurements for capacity. Recipes often use non-standard measurements to describe the amounts of ingredients, for example cup, pinch and handful.