

Review of units in physics

Recall from Phys 4A:

Newton's Second law (for constant mass m) is: Force = (mass) (acceleration).

$$F = m a$$

$$\text{Units: } 1 \text{ Newton} = 1 \text{ N} \equiv 1 \text{ kg m/s}^2$$

Remember: Weight (W) is a force, with $W = m g$ (Units: $\text{N} = \text{kg m/s}^2$)
and g = the acceleration of gravity = 9.80665 m/s^2 at sea level.
Weight is in Newtons (since it's a force), but mass is in kilograms (kg).

Energy is measured in Joules (J). Work is a form of energy, so:

$$\text{Work} = (\text{Force}) (\text{distance moved})$$

$$\text{Units: } 1 \text{ Joule} = 1 \text{ J} = (\text{Newtons}) (\text{m}) = 1 \text{ kg m}^2/\text{s}^2 .$$

$$\text{Power} = \text{Energy}/\text{time} = \text{J/s} \equiv 1 \text{ W} = 1 \text{ Watt} .$$

Recall from Phys 4B:

$$\text{For electric field: } 1 \text{ Volt/m} = 1 \text{ V/m} = 1 \text{ N/Coulomb} = 1 \text{ T m/s} .$$

For magnetic field, since $E/B = c$,

$$\frac{\text{V/m}}{\text{T}} = \frac{\text{m}}{\text{s}}$$

$$\text{so } 1 \text{ V/m} = 1 \text{ T m/s} .$$

$$\text{Wavelength } \lambda \equiv v/f$$

$$\lambda f = v \quad \text{where } v = \text{wave speed,} \\ \text{and } f = \text{frequency (how many waves go by, per second)}$$

$$\text{Units: } (\text{m})(\text{s}^{-1}) = \text{m/s}$$

$$\text{The unit for frequency is: } 1 \text{ Hertz} = 1 \text{ Hz} = 1 \text{ cycle/s} = 1 \text{ s}^{-1} .$$

$$\text{Intensity } I = \text{Power}/\text{Area} = \text{W/m}^2 .$$