



Launching young readers!

Reading Rockets

Literacy in the Sciences: Activity No. 5

Measure Up!

By: Reading Rockets

Hands-on measurement activities are fun to explore with children. Introduce your young learner to these interesting new vocabulary words and knowledge, and help your child develop an early love of measuring everything in sight!

Related

[Numbers, Counting, Measuring and More: Books About](http://www.readingrockets.org//articles/books/c1312/)

[Math](http://www.readingrockets.org//articles/books/c1312/)

[Start with a Book: Numbers and](http://www.startwithabook.org/booklists/numbers-and-measuring)

[Measuring](http://www.startwithabook.org/booklists/numbers-and-measuring)

[Recording Observations: Journals and Field](http://www.readingrockets.org//article/41463)

[Notes](http://www.readingrockets.org//article/41463)

Hands-on measurement activities are fun to explore with children. Armed with interesting new vocabulary words and knowledge, your young learner will soon be measuring everything in sight!

Measurement all around us

Begin exploring measurement by asking your child to help you collect all the objects around your house that help you measure. This can include rulers, measuring cups, tape measures, thermometers, clocks, laundry soap scoops, and the container you use to measure dog food.

Gather these items and talk about how each is used to help us measure something. Sort the objects into things that measure liquids, things that measure length, and others. Collecting and sorting is a great way for your child to see how often we use measurement in our daily life.

Many ways to measure

In addition to measuring using *standard* measurement tools such as a ruler, it's important for kids to measure using *non-standard* measurement tools. For example, you can ask your child to use stuffed animals to measure distance. "How many stuffed animals long is our kitchen table? How many stuffed animals does it take to measure

our hallway?" Shaped graham crackers, blocks, and dried pasta make other good non-standard measurement units.

Let's talk about measuring

When measuring, help your young explorer use terms such as taller, shorter, wide, small, large, lighter, heavier, hotter, colder, warm, and variations of the terms such as large, larger, largest, small, smaller, smallest. As you're talking about what you're doing, use measurement vocabulary words such as thermometer, calendar, ruler, meter stick or yard stick, clock, and scale. These words help your child compare items and expand your child's vocabulary.

Keeping track of measurements

As you do with all with all science and math related activities, encourage your young learner to record their estimates and findings in a special notebook or journal. Have your child record the distances measured using various objects, record the weight of objects that are weighed and track how much time chores take using a stopwatch. Simple drawings and labels that order objects from smallest to largest provide a chance to put all the language arts, math, and science skills together.

Recommended children's books



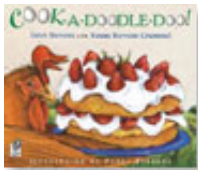
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1847801854/readingrocket-20>

Actual Size

By Steve Jenkins

This colorful, oversized book reveals a wide range of animals, from very small to huge, at actual size. Part of the fun is talking about how the author/illustrator can fit the two-foot tongue of a giant anteater on the pages of the book. This is a beautiful and engaging introduction to the idea of relative size. (Ages 4-8)

- [Purchase book](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1847801854/readingrocket-20)(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1847801854/readingrocket-20>)



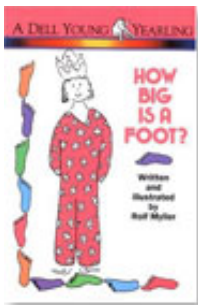
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0152056580/readingrocket-20>

Cook-A-Doodle-Do!

By Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel

A charming picture book about a hen who decides to make a strawberry shortcake with her friends...none of whom know anything about cooking. Iguana tries to measure the flour with a ruler! Hen teaches about measuring properly with the right tools and the author includes side notes about dry versus liquid measuring, as well as equivalents such as 1 stick butter = 1 cup = 8 tablespoons. (Ages 4-8)

- **[Purchase book](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0152056580/readingrocket-20)**



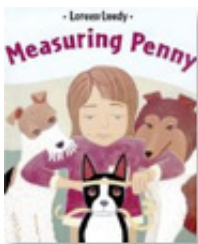
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0440404959/readingrocket-20>

How Big Is a Foot?

By Rolf Myller

The Queen's apprentice needs to build a new bed for the Queen. But how big is a bed when beds have not been invented yet? The amusing story is a fun introduction to the concept of standard measurement. (Ages 4-8)

- **[Purchase book](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0440404959/readingrocket-20)**



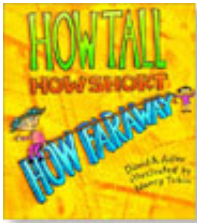
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0805065725/readingrocket-20>

Measuring Penny

By Loreen Leedy

A young girl named Lisa has a homework assignment to measure something in as many ways as she can. "Use your imagination!" says the teacher. Lisa chooses her dog Penny and discovers, among other things, that Penny's tail is one biscuit long. This engaging book teaches the difference between standard and non-standard measurement. (Age level: 4-8)

- **[Purchase book](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0805065725/readingrocket-20)**(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0805065725/readingrocket-20>)



<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0823416321/readingrocket-20>

How Tall, How Short, How Far Away?

By David A. Adler

Learn the units of measure (including the metric system) by comparing the lengths to fingers, arms, feet, and other body parts. You'll find lots of examples of how we use measurement in everyday activities as well as hands-on activities, such as asking the reader to see how tall you are using units of measure from ancient Egypt. (Ages 6-9)

- **[Purchase book](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0823416321/readingrocket-20)**(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0823416321/readingrocket-20>)



<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0060848065/readingrocket-20>

Millions to Measure

By David M. Schwartz

An entertaining look at linear, weight, and volume measurements, with Marvelissimo the Mathematical Magician as your guide. The book clearly explains the metric system and why it's used around the world. (Ages 4-8)

- **[Purchase book](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0060848065/readingrocket-20)**(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0060848065/readingrocket-20>)
- Download this article as a **[PDF document](http://www.readingrockets.org/pdfs/edextras/41232-en.pdf)**(<http://www.readingrockets.org/pdfs/edextras/41232-en.pdf>).
- View this article **[in Spanish](http://www.colorincolorado.org/articulo/41234)**(<http://www.colorincolorado.org/articulo/41234>).
- Find more resources in our **[Literacy in the Sciences](#)** section.

Reading Rockets (2011)

Reprints

You are welcome to print copies or republish materials for non-commercial use as long as credit is given to Reading Rockets and the author(s). For commercial use, please contact info@readingrockets.org.

Tags: **[Content Area Teaching and Learning](#)** | **[Parent Tips](#)** | **[STEM Literacy](#)** | **[STEM Literacy: For Parents](#)**

Add comment

Reading Rockets is a national multimedia project that offers a wealth of research-based reading strategies, lessons, and activities designed to help young children learn how to read and read better. Our reading resources assist parents, teachers, and other educators in helping struggling readers build fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills.

Copyright © 2013 WETA Public Broadcasting



<http://www.weta.org> Visit WETA's other education websites: **[Start with a Book](#)**(<http://www.startwithabook.org/>) | **[Colorín Colorado](#)**(<http://www.colorincolorado.org/>) | **[AdLit](#)**(<http://www.adlit.org/>) | **[LD OnLine](#)**(<http://www.ldonline.org/>)

"You may have tangible wealth untold. Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold. Richer than I you can never be — I had a mother who read to me." — Strickland Gillilan