Converting in the Metric System

Converting units of measurement in the metric system means that you are multiplying or dividing by 10, 100, 1000, etc. That's pretty easy – and it basically means moving the decimal point of your number! Here's how you do it.

Remember the metric units of measurement are preceded by a prefix, and the prefixes can be remembered by the saying:

King   **H**enry   **D**ied   by   **d**rinking   **C**hocolate   **m**ilk

Type of measurement: (base)
       length, mass, capacity   meter
                               gram
                               liter

Step 1: Find the letter of the prefix of the unit you are converting FROM
          (eg: for centimeter, C = prefix); if no prefix, you are at the BASE

Step 2: Find the letter of the prefix of the unit you are converting TO

Step 3: Draw an arrow in the direction you move FROM your start point TO your end point under the number you are changing.

Step 4: Count how many places you are moving: put that number under the arrow.

Step 5: MOVE THE DECIMAL POINT of your starting number in the direction of the arrow, the number of places indicated under the arrow.

Step 6: Fill in any required placeholder zeros

That's it!!!

Let's practice:

90 mm = _____ cm   1,400 mm = _____ cm

50 cm = _____ mm   200 cm = _____ dm (note – small d = deci!)

.42 m = _____ cm   6.74 m = _____ km