

Recognizing Significant Figures

Learning these 5 rules for recognizing significant figures will help you when solving problems. Examples of each rule are shown below. Note that each of the highlighted examples has 3 significant figures.

Rule 1: Nonzero numbers are always significant. 72.3g has three.

Rule 2: Zeros between significant numbers are always significant. 60.5g has three.

Rule 3: All final zeros to the right of the decimal are significant. 6.20g has three.

Rule 4: Placeholder zeros are not significant. You can remove placeholder zeros by rewriting in scientific notation. 0.0253g and 4320g each has three.

Rule 5: Counting numbers and defined constants have an infinite number of significant figures. 6 molecules, 60s = 1 min