

THE pH BOX

All four of the measurements are different ways to express exactly the same condition. The K_w of water, the dissociation constant, is a natural number amazingly close to $1 \text{ E-}14$. That is, when you multiply the hydrogen ion concentration $[\text{H}^+]$ by the hydroxide ion concentration $[(\text{OH})^-]$ in pure water at near room temperature, the number is $1 \text{ E-}14$. If you know the $[(\text{OH})^-]$, you know the $[\text{H}^+]$ and visa-versa. These two measurements are not the same scale, but they are two different measurements of the same thing. The pH is just the negative log of the $[\text{H}^+]$ and the pOH is just the negative log of the $[(\text{OH})^-]$. The final leg of the box is the relationship between the pH and pOH, and that is the easiest one. $\text{pH} + \text{pOH} = 14$ because this is the exponential form of the K_w equation.

