Concentration of Solutions

OBJECTIVES

● Given the mass of solute and volume of solvent, calculate the concentration of a solution.

● Given the concentration of a solution, determine the amount of solute in a given amount of solution.

● Given the concentration of a solution, determine the amount of solution that contains a given amount of solute.

*T*he **concentration** *of a solution is a measure of the amount of solute in a given amount of solvent or solution.* Some medications are solutions of drugs—a one-teaspoon dose at the correct concentration might cure the patient, while the same dose in the wrong concentration might kill the patient.

In this section, we introduce two different ways of expressing the concentrations of solutions: molarity and molality.

Sometimes, solutions are referred to as "dilute" or "concentrated," but these are not very definite terms. "Dilute" just means that there is a relatively small amount of solute in a solvent. "Concentrated," on the other hand, means that there is a relatively large amount of solute in a solvent. Note that these terms are unrelated to the degree to which a solution is saturated. A saturated solution of a substance that is not very soluble might be very dilute.

Molarity

Molarity *is the number of moles of solute in one liter of solution.* To relate the molarity of a solution to the mass of solute present, you must know the molar mass of the solute. For example, a "one molar" solution of sodium hydroxide, NaOH, contains one mole of NaOH in every liter of solution. The symbol for molarity is M, and the concentration of a one molar solution of sodium hydroxide is written as 1 M NaOH.

One mole of NaOH has a mass of 40.0 g. If this quantity of NaOH is dissolved in enough water to make exactly 1.00 L of solution, the solution is a 1 M solution. If 20.0 g of NaOH, which is 0.500 mol, is dissolved in enough water to make 1.00 L of solution, a 0.500 M NaOH solution is produced. This relationship between molarity, moles, and volume may be expressed in the following ways.

$$\text{molarity (M)} = \frac{\text{amount of solute (mol)}}{\text{volume of solution (L)}}$$

$$= \frac{0.500 \text{ mol NaOH}}{1.00 \text{ L}}$$

$$= 0.500 \text{ M NaOH}$$