

4.2: Luminosity

The most important differences between "standard" and "astrophysical" usages are in the meanings of flux and intensity. What we have hitherto called the "radiant flux" Φ of a source of radiation, expressed in watts, is generally called by astronomers, when describing the radiant flux from an entire star, the *luminosity* of the star, and the symbol used is L . While this can be expressed in watts, it is commonly expressed in units of the luminosity of the Sun, which is 3.85×10^{26} watts.

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