

Science Prefixes and Suffixes

Word parts that help students unlock meaning in science vocabulary.

Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning/Use	Example Words & Meanings
bio-	life	biology : study of life; biosphere : regions of Earth with living things
geo-	earth	geology : study of Earth; geosphere : solid parts of Earth
hydro-	water	hydrology : study of water; hydrate : compound containing water
thermo-	heat	thermometer : heat-measuring tool; thermodynamics : study of heat and energy
photo-	light	photosynthesis : making food with light; phototropism : growth response to light
chemo-	chemical	chemosynthesis : making food from chemicals; chemotherapy : chemical treatment
aero-	air or oxygen	aerobic : using oxygen; aerosol : tiny particles suspended in air
micro-	small	microscope : tool for seeing tiny things; microorganism : tiny organism
macro-	large	macromolecule : large molecule; macroevolution : large-scale evolutionary change
endo-	within	endothermic : absorbs heat; endoskeleton : internal skeleton
exo-	outside	exothermic : releases heat; exoskeleton : outer skeleton
hypo-	under or low	hypothermia : low body temperature; hypodermic : under the skin
hyper-	over or high	hypertonic : higher solute concentration; hypertension : high blood pressure
electro-	electricity	electron : negatively charged particle; electrolyte : ion-conducting substance

Suffixes

Suffix	Meaning/Use	Example Words & Meanings
-ology	study of	biology : study of life; geology : study of Earth
-scope	viewing instrument	microscope : views tiny objects; telescope : views distant objects
-meter	measuring instrument	thermometer : measures temperature; barometer : measures air pressure
-graph	recording or diagramming tool	seismograph : records earthquakes; spectrograph : records spectra
-lysis	breaking down	hydrolysis : breaking down with water; electrolysis : breaking down with electricity
-ase	enzyme	lactase : enzyme that breaks down lactose; amylase : enzyme that digests starch
-gen	producing or origin	pathogen : disease-producing agent; antigen : triggers an immune response
-phile	loving or attracted to	hydrophile : attracted to water; thermophile : heat-loving organism
-phobe	fearing or repelled by	hydrophobe : repelled by water; acidophobe : sensitive to acid
-taxis	movement response	chemotaxis : movement toward chemicals; phototaxis : movement toward light
-tropism	growth response	phototropism : growth toward light; gravitropism : growth response to gravity
-stat	stabilizer or regulator	thermostat : regulates temperature; rheostat : regulates electric current
-genic	producing or caused by	carcinogenic : cancer-causing; geogenic : produced by Earth processes
-oid	resembling	asteroid : star-like body; spheroid : nearly spherical form