

PRINCIPLE LATIN AND GREEK ROOTS USED IN BIOLOGICAL TERMINOLOGY

This list will help in learning the many technical terms used in biology. Use this list to learn their meanings.

a = without (prefix), negative	capit = head capill = hair	don = tooth dors = back	hom = like homo = the same; human, man
ab = from, opposite	card = heart	duo = two, twice	hyal = glass-like hydr = water
abyss = extreme depths	carin = keel, breastbone		hyper = high activity, above, over hypo = low activity, below, under
acanth = spine	carn = flesh	-eal = pertaining to	ichth = fish
actin = ray	-carp = spore case	echin = spiny	-ida = like
ad = to, toward	caud = tail	eco = house	-idia = little
adipo = fat	cephal = head	ect = outside, outer	insect = to cut in, divide
affer = carry to, bear inward	cera = horn	ef = away	inter = between
ala = wing	cerebr = brain	ejacul = throw out	intra = inside, within
alb = white	cerv = neck	embol = inserted	iso = equal
alveoli = pit, cavity	cest = girdle	encephalon = brain	itis = inflammation of
amnio = fetal sac	ceta = whale	end = inner	
amphi = on both sides, both	chaet = bristle, spine	engy = narrow	kary = fusion
ampulla = a flask	chel = claw	enter = inside	kin = moving
an = without	choan = funnel	entom = an insect	
andr = male	chondr = cartilage	epi = upon	lab = lip
anell = a little ring	chlor = green	erythr = red	lacuna = space, void
angio = enclosed	chord = cord	eu = advanced, typical	lamella = leaf layer
aniso = opposite	chrom = color	eury = wide range of tolerance	lepi = scale
ante = in front of	chrys = golden	ex = outside, from	-lemma = membrane
antho = flower	cili = eyelash	extra = beyond	leuc = white
anthro = human	cirri = small tentacle		liga = to tie together
anti = opposite, against	clitor = to close	fasc = bundle	lith = stone
aqua = water	cloaca = sewer	fenestr = window	log (logy) = treatise, study
arach = spider, spiderweb	cnid = nettle	fer = to bear, carry	lumen = cavity
arbor = tree	coel = hollow	fili = thread	lumen = light-producing
arch = primitive	com = together	flex = bend	lutea = yellow
arthro = joint	conch = shell	foramen = opening (small)	lys = to kill; a dissolution
artio = even	corn = horn	foss = ditch	
asco = cup-like	corp = body		macro = great, large
-ase = an enzyme	cotyl = embryonic leaf	gam = marriage, a joining	macula = spot
aster = star	crani = skull	gaster = stomach	magni = large
ater (atra) = black	crusta = crust, shell	gangli = knot in string	mastig = whip
aud = to hear, hearing	crypt = hidden	gen = descent, generate; also: knee, cheek, chin	major = larger
auri = ear	cten = comb	glia = glue (like)	mamma = breast
auto = self	culp = lance, point	gly = sugar-containing	maxilla = upper jaw
avi = bird	cuti = skin	glom = ball of yarn	medull = marrow
	-cuel = circular	gloss = tongue	mela = dark
basi = at the bottom	cyan = blue-green	gnath = jaw	mening = membrane
bathy = very deep	cyst = capsule	gono (gona) = sex organ	mer = part, unit
bdella = sucker	cyt = cell	gymn = naked	meso = middle
bio (bios) = life		gyn = female	meta = after
bi (bis) = two	-dae = family	haem = blood	micro = small
blast = germ cell	dactyl = finger	hali = salt-tolerant	mit = thread
brachi = arm	de = from, away, down	helminth = worm	moll = soft
brachy = short	deca = ten	hemi = half	mono = single, one
brady = slow	demi = half	hepat = liver	morph = form
branch = gill, lung	den = tooth	herp = creeping	muco = slimy, mucus
bronch = windpipe	dendr = tree or bush	hetero = different or other	multi = many
bucc = cavity of mouth	derm = skin	hex = six	mus = mouse
bursa = pouch	di = twice, second	hipp = horse	myce (myco) = fungus
	dia = apart	histo = tissue	myo = muscle
caec = blind	digit = finger or toe	holo = complete	myst = moustache
caly = covering	din = terrible or whirling		
campanula = bell	diplo = double		
canth = spine			

nao = dwarf
narc = drugged, drug-like
necro = death
nema = thread
nephro = kidney
neur = nerve
nidus = nest
nom = law
node = thickened area
noto = back
nudi = naked

-oid = like
ocel = eye
odont = teeth
oesoph = gullet
olfact = smelling
oligo = few
oment = fatty skin
oo = egg
ophi = snake
ophthalm = eye
opercul = little cover
opt = eye, vision
orb = circle
oral = mouth
ornith = bird
ortho = straight
os = mouth
-ose = a sugar
-osis = increase of
oss (ost) = bone
osti = mouth
ostrac = shell
oti (oto) = ear
ovum = egg

pachy = thick
palae = ancient
-palmate = webbed
papil = nipple
par = birth
para = beside, near
pariet = wall
parv = small
pect = breast
ped = foot
peduncul = little foot
pelecy = hatchet
penis = tail, penis
pente = five
peri = around
perisso = odd
perenni = permanent
petr = rock
phaeo = brown
phago = eat
phil = loving, liking
phor = carry
photo = light
phragm = fence, partition
phyl = tribe, group
phyl = leaf
physa = bladder
physio = nature
phyte = plant

pino = to drink
pili = hair
pinna = feather
plac = plate, tablet
plan = flat, plane
plantar = sole of foot
plasm = fluid, forming
plast = rod-shaped body
platy = flat, broad
pleio = multiple
pleur = side
plex = interwoven
plica = fold
-ploid = chromosome #
plume = feather
pneumo = air, breathing
pod = foot
poly = many
pollex = thumb
pons = bridge
porta = gate
post = behind, after
pre = before
prim = first
pro = in front, toward
process = to project from
proct = anus
profund = deep
proto = first
prox = nearby
pseud = false
ptero = wing, fin
pulmo = lung
pychn = pressure
pyg = rump

quad = four
quat = four
quint = five

rami = branch
renal = kidney
rete = little net
retro = back, backward
rhabd = rod
rhach = spine
rhage = tear, rent
rhin = nose
rhiz = root
rhodo = red
rhomb = square
rhynch = snout
rodo = gnaw
rostrum = beak, prow
rota = turn, wheel

sacch = sugar
saggi = mid-line
sapr = decaying matter
sarc = flesh
saur = lizard
scaph = hollow
schizo = cleft, split
scler = hard
scrot = pouch
scut = shield

scypho = cup
-sect = cut
semi = half, part
sept = seven, wall
ser = fluid on body
serra = saw
set = bristle
sex = six
sinus = hollow
sol = sun
soma = body
-spanch = viscera
sperm = seed, semen
sphict = closing
spira = coiling
sporo = spore-producing
squam = scale, flattened
steg = covering
stell = star
sten = narrow
stom = mouth
striet = narrow bands
styl = column
sub = under, below
sulc = groove, furrow
super = above
syn (sym) = together, partnership

tachy = fast
tact = touch
taenia = band, ribbon
tax = to arrange
teleo = complete, perfect
tele = far end
tentacul = holding
terti = third
test = shell
testis = male gonad
tetra = four
theca = case
thermo = heat
thero = beast, mammal
thromb = clot
tom = piece or section, cut
toti = all, total
trach = tube
trans = across
trema = hole
tri = three
trich = hair
trop = turning
troph = food, feeding
tympan = drum

ultra = beyond
unc = hook
ungul = hoof, claw
uni = one, single
uro = tail, excretory
uter = womb

vagina = sheath
vague = wandering
venter = belly
verm = worm
vesti = rudimentary

vita = life
vitell = yolk
vitro = glass
viv = alive
volv = turning, womb
vors = devour

xero = drought-tolerant
xyl = wood

zon = girdle
zoo (zoa) = animal
zyg = yoke