

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

inter =	between	-lemma =	membrane	magni =	large
intra =	inside, within	leuc =	white	mastig =	whip
iso =	equal	liga =	to tie together	major =	larger
itis =	inflammation of	lith =	stone	mamma =	breast
		log (logy) =	treatise, study	maxilla =	upper jaw
kary =	fusion	lumen =	cavity	medull =	marrow
kin =	moving	lumin =	light-producing	mela =	dark
		lutea =	yellow	mening =	membrane
lab =	lip	lys =	to kill; a dissolution	mer =	part, unit
lacuna =	space, void			meso =	middle
lamella =	leaf layer	macro =	great, large	meta =	after
lepi =	scale	macula =	spot	micro =	small
mit =	thread	papil =	nipple	process =	to project from
moll =	soft	par =	birth	proct =	anus
mono =	single, one	para =	beside, near	profund =	deep
morph =	form	pariet =	wall	proto =	first
muco =	slimy, mucus	parv =	small	prox =	nearby
multi =	many	pect =	breast	pseud =	false
mus =	mouse	ped =	foot	ptero =	wing, fin
myce (myco)=	fungus	peduncul =	little foot	pulmo =	lung
myo =	muscle	pelecy =	hatchet	pychn =	pressure
myst =	moustache	penis =	tail, penis	pyg =	rump
		pente =	five		
nao =	dwarf	peri =	around	quad =	four
narc =	drugged, drug-like	perisso =	odd	quat =	four
necro =	death	perenni =	permanent	quint =	five
nema =	thread	petr =	rock		
nephr =	kidney	phaeo =	brown	rami =	branch
neur =	nerve	phago =	eat	renal =	kidney
nidus =	nest	phil =	loving, liking	rete =	little net
nom =	law	phor =	carry	retro =	back, backward
node =	thickened area	photo =	light	rhabd =	rod
noto =	back	phragm =	fence, partition	rhach =	spine
nudi =	naked	phyl =	tribe, group	rhage =	tear, rent
		phyl =	leaf	rhin =	nose
-oid =	like	physa =	bladder	rhiz =	root
ocel =	eye	physio =	nature	rhodo =	red
odont =	teeth	phyte =	plant	rhomb =	square
oesoph =	gullet	pino =	to drink	rhynch =	snout
olfact =	smelling	pili =	hair	rodo =	gnaw
oligo =	few	pinna =	feather	rostrum =	beak, prow
oment =	fatty skin	plac =	plate, tablet.	rota =	turn, wheel
oo =	egg	plan =	flat, plane		
ophi =	snake	plantar =	sole of foot	sacch =	sugar
ophthalm =	eye	plasm =	fluid, forming	saggi =	mid-line
opercul =	little cover	plast =	rod-shaped body	sapr =	decaying matter
opt =	eye, vision	platy =	flat, broad	sarc =	flesh
orb =	circle	pleio =	multiple	saur =	lizard
oral =	mouth	pleur =	side	scaph =	hollow
ornith =	bird	plex =	interwoven	schizo =	cleft, split
ortho =	straight	plica =	fold	scler =	hard
os =	mouth	-ploid =	chromosome #	scrot =	pouch
-ose =	a sugar	plume =	feather	scut =	shield
-osis =	increase of	pneumo =	air, breathing	scypho =	cup
oss (ost) =	bone	pod =	foot	-sect =	cut
osti =	mouth	poly =	many	semi =	half, part
ostrac =	shell	pollex =	thumb	sept =	seven, wall
oti (oto) =	ear	pons =	bridge	ser =	fluid on body
ovum =	egg	porta =	gate	serra =	saw
		post =	behind, after	set =	bristle
pachy =	thick	pre =	before	sex =	six
palae =	ancient	prim =	first	sinus =	hollow
-palmate =	webbed	pro =	in front, toward	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

xero = drought-tolerant
 xyl = wood
 zon = girdle
 zoo (zoa) = animal
 zyg = yoke

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

Developed by:

Anne Maben, Science Mentor, Polytechnic High School
 Diane Lowell, Science Mentor
 Hughes Middle School
 Long Beach Unified School District

Strategic Science Teaching © 2012

Used with Permission from the Long Beach Unified School District
 Los Angeles County Office of Education <http://sst.lacoe.edu>