

# BEGINNER'S SCIENCE DICTIONARY





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SCIENCE  
DICTIONARY**





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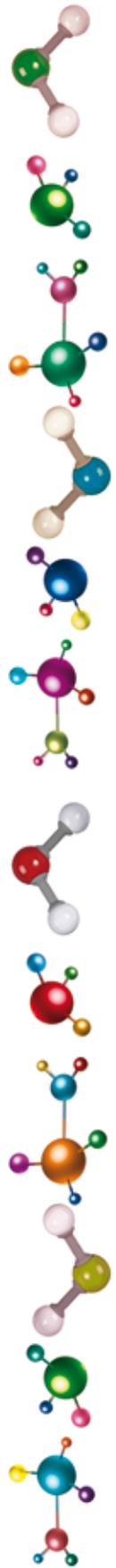
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**teri**

The Energy and Resources Institute



**abiotic** non-living things or factors. For example, air, water, soil, light, and temperature.

**absorbent** material that soaks up fluids. For example, sponge is water absorbent.

**acceleration** the act of increasing speed; increase of motion or action; rate at which velocity changes with time, in terms of both speed and direction.

**acid** (from Latin *acere*, meaning 'sour') a chemical substance that is sour in taste and turns blue litmus red. Some fruits such as lemon and green mangoes contain acids.

**acid rain** any form of precipitation like rain, fog or snow containing a high concentration of acid-forming gases like sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide. When these mix with water vapour in the air, they form sulphuric and nitric acid and fall as rain.

**adapt** change and become used to living in a certain place. For example, squirrels are adapted to living on trees.

**adaptation** process of adapting, or becoming suitable to a new or special situation.

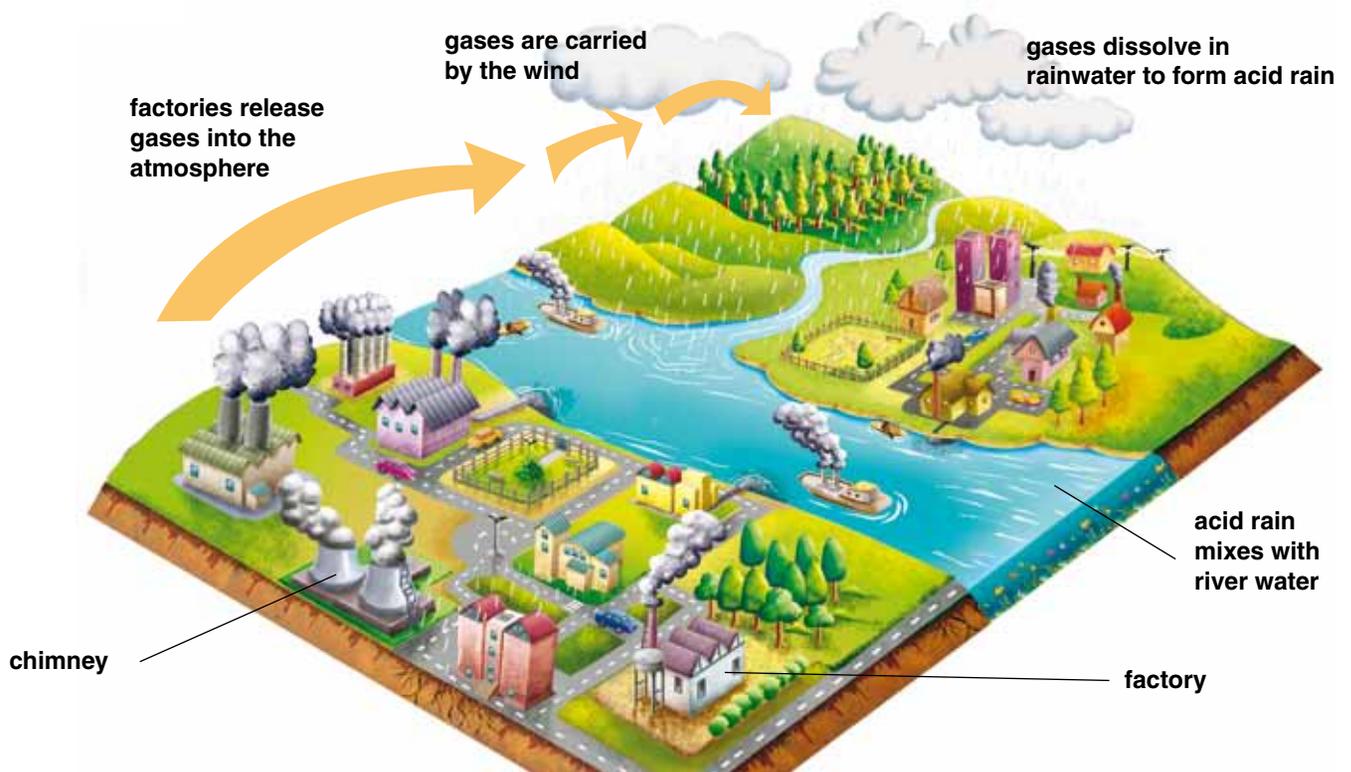
**aerial** of or happening in the air; metal device that sends or receives radio or television signals.



**aerobe** organism that needs oxygen to survive.

**aerosol** tiny liquid or solid particles suspended in gas. This suspension is packed in metallic bottles after applying high pressure. For example, deodorants are available in the form of aerosol in a can.

**aestivate** (from Latin *aestas*, meaning 'summer') be in an inactive state, especially during summer season.



**afforestation** planting of trees to turn a barren land into a forest.



**albedo** fraction of light reflected from a body like a planet or asteroid. For example, the earth's albedo is around 0.39.

**albumen** white of an egg.

**alchemy** ancient practice of turning metal into gold.

**alcohol** colourless liquid that turns into vapour and catches fire very easily.



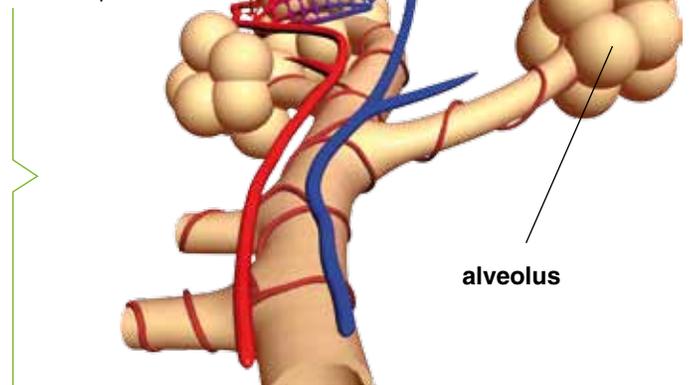
**algae** (singular: alga) simple plant-like organisms ranging in size from single-celled forms to the giant kelp, mainly found in water. Algae lack roots, stems, and leaves but make their own food through photosynthesis.

**alimentary canal** tube of the digestive system through which food passes and is finally removed from the body. It includes mouth, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, and anus.

**alkali** a water-soluble compound that reacts with an acid to form a salt and water. Alkalis turn red litmus blue.

**altitude** height of an object from the ground or the sea level. It is measured in feet, metres or miles.

**alveolus** (plural: alveoli) tiny air sac within the lungs in which exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide takes place.



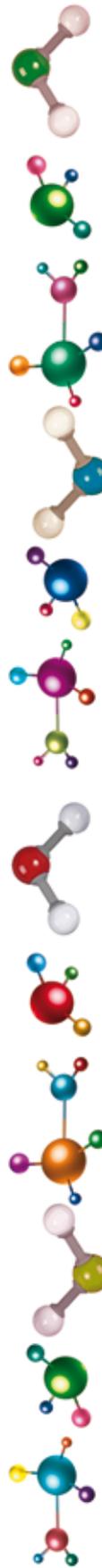
**amoeba** (plural: amoebae) microscopic living being consisting of a single cell. It has no specific shape and eats by wrapping its body around its food.

**amorphous** related to solids that do not have definite form or structure.

**amphibian** adult animal that can live both in water and on land. For example, frogs and toads.

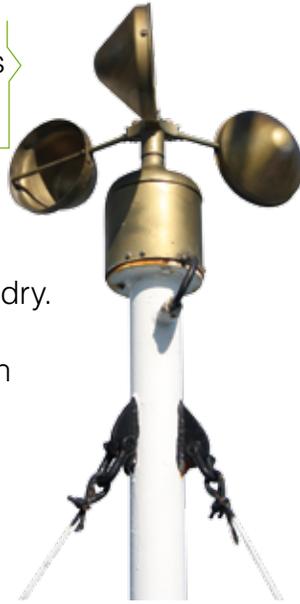
**anaerobe** organism that can survive without air or oxygen.





**anemometer**

instrument that measures the force and speed of wind.



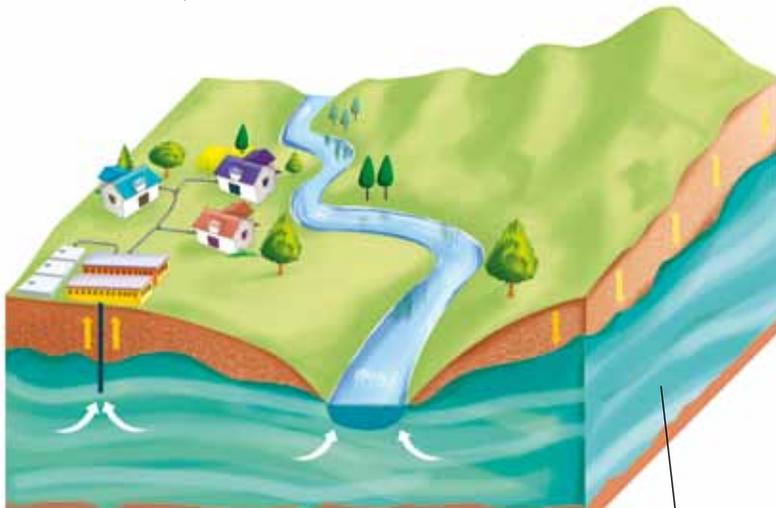
**anhydrous** crystalline salts that have lost their water and have become dry.

**antenna** movable organ of sensation attached to the head of an insect, functioning mainly as an organ of touch; metallic apparatus for sending or receiving electromagnetic waves. See *aerial*.

**anther** pollen-bearing part at the upper end of the stamen of a flower. Anthers occur at the tip of a slender, stem-like filament and have two lobes.

**apparatus** equipment designed for a specific function; tools or equipment used in an experiment.

**aquifer** underground layer of sand or gravel that contains water, and which is the source of water in wells and springs.



aquifer

**arid** very dry due to lack of rainfall.

**artery** tube-like structure that carries blood away from the heart to tissues and organs.

**asexual** having no sex organs.

**asexual reproduction** reproduction that occurs without the union of male and female gametes. For example, budding, fission or spore formation.

**asteroid** any of numerous rocky, irregularly shaped bodies that revolve around the sun. Asteroids are too small in size to be considered planets.



**atmosphere** layer of gases surrounding the earth or any planet.

**atom** basic building block of any matter. An atom consists of a centrally placed nucleus that contains neutrons, protons, and electrons.

**atomicity** number of atoms in a molecule.

**auricle** either one of the two upper chambers of the heart.

**autotroph** living organism that can make its own food in the presence of sunlight and carbon dioxide.



### backbone - biotic



**backbone** column of bones that runs along the centre of the back; also called spine or spinal column.

**bacterium** (plural: bacteria) any of the microscopic, unicellular organisms that lack chlorophyll and reproduce asexually.

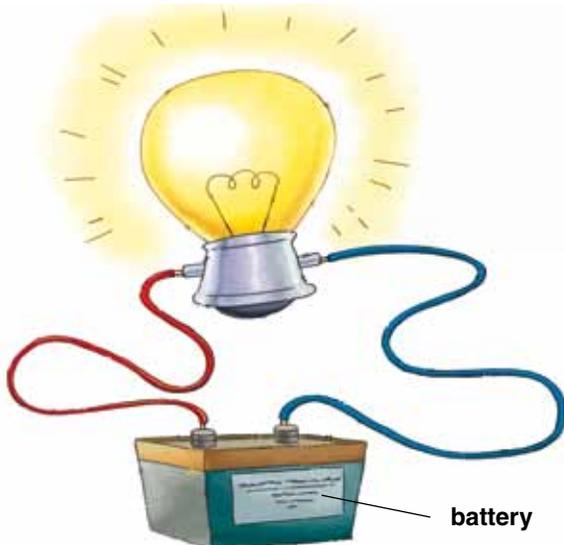
**balance** instrument that has two flat

pans, called scales, hanging from a bar. It is used for weighing objects.

**barometer** instrument used to measure atmospheric pressure.

**base** compound with bitter taste and slippery feel. A base turns red litmus blue and reacts with acids to form salts.

**battery** device that stores chemical energy and makes it available in an electrical form.



**beam** ray of light.

**bedrock** solid layer of rock beneath the layer of soil, sand, and gravel.

**bicellular** having two cells.

**bile** bitter, yellow or green liquid made by the liver. It is stored in the gall bladder and helps in the digestion of fats.

**biodegradable matter** matter that can be broken down into simpler compounds by micro-organisms like bacteria.

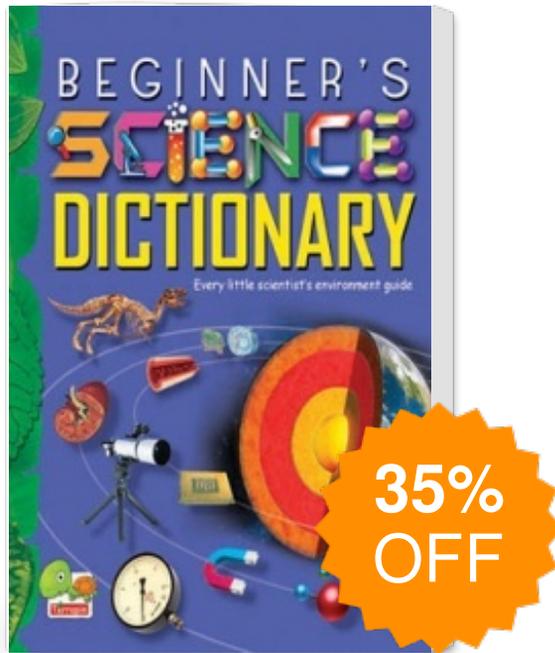


**biodiversity** variety of life forms found on the earth at all levels.

**biology** study of life and living organisms.

**biotic** related to life and living organisms.

# Beginner's Science Dictionary



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