

# CHEMISTRY Terminology

The ABCs of chemistry

## A

**A:** Symbol for atomic mass number  
**absolute zero:** Lowest temperature; 0 Kelvin  
**Ae:** Symbol for the element actinium,  $Z = 89$   
**accuracy:** The closeness of measurement to true value  
**acetate anion:**  $C_2H_3O_2^-$ , charge -1  
**acetic acid:**  $C_2H_4O_2$   
**acetone:** Dimethyl ketone; organic solvent  
**acid-base indicator:** A chemical that changes color if the pH changes  
**acid-base titration:** A method for determining acid or base concentrations  
**acid definition:** See Arrhenius acid, Brønsted-Lowry acid, Lewis acid  
**acid ionization constant ( $K_a$ ):** Equilibrium constant for acid dissociation  
**acidic solution:** pH below 7  
**actinide:** Element with  $Z = 90$  or above; radioactive  
**activation energy ( $E_a$ ):** A process's energy barrier



**adhesion:** Attraction of unlike molecules or materials  
**Ag:** Symbol for the element silver,  $Z = 47$   
**Al:** Symbol for the element aluminum,  $Z = 13$   
**alcohol:** Organic compound with -OH group; ROH  
**aldehyde:** Carbonyl group bonded to hydrogen and an organic group  
**alkali metal family:** Lithium, sodium, potassium, rubidium, cesium, and francium; column #1  
**alkaline earth metal family:** Beryllium, magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, and radium; column #2  
**alkane:** Hydrocarbon; all C-C single bonds  
**alkene:** Hydrocarbon; 1 or more C=C double bonds  
**alkyne:** Hydrocarbon; 1 or more C≡C triple bonds  
**allotropes:** Two or more forms of an element  
**alloy:** Solution of 2 or more metals  
**alpha ( $\alpha$ ):** Greek letter that denotes radioactive particle and various scientific variables  
**alpha particle:** Helium nucleus; charge +2  
**Au:** Symbol for the element auriferous,  $Z = 79$   
**amalgam:** Alloy of mercury with other metal  
**amine:** Organic base; RRRN; modified ammonia  
**amino acid:** Compound with organic acid and organic base property; forms proteins and peptides  
**ammonia:**  $NH_3$ , base  
**ammonium cation:**  $NH_4^+$ , charge +1  
**ammonium hydroxide:**  $NH_4OH$   
**amphoteric oxide:** Exhibits both acid and basic properties  
**amu:** Atomic mass unit;  $1/12$  mass of C-12  
**anion:** Ion with a negative charge  
**anode:** Electrode that supports oxidation  
**antibonding MO:** MO is less stable than separate AOs  
**AO:** Abbreviation for atomic orbital

**aq:** Aqueous; "dissolved in water"  
**Ar:** Symbol for the element argon,  $Z = 18$   
**aromatic:** Organic compound with a benzene ring  
**Arrhenius acid:** Produces hydronium ion in water solution  
**Arrhenius base:** Yields hydroxide ion in water solution  
**Arrhenius equation for rate constant ( $k$ ):**  

$$k = Ae^{-E_a/RT}$$
 $E_a$  = activation energy  
**arsenide anion:**  $As^{3-}$ , charge -3  
**As:** Symbol for the element arsenic,  $Z = 33$   
**At:** Symbol for the element astatine,  $Z = 85$   
**atm:** Symbol for pressure in "atmospheres"  
**atom:** Fundamental unit of all matter  
**atomic mass number ( $A$ ):** Total number of protons and neutrons  
**atomic number ( $Z$ ):** Number of protons in the nucleus  
**atomic orbital:** Wave motion of electrons in atoms  
**atomic radius:** Empirical measure of atom size  
**atomic weight:** Weighted average of natural isotopes of an element  
**Au:** Symbol for the element gold,  $Z = 79$   
**Aufbau principle:** Guides the filling of electronic subshells of the elements  
**Avogadro's law:** Volume is proportional to gas moles at fixed pressure and temperature  
**Avogadro's number:**  $N_A = 6.022 \times 10^{23} \text{ mol}^{-1}$

**Bk:** Symbol for the element berkelium,  $Z = 97$   
**bleach:** Chemical that is a strong oxidizing agent  
**boiling:** Liquid  $\rightarrow$  gas at the boiling point  
**boiling point elevation:** A solution has a higher boiling point than a pure solvent  
**boiling point ( $T_b$ ):** Liquid-gas equilibrium,  $P = 1 \text{ atm}$   
**boiling point of water:** 100°C  
**bond energy:** Energy held by a chemical bond  
**bond length:** Distance between 2 atoms in a bond  
**bond order for Lewis model:** # of bonds divided by # of bonded atoms  
**bond order for MO treatment:** # of filled bonding MOs minus # of filled antibonding MOs  
**bonding electrons:** Form chemical bonds in a compound  
**bonding MO:** MO is more stable than AOs  
**Boyle's law:**  $PV$  constant for gas, fixed  $T$  and  $n$   
**Br:** Symbol for the element bromine,  $Z = 35$   
**bromide anion:**  $Br^-$ , charge -1  
**Brønsted-Lowry acid:** Proton donor  
**Brønsted-Lowry base:** Proton acceptor  
**buffer:** Composed of weak acid and weak base; serves to keep pH constant



## B

**B:** Symbol for the element boron,  $Z = 5$   
**Ba:** Symbol for the element barium,  $Z = 56$   
**balanced equation:** Each side of the equation has the same number of atoms of each element and charge  
**balanced redox:** Electron loss = electron gain  
**barium cation:**  $Ba^{2+}$ , charge +2  
**base definition:** See Arrhenius base, Brønsted-Lowry base, Lewis base  
**base ionization constant ( $K_b$ ):** Equilibrium constant for base dissociation  
**basic solution:** pH over 7  
**battery:** Source of electrical power; galvanic cell  
**Be:** Symbol for the element beryllium,  $Z = 4$   
**benzene:**  $C_6H_6$ ; organic solvent; aromatic ring of 6 carbon atoms  
**beryllium cation:**  $Be^{2+}$ , charge +2  
**beta ( $\beta$ ):** Greek letter that denotes radioactive particle and a number of scientific variables  
**beta particle:** Energetic electron from the nucleus; charge -1  
**Bh:** Symbol for the element bohrium,  $Z = 107$   
**Bi:** Symbol for the element bismuth,  $Z = 83$   
**bicarbonate anion:**  $HCO_3^-$ , charge -1  
**bimolecular oxygen:**  $O_2$   
**binary compound:** Formed from 2 elements  
**bisulfate anion:**  $HSO_4^-$ , charge -1



**b:** Symbol for  $\text{centi-}$ , the SI prefix for  $1/100$  or  $10^{-2}$   
**c:** Symbol for the speed of light  
**°C:** Celsius temperature scale  
**C:** Symbol for the element carbon,  $Z = 6$   
 **$C_2H_4O_2$ :** Acetic acid  
**Ca:** Symbol for the element calcium,  $Z = 20$   
**calcium cation:**  $Ca^{2+}$ , charge +2  
**calcium fluoride:**  $CaF_2$   
**calcium hydroxide:**  $Ca(OH)_2$   
**calorie:** English unit of heat energy  
**calorimetry:** Study of the release or absorption of heat  
**carbide anion:**  $C^{4-}$ , charge -4  
**carbohydrate:** Organic compound; carbon bonded to several -OH groups (sugar and starch)  
**carbon dioxide:**  $CO_2$   
**carbon monoxide:**  $CO$   
**carbonate anion:**  $CO_3^{2-}$ , charge -2  
**carbonic acid:**  $H_2CO_3$   
**carbonyl group:**  $CO$ , ligand complex  
**carboxyl group:**  $-CO$  bonded to 2 groups  
**carboxylic acid:** Organic acid;  $R-COOH$   
**catalyst:** Accelerates a reaction but is not consumed in the reaction; lowers the activation energy  
**cathode:** Electrode that supports reduction  
**cation:** Ion with a positive charge  
**Cd:** Symbol for the element cadmium,  $Z = 48$



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