

Physics Terminology

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Absolute zero	The theoretical lowest possible temperature. More formally, it is the theoretical temperature at which entropy reaches its minimum value.	Acceleration	The rate at which the velocity of a body changes with time.
Alpha particle	Consist of two protons and two neutrons bound together into a particle identical to a Helium nucleus, which is classically produced in the process of alpha decay, but may be produced also in other ways and given the same name.	Alternating current	A form of electric current in which the movement of electric charge periodically reverses direction.
Ammeter	An instrument that is used to measure current.	Ampere	A unit that describes the rate of flow of electric current.
Atom	A basic unit of matter that consists of a dense central nucleus surrounded by a cloud of negatively charged electrons. The atomic nucleus contains a mix of positively charged protons and electrically neutral neutrons.	Atomic number	The number of protons found in the nucleus of an atom. It is most often used to classify elements (see periodic table).
Snell's principle	A theorem concerning diffraction that states that the diffraction pattern from an opaque body is identical to that from a hole of the same size and shape except for the overall forward beam geometry.	Background radiation	The ubiquitous cosmic radiation that the general population is exposed to.
Barometer	A scientific instrument used in meteorology to measure atmospheric pressure. Pressure tendency can forecast short term changes in the weather.	Beam	A structural element that is capable of withstanding load primarily by resisting bending. Beams are traditionally descriptions of loading or real engineering structural elements, but under an extreme such as truck or automobile frames, machine frames, and other mechanical or structural systems certain beam structures that are designed and analyzed in a simple fashion.
Bending	(also known as flexure) The behavior of a member structural element subjected to an external load applied perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the element.	Beta particle	high-energy, high-speed electrons or positrons emitted by certain types of radioactive nuclei.
Big Bang	The prevailing cosmological model that describes the early development of the universe.	Binary star	A binary star is a star system consisting of two stars orbiting around their common center of mass.
Bonding energy	The mechanical energy required to disassemble a whole into separate parts. A bound system typically has a lower potential energy than the sum of its constituent parts.	Black box	A region of space-time where gravity prevents anything, including light, from escaping.
Black body radiation	The type of electromagnetic radiation within or surrounding a body in thermodynamic equilibrium with its environment, or emitted by a black body (an opaque and non-reflective body) held at constant, uniform temperature. The radiation has a specific spectrum and intensity that depends only on the temperature of the body.	Block and tackle	A system of two or more pulleys with a rope or cable threaded between them, usually used to lift or pull heavy loads.
Boltz	One of two classes of elementary particles, the other being fermions. An important characteristic of bosons is that there is no limit to the number that can occupy the same quantum state.	Brown thermal noise	A traditional unit of energy equal to about 1366 joules. It is the amount of energy needed to heat one pound of water by one degree Fahrenheit. In scientific contexts the Btu has largely been replaced by the Jt unit of energy, the joule.
Buoyancy	An upward force exerted by a fluid, that opposes the weight of an immersed object.		

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Reviews

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