



Mid-Ohio Educational Service Center
Science Course of Study
Eighth Grade – Vocabulary Definitions

(Ohio Department of Education. 2003. K-12 Science Academic Content Standards)

asexual reproduction	Involving or reproducing by reproductive processes (as cell division, spore formation, fission or budding) that do not involve the union of germ cells or egg and sperm.
asteroid	A small rocky body orbiting the sun.
atmosphere	The gaseous envelope surrounding the earth; consists of oxygen, nitrogen and other gases, extends to a height of about 40,744 km (22,000 miles), and rotates with Earth.
characteristic	A distinguishing trait, feature, quality or property.

comet	A celestial body that consists of a fuzzy head usually surrounding a bright nucleus, that has a usually highly eccentric orbit, and that often, when in the part of its orbit near the sun, develops a long tail which points away from the sun.
composition	The qualitative and quantitative makeup of a chemical compound.
control	A group used as a standard of comparison for checking the results of an experiment.
convergent	To come together or tend to come together at a point.
crustal deformation	A change in the crust of a planet, moon or asteroid.
current	Continuous flow as of air, water or electric charge.

cycle	An interval of time during which a sequence of a recurring succession of events or phenomena is completed.
design	To create, fashion, execute or construct according to plan.
diversity	A great deal of variety.
eclipse	The total or partial obscuring of one celestial body by another.
energy	The capacity for doing work, can be in various forms such as nuclear, sound, thermal and light.
environment	The complex of physical, chemical and biotic factors that act upon an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determine its form and survival.

extinct	A species of organisms that no longer exists.
faulting	To fracture so as to produce a geologic fault.
folding	Causing rock strata to undergo bending or curvature.
force	An influence, that if applied to a free body, results chiefly in an acceleration of that body in the direction of its application.
fossil	Remnant, impression or trace of an organism of past geologic ages that has been preserved in the Earth's crust.
gene	A functional hereditary unit located at a particular point on a chromosome that controls or acts in the transmission of hereditary characteristics.

gravitation	A force manifested by acceleration toward each other of two free material particles or bodies, or of radiant-energy quanta.
heredity	The sum of the qualities and potentialities genetically derived from one's ancestors; the relation between successive generations, by which characteristics persist.
interstellar	Located, taking place or traveling among the stars, especially of the Milky Way galaxy.
landform	A natural feature of a land surface.
life	An organism that has the capacity for metabolism, growth, reaction to stimuli and reproduction.

life cycle	The series of stages in form and functional activity through which an organism passes from fertilized ovum to the fertilized ovum of the next generation.
------------	---

magma	Molten rock material within the Earth from which igneous rock results by cooling.
-------	---

mantle	The part of the interior of a terrestrial planet, especially the Earth, that lies beneath the lithosphere and above the central core.
--------	---

mean	The sum of a set of numbers divided by the number of elements in the set.
------	---

median	The middle number or item in a set of numbers or objects arranged from least to greatest, or the mean of the two middle numbers when the set has two middle numbers.
--------	--

meteor	Any of the small particles of matter in the solar system that are directly observable only by their incandescence from frictional heating on entry into the atmosphere.
--------	---

meteoroid	One of a large number of celestial bodies of various size that appear as meteors when they enter Earth's atmosphere.
-----------	--

mode	The number or object that appears most frequently in a set of numbers or objects.
------	---

model	A description or analogy used to help visualize something (such as an atom) that cannot be directly observed.
moon cycle	The cycle of the moon's phases, from new to full and back.
motion	An act, process or instance of changing position through time.
ocean trench	A long, narrow, deep depression in the ocean bed.
orbit	A path described by one body in its revolution about another (as by the Earth about the sun or by an electron about an atomic nucleus).
organism	An individual constituted to carry on the activities of life by means of organs separate in function but mutually dependent; a living being.

physiology	The biological science of essential and characteristic life processes, activities and functions.
------------	--

planet	Any of the large bodies that revolve around the sun in the solar system.
--------	--

quantitative	Involving the measurement of quantity or amount.
--------------	--

reference point	A basis or standard for evaluation, assessment or comparison; a criterion.
-----------------	--

reproduction	The process by which organisms give rise to offspring and which fundamentally consists of the segregation of a portion of the parental body by a sexual or an asexual process, and its subsequent growth and differentiation into a new individual.
--------------	---

resource	Industrial materials and capacities (as mineral deposits and waterpower) supplied by nature (earth science) and substances used by an organism for survival (biology).
----------	--

sediment	Material deposited by water, wind or glaciers.
----------	--

sound waves	Mechanical radiant energy that is transmitted by longitudinal pressure waves in a material medium (such as air) and is the objective cause of hearing.
-------------	--

species	A group of organisms consisting of similar individuals capable of exchanging genes or interbreeding.
---------	--

star	A natural luminous body visible in the sky, especially at night.
------	--

structure	The arrangement of particles or parts in a substance or body.
-----------	---

survival	The continuation of life or existence.
----------	--

system	1. A group of body organs that together perform one or more vital functions. 2. An organized group of devices, parts or factors that together perform a function or drive a process (weather systems, mechanical systems).
--------	--

technology	Human innovation in action that involves the generation of knowledge and processes to develop systems that solve problems and extend human capabilities. The innovation, change, or modification of the natural environment to satisfy perceived human needs and wants.
------------	---

theory	A supposition or a system of ideas intended to explain something, especially one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained.
tides	The alternate rising and falling of the surface of the ocean and water bodies (such as gulfs and bays) connected with the ocean that occurs usually twice a day, and is caused by the gravitational attraction of the sun and moon occurring unequally on different parts of the Earth.
tool	A device that aids in accomplishing a task, a form of technology.
trait	An inherited characteristic.
transform	To change in composition or structure.

uplift	To cause (a portion of Earth's surface) to rise above adjacent areas.
volcano	A vent in the crust of the Earth or another planet from which usually molten rock, ash and steam are ejected.
wave	A disturbance or variation that transfers energy progressively from point to point in a medium, and that may take the form of an elastic deformation or of a variation of pressure, electric or magnetic intensity, electric potential, or temperature.
weathering	To subject to the action of the elements.