

Microbial Jargon Worksheet



AMERICAN
SOCIETY FOR
MICROBIOLOGY

Word	Public Meaning	Microbiology Meaning
Measurements/Quantification		
Colony	A group of individuals or things with common characteristics or interests situated in close association	Millions of individual microbes growing together as spherical dots on agar plates and visible by the naked eye
Isolate	An individual socially withdrawn or removed from society	An individual, population, strain, or culture obtained by or resulting from selection or separation
Ladder	A structure for climbing up or down that consists essentially of two long sidepieces joined at intervals by crosspieces on which one may step	Tool used to mark the molecular weight of unknown samples in nucleic acid electrophoresis
Sequence	A continuous or connected series	The order of nucleotides within a nucleic acid
Methods/Tools		
Bath	A washing or soaking (as in water or steam) of all or part of the body	Container filled with liquid (usually water) that is heated or cooled to a controlled temperature, providing a gentle method of maintaining sample temperature
Culture	Acquaintance with and taste in fine arts, humanities, and broad aspects of science	The act of growing microbes in the lab for research
Fish/FISH	An aquatic animal	Fluorescent (or fluorescence) in situ hybridization
Gram	A metric unit of mass equal to $1/1000$ kilogram	Frequently-used stain that distinguishes different types of bacteria based on their cell wall properties
Hood	A flexible covering for the head and neck, or a protective covering for the head and face	Structure that provides an aseptic work area while allowing the containment of infectious splashes or aerosols generated by many microbiological procedures
Loop	A curving or doubling of a line so as to form a closed or partly open curve within itself through which another line can be passed or into which a hook may be hooked	A tool, usually made of platinum or nichrome wire, in which the tip forms a small loop that is used to smear, streak, or take an inoculum from, a culture of microorganisms
Media	Those who work in fields such as newspapers, radio, or television and report on news	Water and nutrients that support microbial growth
PDA	Public Display of Affection	Peptone-dextrose agar or photodiode array
Plate	A shallow, usually circular vessel from which food is eaten or served	A circular flat dish with a lid that is used for growing bacteria on a bed of nutrient jelly

Streak	To run naked through a public place	Method used to isolate pure microbial cultures by dragging an inoculated instrument along the surface of an agar dish
Tip(s)	A piece of advice or expert or authoritative information	Device that attaches to a pipettor, used to transfer liquid between vessels using suction and pressure
Well	A hole made in the earth to reach a natural deposit (as of water, oil, or gas)	Indentation arranged in a regular matrix pattern on a plastic plate, used to grow and/or analyze samples in parallel
Organism		
Be serious/B. cereus	A way to say "stop joking" or tell someone to stop acting weird	Toxin-producing gram-positive bacteria that causes intestinal illness
Bugs*	Any members of the order Hemiptera, OR any of various small arthropods (such as a beetle or spider) resembling these insects	A colloquial term for microbes
Mold	The frame on or around which an object is constructed	Fungi which grow as semi-microscopic organisms, and whose mycelium tends to form a loose meshwork rather than a dense tissue
Staff/staph	Individuals chiefly responsible for the internal operations of an institution or business	Short for the bacterial genus "Staphylococcus" which is commonly found on human skin
Processes/Mechanisms		
Clone	One that appears to be a copy of an original form	Produce many copies of a gene by repeated cycles of replication
Conjugation	Schematic arrangement of the inflectional forms of a verb, typically based on tense and person	A form of genetic exchange between bacteria without multiplying or reproducing
Expression	Facial aspect or vocal intonation as indicative of feeling	Production of an observable phenotype by a gene, usually by directing synthesis of a protein
Structures/Traits		
Aerobic	A system of physical conditioning involving exercises strenuously performed so as to cause marked temporary increase in respiration and heart rate	Requiring oxygen for survival
Cell	A single room (as in a convent or prison) usually for one person	The smallest unit that can live on its own and that makes up all living organisms and the tissues of the body
Envelope	A flat, usually paper container (as for a letter)	External viral membrane derived from infected host cell
Lawn	Ground that is covered with grass and is kept mowed	A uniform and uninterrupted layer of bacterial growth, in which individual colonies cannot be observed
Resistant	Exerting force in opposition	Having developed the ability to employ defense strategies to resist the effects of antibiotics and antimicrobials

*We include the term "bugs" since it is frequently used as a microbiology term. However, we point out that its use is increasingly seen as inaccurate and inappropriate.