

Watch your Words!

Science vocabulary with dual meanings

WORD	SCIENCE MEANING	PUBLIC MEANING
Earth		
Shear	difference in wind speed/direction	cut wool off of
Mantle	planet layer between crust and core	important role passed from person to person
Crust	outermost layer of planet	edge of pizza/pie
Fault	fracture in a rock with movement	responsible for accident/misfortune
Dating	determining age of site/artifact	initial stage of romantic relationship
Grade	gradient/slope	level of proficiency
Plastic	substance that is easily shaped/molded	synthetic material
Matter	physical substance in general	be of importance, have significance
Surf	line of foam on seashore from breaking waves	riding a surfboard
Shelf	a submarine bank	a surface for displaying/storing objects
Submarine	existing/occurring under the sea surface	a ship that stays submerged under water for extended periods
Current	water or air moving in a direction	belonging to the present time
Bank	land alongside a river/lake	a place where people store money
Fetch	distance traveled by wind/waves over water	go far and then bring back something/someone
Swell	sea movement in rolling waves that do not break	to become larger in size (e.g. a body part)
Processes		
Model	computer simulation	promotes fashion/product
Cycling	flow of nutrients or elements	riding a bicycle
Bonding	electrostatic attraction between atoms	making an emotional connection
Driver	influential factor	someone who drives a vehicle
Force	strength/energy of action/movement	make someone do something against their will
Stress	pressure/tension exerted on a material object	mental/emotional strain
Sample	to take a sample for analysis	a small part of something
Productive	creating organic matter through photo/chemosynthesis	busy and efficient
Code	software/computer language	encrypted message
Space		
Jet	gas stream ejected from an accretion disk surrounding star	an aircraft powered by jet engines
Belt	collection of asteroids in a disc shape	materials worn around waist to support clothes
Dwarf	celestial body resembling small planet	characters from Snow White
Units		
Charge	force experienced by matter when in an electromagnetic field	demand a price for rendered goods/services
Hertz	the SI unit of frequency	rental car company
Scale	system of marks used for measuring	device used for measuring weight
Bar	unit of measure of atmospheric pressure	place to drink alcoholic beverages
Pressure	force per unit area that gas/liquid/solid exerts on another	use of persuasion to make someone do something
Mole	SI unit used to measure amount of something	small rodent-like mammal

Watch your Words!

What are three words/phrases you use regularly in your work that might be inaccessible or misinterpreted by those outside your field?

What are some alternatives you could use?

If you really need to use it, what's a clear and memorable way to explain or define it?

IS IT JARGON? PLAY THE GAME AND FIND OUT!

- Do you only use it when talking about your science?
- Does it have a different meaning in day-to-day conversation?
- Are friends/neighbors/relatives in a different profession unable to explain or define it?
- When you defend using it, do you say things like "Everyone SHOULD know what it means"?
- Is it serving as a barrier to communication instead of a bridge?

If you checked a box for any of these questions, it's probably jargon!