

Electricity Unit Vocabulary

Word	Definition
AC (<u>A</u> lternating <u>C</u> urrent)	An electric current that reverses direction at regular intervals. In the United States this is the standard electrical current in homes.
Battery	A device that produces an electric current by harnessing the chemical reactions that take place within its cells.
Complete (Closed) Circuit	An electric circuit providing an uninterrupted, endless path for the flow of current.
Conductor	A material through which electric current can pass. In general, metals are good conductors.
DC (<u>D</u> irect <u>C</u> urrent)	An electric current flowing in one direction only through a pathway. Batteries supply direct current.
Current Electricity	A flow of electric charge (electrons).
Incomplete (Open) Circuit	A discontinuous circuit through which no current can flow.
Insulator	A material that does not easily transmit as electric current or heat. Materials such as wood, plastic, and ceramics are insulators.
Lightning	An electrical discharge from clouds that have acquired an electrical charge (build-up of electrons), usually occurring during storms.
Load	A device that receives power, uses electricity. An example is a light bulb or a fan.
Nucleus	The small, dense center of the atom. The nucleus is composed of protons and neutrons and has a positive electrical charge.
Parallel Circuit	A closed electrical circuit in which the current is divided into two or more paths. Examples: house wiring, Christmas lights.
Pathway	A course through which electricity can flow.
Power Source	A device that supplies electricity to a circuit such as a battery, a solar cell, or a generator.
Series Circuit	An electric circuit connected so that current passes through each circuit element in turn without branching. Flashlight, car battery, fire alarms.
Static Electricity	A stationary electric charge built up on an insulating material. Electrons are not moving.
Switch	A device that immediately changes a circuit from complete to incomplete (closed to open)