

Scientific Names Rules (The Basics)

1. The first word is the genus, second word is the species.
 - a. If there is a third word in the name it is the subspecies.
 - i. le: *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern humans) vs. *Homo sapiens idaltu* (discovered in 1997 that are extinct hominin fossils that have cranial features outside the modern range, but predate *Homo neanderthalensis*.)
2. The genus is capitalized, all other words are lowercased.
3. The entire scientific name is underlined or italicized.
 - a. If handwritten, it is underlined.
 - b. If typed, it is italicized.
4. The name is generally in Latin or Latinized.
 - a. Only the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet are used.
 - i. Gaps, accents, apostrophes, hyphens (except rare instances).
 - ii. Numbers are not used.
5. Occasionally, there is a name or symbol after the scientific name.
 - a. It is not italicized or underlined.
 - b. It may indicate the person who classified it.
 - i. Linnaeus or L. indicates Carolus Linnaeus classified it.
 - ii. Linnaeus 1758 indicates that Linnaeus classified it as one of the first classified organisms.
 - iii. If the author name is in parentheses, that indicates that the species was originally assigned to a different genus.
 - c. It may indicate mutations.
 - i. Cultivar names are given when the mutation occurs **due to human influence**.
 1. Examples: a mutation occurs in a garden
 2. The abbreviation **cv.** is used to signify that the mutation is a cultivar.
 3. cv. is placed after the species and is **not** underlined or italicized.
 - a. Example: *Sansevieria trifasciata* cv.
 - d. It may indicate scientific classification changes.
6. When referring to an unidentified species, use the abbreviation "sp." (The plural form is "spp.")
 - a. The "sp." and "spp." labels are not italicized.
 - b. Examples:
 - i. The meadow contained several sedge plants (*Carex* sp.).
 - ii. The forest floor contained several species of pixie cup lichen (*Cladonia* spp.).
7. After the first use, the genus name can be abbreviated to just its initial: *F. catus*.
 - a. Sometimes the full genus name isn't spelled out on first use. Some organisms, such as the famous study organisms *E. coli* and *C. elegans*, are so well known that it's common in informal discussion to just use the abbreviated version of the name.