

CP4a Describing waves

Word	Pronunciation	Meaning
amplitude		The size of vibrations or the maximum distance a particle moves away from its resting position when a wave passes.
electromagnetic waves		A group of waves that all travel at the same speed in a vacuum, and are all transverse.
frequency	<i>free-kwen-see</i>	The number of vibrations (or the number of waves) per second.
hertz (Hz)	<i>hurts</i>	The unit for frequency. One hertz is one wave per second.
longitudinal wave	<i>long-it-tyewd-in-al</i>	A wave where the particles vibrate in the same direction as the wave is travelling.
medium		Any substance through which something travels.
period		The time taken for one complete wave to pass a point. It is measured in seconds.
seismic waves		Vibrations in the rocks of the Earth caused by earthquakes or explosions. There are transverse and longitudinal seismic waves.
sound waves		Vibrations in the particles of a solid, liquid or gas, which are detected by our ears and 'heard' as sounds. Sound waves are longitudinal waves.
transverse wave		A wave where the vibrations are at right angles to the direction the wave is travelling.
velocity		The speed of an object in a particular direction. Usually measured in metres per second (m/s).
wave		A way of transferring energy or information. Many waves travel when particles pass on vibrations.
wavelength		The distance between a point on one wave and the same point on the next wave.

CP4c Refraction

Word	Pronunciation	Meaning
interface		The boundary between two materials.
normal		An imaginary line at right angles to a surface where a ray of light hits it.
refraction		The change in direction when waves go from one medium to another.