Short Summary of IUPAC Nomenclature of Organic Compounds

Introduction

The purpose of the IUPAC system of nomenclature is to establish an international standard of naming compounds to facilitate communication. The goal of the system is to give each structure a unique and unambiguous name, and to correlate each name with a unique and unambiguous structure.

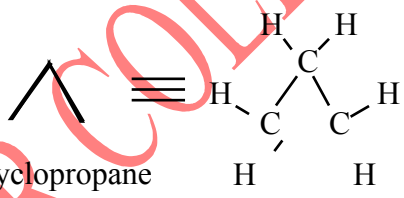
I. Fundamental Principle

IUPAC nomenclature is based on naming a molecule's longest chain of carbons connected by single bonds, whether in a continuous chain or in a ring. All deviations, either multiple bonds or atoms other than carbon and hydrogen, are indicated by prefixes or suffixes according to a specific set of priorities.

II. Alkanes and Cycloalkanes

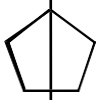
Alkanes are the family of saturated hydrocarbons, that is, molecules containing carbon and hydrogen connected by single bonds only. These molecules can be in continuous chains (called linear or acyclic), or in rings (called cyclic or alicyclic). The names of alkanes and cycloalkanes are the root names of organic compounds. Beginning with the five-carbon alkane, the number of carbons in the chain is indicated by the Greek or Latin prefix. Rings are designated by the prefix "cyclo". (In the geometrical symbols for rings, each apex represents a carbon with the number of hydrogens required to fill its valence.)

CH_4	methane	$CH_3[CH_2]_{10}CH_3$	dodecane
CH_3CH_3	ethane	$CH_3[CH_2]_{11}CH_3$	tridecane
$CH_3CH_2CH_3$	propane	$CH_3[CH_2]_{12}CH_3$	tetradecane
$CH_3[CH_2]_2CH_3$	butane	$CH_3[CH_2]_{18}CH_3$	icosane
$CH_3[CH_2]_3CH_3$	pentane	$CH_3[CH_2]_{19}CH_3$	henicosane
$CH_3[CH_2]_4CH_3$	hexane	$CH_3[CH_2]_{20}CH_3$	docosane
$CH_3[CH_2]_5CH_3$	heptane	$CH_3[CH_2]_{21}CH_3$	tricosane
$CH_3[CH_2]_6CH_3$	octane	$CH_3[CH_2]_{28}CH_3$	triacontane
$CH_3[CH_2]_7CH_3$	nonane	$CH_3[CH_2]_{29}CH_3$	hentriacontane
$CH_3[CH_2]_8CH_3$	decane	$CH_3[CH_2]_{38}CH_3$	tetracontane
$CH_3[CH_2]_9CH_3$	undecane	$CH_3[CH_2]_{48}CH_3$	pentacontane



cyclopropane

cyclobutane



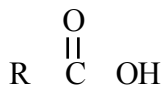
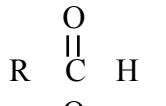
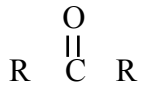
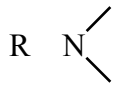
cyclopentane

cyclohexane cycloheptane cyclooctane

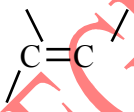
III. Nomenclature of Molecules Containing Substituents and Functional Groups

A. Priorities of Substituents and Functional Groups
LISTED HERE FROM HIGHEST TO LOWEST PRIORITY, except that the substituents within Group C have equivalent priority.

Group A—Functional Groups Indicated By Prefix Or Suffix

Family of Compound	Structure	Prefix	Suffix
Carboxylic Acid		carboxy-	-oic acid (-carboxylic acid)
Aldehyde		oxo- (formyl)	-al (carbaldehyde)
Ketone		oxo-	-one
Alcohol		hydroxy-	-ol
Amine		amino-	-amine

Group B—Functional Groups Indicated By Suffix Only

Family of Compound	Structure	Prefix	Suffix
Alkene		--------	-ene
Alkyne		--------	-yne

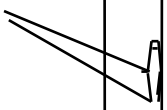
Group C—Substituents Indicated by Prefix Only

Substituent	Structure	Prefix	Suffix
Alkyl (see list below)	R—	alkyl-	----------
Alkoxy	R— O —	alkoxy-	----------
Halogen	F — Cl — Br — I —	fluoro- chloro- bromo- iodo-	---------- ---------- ---------- ----------

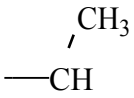
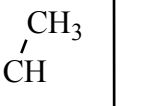
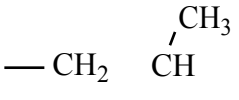
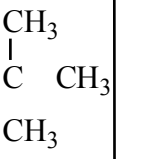
Group C continued on next page

Group C—Substituents, continued

Miscellaneous substituents and their prefixes

NO_2	$CH=CH_2$	$CH_2CH=CH_2$	
nitro	vinyl	allyl	phenyl

Common alkyl groups—replace "ane" ending of alkane name with "yl". Alternate names for complex substituents are given in brackets.

CH_3 methyl	 isopropyl [1-methylethyl]	 *sec*-butyl [1-methylpropyl]
CH_2CH_3 ethyl		
$CH_2CH_2CH_3$ propyl (*n*-propyl)	 isobutyl [2-methylpropyl]	 *tert*-butyl or *t*-butyl [1,1-dimethylethyl]
$CH_2CH_2CH_2CH_3$ butyl (*n*-butyl)		

B. Naming Substituted Alkanes and Cycloalkanes—Group C Substituents Only

1. Organic compounds containing substituents from Group C are named following this sequence of steps, as indicated on the examples below:

•Step 1. Find the longest continuous carbon chain. Determine the root name for this parent chain. In cyclic compounds, the ring is usually considered the parent chain, unless it is attached to a longer chain of carbons; indicate a ring with the prefix "cyclo" before the root name. (When there are two longest chains of equal length, use the chain with the greater number of substituents.)

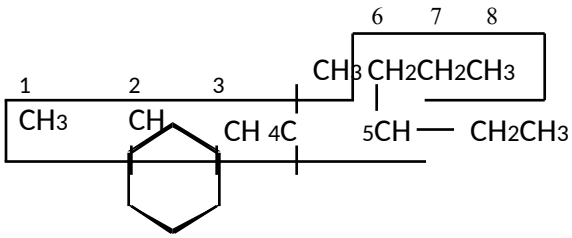
•Step 2. Number the chain in the direction such that the position number of the first substituent is the smaller number. If the first substituents from either end have the same number, then number so that the second substituent has the smaller number, *etc*.

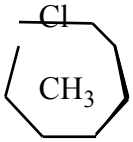
•Step 3. Determine the name and position number of each substituent. (A substituent on a nitrogen is designated with an "*N*" instead of a number; see Section **III**.D.1. below.)

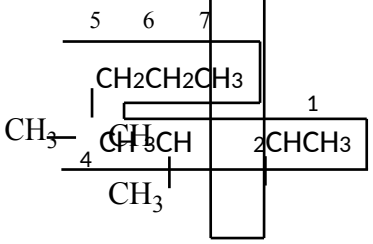
•Step 4. Indicate the number of identical groups by the prefixes di, tri, tetra, *etc*.

•Step 5. Place the position numbers and names of the substituent groups, in alphabetical order, before the root name. In alphabetizing, ignore prefixes like *sec*-, *tert*-, di, tri, *etc*., but include iso and cyclo. Always include a position number for each substituent, regardless of redundancies.

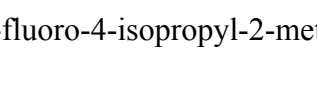
Examples



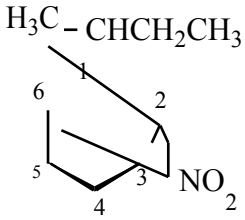




3-bromo-2-chloro-5-ethyl-4,4-dimethyloctane



3-fluoro-4-isopropyl-2-methylheptane



1-*sec*-butyl-3-nitrocyclohexane
(numbering determined by the alphabetical order of substituents)

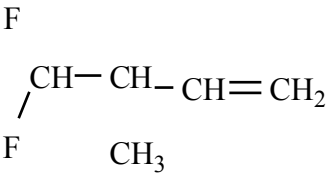
C. Naming Molecules Containing Functional Groups from Group B—Suffix Only

1. Alkenes—Follow the same steps as for alkanes, except:

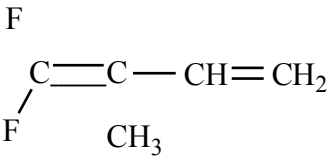
   a. Number the chain of carbons *that includes the C=C* so that the C=C has the lower position number, since it has a higher priority than any substituents;

   b. Change "ane" to "ene" and assign a position number to the first carbon of the C=C;

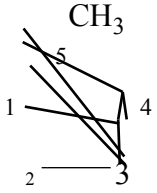
   c. Designate geometrical isomers with a *cis,trans* or *E,Z* prefix.



4,4-difluoro-3-methylbut-1-ene

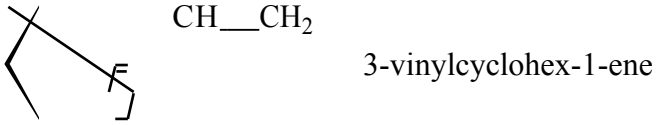


1,1-difluoro-2-methyl-buta-1,3-diene



5-methylcyclopenta-1,3-diene

Special case: When the chain cannot include the C=C, a substituent name is used.



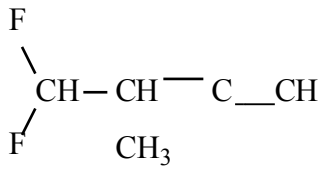
3-vinylcyclohex-1-ene

2. Alkynes—Follow the same steps as for alkanes, except:

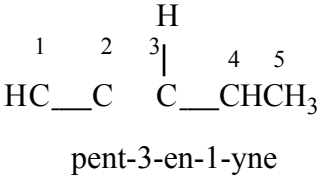
   a. Number the chain of carbons *that includes the C≡C* so that the functional group has the lower position number;

   b. Change "ane" to "yne" and assign a position number to the first carbon of the C≡C.

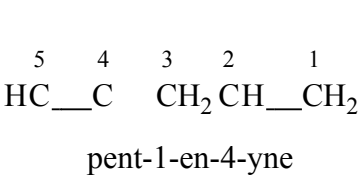
Note: The Group B functional groups (alkene and alkyne) are considered to have equal priority: in a molecule with both a double and a triple bond, whichever is closer to the end of the chain determines the direction of numbering. In the case where each would have the same position number, the double bond takes the lower number. In the name, "ene" comes before "yne" because of alphabetization. See examples on next page.



4,4-difluoro-3-methylbut-1-yne



pent-3-en-1-yne
("yne" closer to end of chain)



pent-1-en-4-yne
("ene" and "yne" have equal priority unless they have the same position number, when "ene" takes the lower number)

(Notes: 1. An “e” is dropped if the letter following it is a vowel: “pent-3-en-1-yne” , not “3-pent-3-ene-1-yne”. 2. An “a” is added if inclusion of di, tri, *etc*., would put two consonants consecutively: “buta-1,3-diene”, not “but-1,3-diene”.)

D. Naming Molecules Containing Functional Groups from Group A—Prefix or Suffix

In naming molecules containing one or more of the functional groups in Group A, the group of highest priority is indicated by suffix; the others are indicated by prefix, with priority equivalent to any other substituents. The table in Section **III**.A. defines the priorities; they are discussed below in order of increasing priority.

Now that the functional groups and substituents from Groups A, B, and C have been described, a modified set of steps for naming organic compounds can be applied to all simple structures:

•Step 1. Find the highest priority functional group. Determine and name the longest continuous carbon chain that includes this group.

•Step 2. Number the chain so that the highest priority functional group is assigned the lower number.

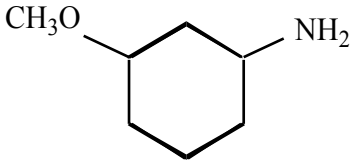
•Step 3. If the carbon chain includes multiple bonds (Group B), replace “ane” with “ene” for an alkene or “yne” for an alkyne. Designate the position of the multiple bond with the number of the first carbon of the multiple bond.

•Step 4. If the molecule includes Group A functional groups, replace the last “e” with the suffix of the highest priority functional group, and include its position number.

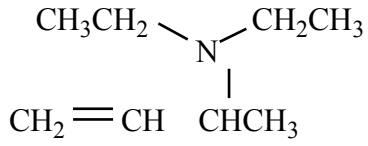
•Step 5. Indicate all Group C substituents, and Group A functional groups of lower priority, with a prefix. Place the prefixes, with appropriate position numbers, in alphabetical order before the root name.

1. Amines: prefix: amino-; suffix: -amine—substituents on nitrogen denoted by “*N*”

propan-1-amine

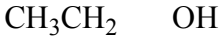


3-methoxycyclohexan-1-amine
("1" is optional in this case)

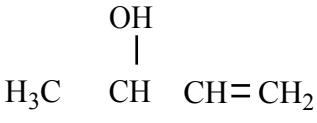


N,*N*-diethylbut-3-en-2-amine

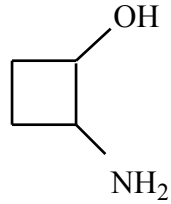
2. Alcohols: prefix: hydroxy-; suffix: -ol



ethanol

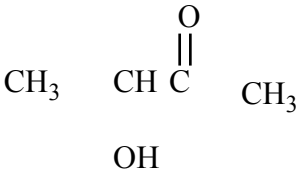


but-3-en-2-ol



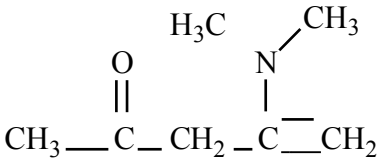
2-aminocyclobutan-1-ol
("1" is optional in this case)

3. Ketones: prefix: oxo-; suffix: -one



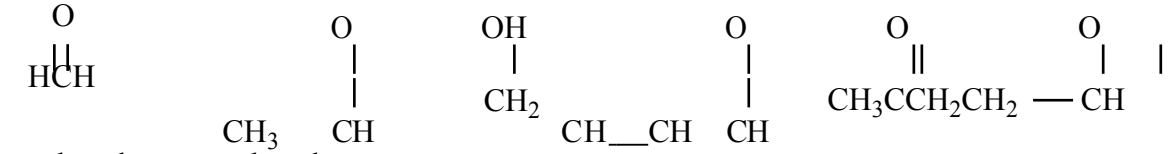
3-hydroxybutan-2-one

cyclohex-3-en-1-one
("1" is optional in this case)



4-(*N*,*N*-dimethylamino)pent-4-en-2-one

4. Aldehydes: prefix: oxo-, or formyl- (O=CH-); suffix: -al (abbreviation: —CHO).
An aldehyde can only be on carbon 1, so the "1" is generally omitted from the name.



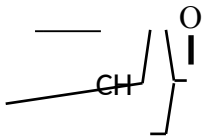
methanal; formaldehyde

ethanal; acetaldehyde

4-hydroxybut-2-enal

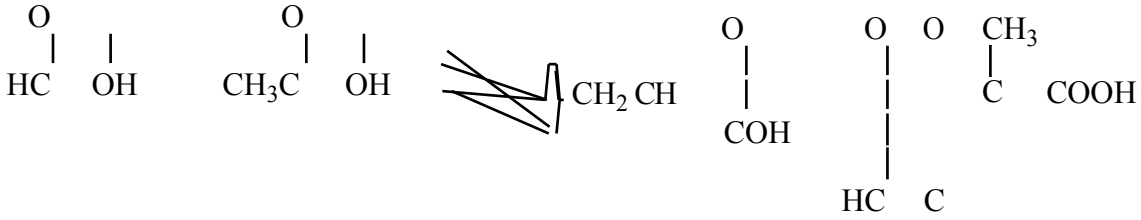
4-oxopentanal

Special case: When the chain cannot include the carbon of the CHO, the suffix "carbaldehyde" is used:



cyclohexanecarbaldehyde

5. Carboxylic Acids: prefix: carboxy-; suffix: -oic acid (abbreviation: —COOH).
A carboxylic acid can only be on carbon 1, so the "1" is generally omitted from the name.



methanoic acid; formic acid

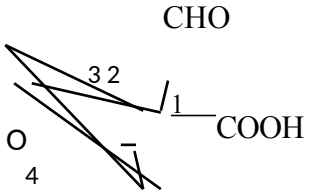
ethanoic acid; acetic acid

2-amino-3-phenylpropanoic acid

2,2-dimethyl-3,4-dioxobutanoic acid

(Note: Chemists traditionally use, and IUPAC accepts, the names "formic acid" and "acetic acid" in place of "methanoic acid" and "ethanoic acid".)

Special case: When the chain numbering cannot include the carbon of the COOH, the suffix "carboxylic acid" is used. See example on next page.



2-formyl-4-oxocyclohexanecarboxylic acid ("formyl" is used to indicate an aldehyde as a substituent when its carbon cannot be in the chain numbering)

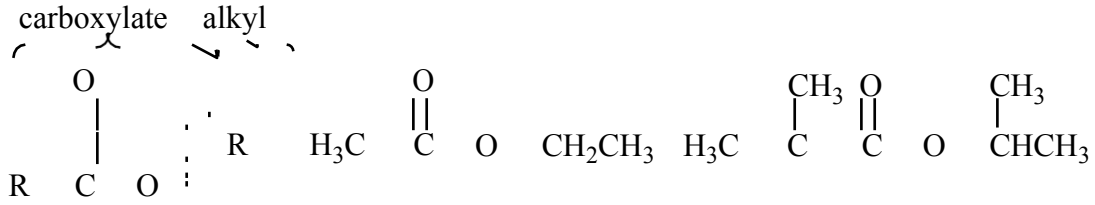
E. Naming Carboxylic Acid Derivatives
The six common groups derived from carboxylic acids are salts, anhydrides, esters, acyl halides, amides, and nitriles. Salts and esters are most important.

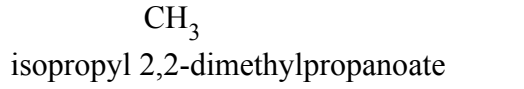
1. Salts of Carboxylic Acids
Salts are named with cation first, followed by the anion name of the carboxylic acid, where "**ic acid**" is replaced by "**ate**" :

acet**ic acid**	becomes	acet**ate**
butano**ic acid**	becomes	butano**ate**
cyclohexanecarboxyl**ic acid**	becomes	cyclohexanecarboxyl**ate**

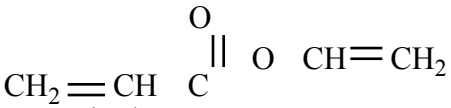
2. Esters

Esters are named as “organic salts” that is, the alkyl name comes first, followed by the name of the carboxylate anion. (common abbreviation: —COOR)



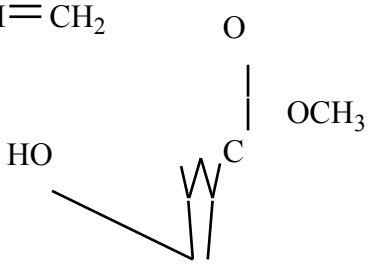


isopropyl 2,2-dimethylpropanoate



vinyl prop-2-enoate

cyclohexyl 2-phenylacetate

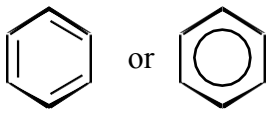


methyl 3-hydroxycyclopentanecarboxylate

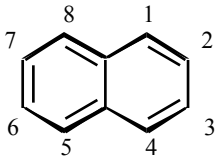
IV. Nomenclature of Aromatic Compounds

“Aromatic” compounds are those derived from benzene and similar ring systems. As with aliphatic nomenclature described above, the process is: determining the root name of the parent ring; determining priority, name, and position number of substituents; and assembling the name in alphabetical order. *Functional group priorities are the same in aliphatic and aromatic nomenclature.*

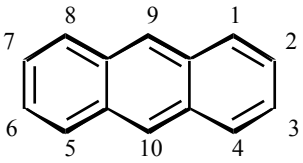
A. Common Parent Ring Systems



benzene



naphthalene

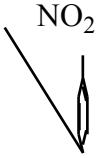


anthracene

B. Monosubstituted Benzenes

1. Most substituents keep their designation, followed by the word “benzene”:

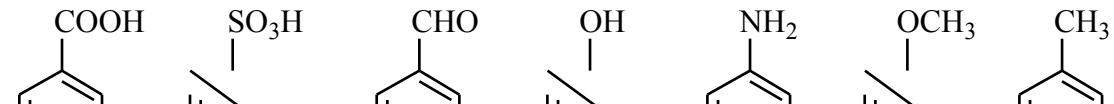
chlorobenzene



nitrobenzene

ethylbenzene

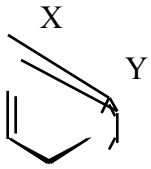
2. Some common substituents change the root name of the ring. IUPAC accepts these as root names, listed here in decreasing priority:

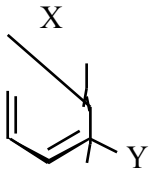


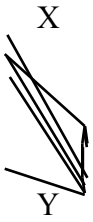
benzoic acid | benzene-sulfonic acid | benzaldehyde | phenol | aniline | anisole | toluene

C. Disubstituted Benzenes

1. Designation of substitution—only three possibilities:



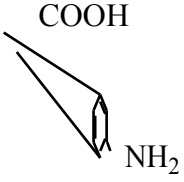




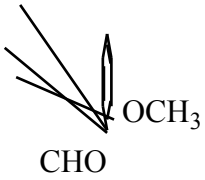
common:	*ortho-*	*meta-*	*para-*
IUPAC:	1,2-	1,3-	1,4-

2. Naming disubstituted benzenes—Priorities determine root name and substituents

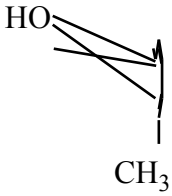
1,4-dibromobenzene



3-aminobenzoic acid

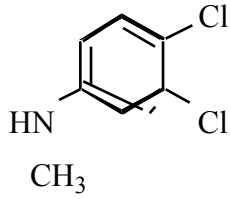


2-methoxybenzaldehyde

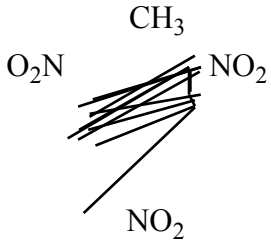


3-methylphenol

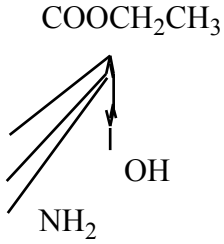
D. Polysubstituted Benzenes



3,4-dichloro-*N*-methylaniline



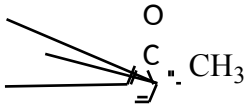
2,4,6-trinitrotoluene (TNT)



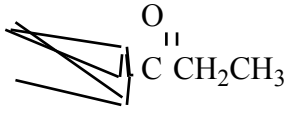
ethyl 4-amino-3-hydroxybenzoate

E. Aromatic Ketones

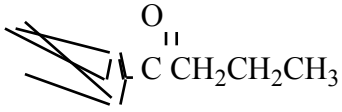
A special group of aromatic compounds are ketones where the carbonyl is attached to at least one benzene ring. Such compounds are named as "phenones", the prefix depending on the size and nature of the group on the other side of the carbonyl. These are the common examples:



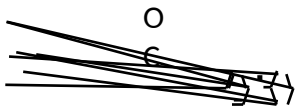
acetophenone



propiophenone



butyrophenone



benzophenone

Courtesy of Dr. Jan Simek, California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo