4 · Atomic structure

AQA · GCSE · Physics · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
isotopes /ˈaɪsətəʊps/	Carbon-12 and carbon-14 are **isotopes**. Carbon-12 carbon-14
radioactive decay /ˌreɪdɪəʊˈæktɪv dɪˈkeɪ/	**Radioactive decay** changes one element into another.
Activity /ækˈtɪvɪti/	**Activity** is the number of nuclei that decay each second.
becquerel /ˈbekwərəl/	One **becquerel** is one decay per second.
Count-rate /kaʊnt reɪt/	**Count-rate** is the number of clicks a detector records each second.
Half-life /hɑːf laɪf/	**Half-life** is the time for half the nuclei to decay.
Contamination /kənˌtæmɪˈneɪʃn/	**Contamination** means radioactive material gets onto or into something.
Irradiation /ˌɪreɪdɪˈeɪʃn/	**Irradiation** means being exposed to radiation from outside.
background radiation /ˈbækgraʊnd ˌreɪdɪˈeɪʃn/	**Background radiation** is all around us.
fission /ˈfɪʃn/	**Fission** splits a uranium nucleus.
fusion /ˈfjuːʒn/	**Fusion** powers the Sun.

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