Fission

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Physics · HL · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
nuclear fission /ˈnjuːklɪə ˈfɪʃn/	**Nuclear fission** splits a big nucleus into two.
fission fragment	Each **fission fragment** is a smaller nucleus.
spontaneous fission	**Spontaneous fission** happens without a neutron hitting the nucleus.
neutron-induced fission	In a reactor, **neutron-induced fission** releases more neutrons.
chain reaction /tʃeɪn rɪˈækʃn/	Each fission starts more fissions in a **chain reaction**.
critical mass /ˈkrɪtɪkl mæs/	Above the **critical mass**, the chain reaction keeps going.
moderator /ˈmɒdəreɪtə/	Water acts as a **moderator**: it slows the neutrons down.
control rod /kənˈtrəʊl rɒd/	A **control rod** absorbs neutrons to slow the reaction.
coolant	Water is the **coolant** that carries heat away from the core.
heat exchanger	A **heat exchanger** passes heat to water that makes steam.
shield	A thick concrete **shield** protects the workers.
nuclear waste	**Nuclear waste** must be stored safely for many years.

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