

Vocabulary



constant a factor that doesn't change in an experiment

Suppose you do an experiment to find out the effect of water on the growth of plants. The only factor you would change in the experiment would be the amount of water the plants receive. All other factors, such as the amount of sunlight the plants receive, the original size of the plants, and the type of soil the plants are grown in, must stay the same, or constant.

dependent variable the variable that changes as a result of changing the independent variable in an experiment

In the plant experiment described above, the dependent variable is the height of the plant at the end of the experiment. This factor changes according to how the independent variable (the amount of water) changes.

independent variable the factor in an experiment that is changed

In the plant experiment, the independent variable is the amount of water the plants receive. This factor is the only one that changed during the experiment.

surface tension the force acting on the molecules at the surface of a liquid that causes the liquid to form rounded drops

Surface tension is a force between molecules. It is what allows some insects to move across the surface of a pond without falling in.