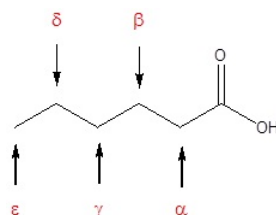


17.7: Nomenclature

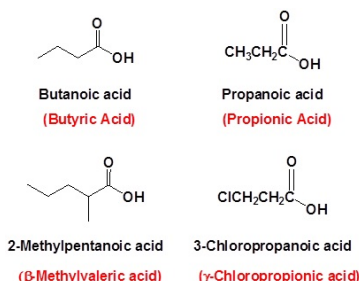
The IUPAC system of nomenclature assigns a characteristic suffix to these classes. The **-e** ending is removed from the name of the parent chain and is replaced **-anoic acid**. Since a carboxylic acid group must always lie at the end of a carbon chain, it is always given the #1 location position in numbering and it is not necessary to include it in the name.

Many carboxylic acids are called by the common names. These names were chosen by chemists to usually describe a source of where the compound is found. In common names of aldehydes, carbon atoms near the carboxyl group are often designated by Greek letters. The atom adjacent to the carbonyl function is alpha, the next removed is beta and so on.



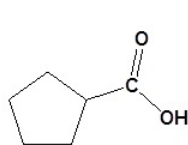
Formula	Common Name	Source	IUPAC Name	Melting Point	Boiling Point
HCO ₂ H	formic acid	ants (L. formica)	methanoic acid	8.4 °C	101 °C
CH ₃ CO ₂ H	acetic acid	vinegar (L. acetum)	ethanoic acid	16.6 °C	118 °C
CH ₃ CH ₂ CO ₂ H	propionic acid	milk (Gk. protus prion)	propanoic acid	-20.8 °C	141 °C
CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₂ CO ₂ H	butyric acid	butter (L. butyrum)	butanoic acid	-5.5 °C	164 °C
CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₃ CO ₂ H	valeric acid	valerian root	pentanoic acid	-34.5 °C	186 °C
CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₄ CO ₂ H	caproic acid	goats (L. caper)	hexanoic acid	-4.0 °C	205 °C
CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₅ CO ₂ H	enanthic acid	vines (Gk. oenanthe)	heptanoic acid	-7.5 °C	223 °C
CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₆ CO ₂ H	caprylic acid	goats (L. caper)	octanoic acid	16.3 °C	239 °C
CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₇ CO ₂ H	pelargonic acid	pelargonium (an herb)	nonanoic acid	12.0 °C	253 °C
CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₈ CO ₂ H	capric acid	goats (L. caper)	decanoic acid	31.0 °C	219 °C

Example (Common Names Are in Red)

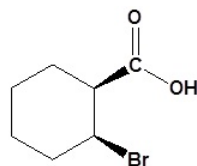


Naming carboxyl groups added to a ring

When a carboxyl group is added to a ring the suffix **-carboxylic acid** is added to the name of the cyclic compound. The ring carbon attached to the carboxyl group is given the #1 location number.



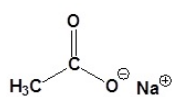
Cyclopentanecarboxylic acid



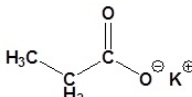
C/s-2-Bromocyclohexanecarboxylic acid

Naming carboxylates

Salts of carboxylic acids are named by writing the name of the cation followed by the name of the acid with the **–ic acid** ending replaced by an **–ate** ending. This is true for both the IUPAC and Common nomenclature systems.



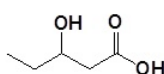
Sodium ethanoate
(Sodium Acetate)



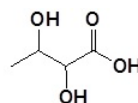
Potassium Propanoate
(Potassium propionate)

Naming carboxylic acids which contain other functional groups

Carboxylic acids are given the highest nomenclature priority by the IUPAC system. This means that the carboxyl group is given the lowest possible location number and the appropriate nomenclature suffix is included. In the case of molecules containing carboxylic acid and alcohol functional groups the OH is named as a hydroxyl substituent. However, the **l** in hydroxyl is generally removed.

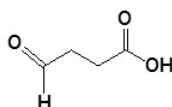


3-Hydroxypentanoic acid

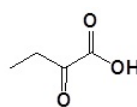


2,3-Dihydroxybutanoic acid

In the case of molecules containing a carboxylic acid and aldehydes and/or ketones functional groups the carbonyl is named as a "Oxo" substituent.

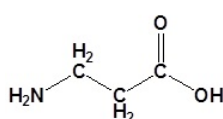


4-Oxobutanoic acid

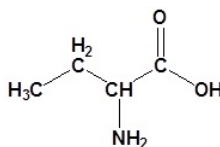


2-Oxobutanoic acid

In the case of molecules containing a carboxylic acid an amine functional group the amine is named as an "amino" substituent.



3-Aminopropanoic acid

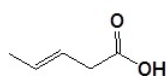


2-Aminobutanoic acid

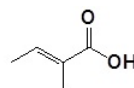
When carboxylic acids are included with an alkene the following order is followed:

(Location number of the alkene)-(Prefix name for the longest carbon chain minus the -ane ending)-(an –enoic acid ending to indicate the presence of an alkene and carboxylic acid)

Remember that the carboxylic acid has priority so it should get the lowest possible location number. Also, remember that cis/trans or E/Z nomenclature for the alkene needs to be included if necessary.



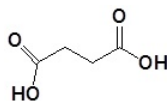
Trans-3-pentenoic acid



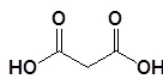
(*E*)-2-Methyl-2-butenoic acid

Naming dicarboxylic acids

For dicarboxylic acids the location numbers for both carboxyl groups are omitted because both functional groups are expected to occupy the ends of the parent chain. The ending **-dioic acid** is added to the end of the parent chain.



Butanedioic acid



Propanedioic acid

Contributors

- Prof. Steven Farmer ([Sonoma State University](#))
- William Reusch, Professor Emeritus ([Michigan State U.](#)), [Virtual Textbook of Organic Chemistry](#)

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