

## Linnaean Taxonomic Classification Nomenclature

All biologists use a single naming system that essentially follows the practice of Linnaeus.

Taxa are always given Latin names (or Latinized ones). This is a label and not a definition.

*(Homo sapiens – wise man)*

The name of a species always consists of two words – the genus (generic) name followed by the species (specific) name. Grammatically, the genus is a noun and the species is adjective or another noun in opposition.

The genus name is always capitalized and italicized. The species name is italicized only. If you used the genus name already you may use the first letter followed by a period.

*Homo sapiens, H. sapiens*

In the rare cases where a subgenus name is used it is capitalized, italicized and put in parentheses after the genus.

*Australopithecus (Paranthropus) robustus*

If a subspecies name is used it comes at the end and is italicized only.

E.G. *Homo sapiens sapiens*

Categories above the genus level are capitalized but not italicized. They generally have endings that show the level of classification.

**ini** for tribe (Infraorder),

**oidea** for superfamily,

**idae** for family.

Above the superfamily the only rule is that the name must be Latin or Latinized.

The Latin names are often anglicized by dropping the ending and it is not normally capitalized.

Hominidae – hominid.

Technically the full name of the taxon should include the name of its inventor and the date but this is only done if the discussion is concerning the taxonomy of the name.

*Homo sapiens* Linnaeus, 1758

Ideally, a taxon should have only one name, but some have been given more than one and there is a disagreement over which one has priority or which one is better.

*Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* vs. *Homo neanderthalensis*

## Meanings behind the Latin names

*Homo sapiens*

Man wise

*Homo neanderthalensis*

Man Neander from (*ensis*)

*Homo habilis*

Man handy

*Australopithecus afarensis*

Southern (*Austral*) ape (*pithecus*) Afar (place) from (*ensis*)

*Homo erectus*

Man erect

*Australopithecus africanus*

Southern (*Austral*) ape (*pithecus*) Africa of (*nus*)

*Homo ergaster*

Man work

*Paranthropus robustus*

Beside (*Para*) human (*anthropus*) robust

*Homo floresiensis*

Man Flores from (*ensis*)

*Paranthropus boisei*

Beside (*Para*) human (*anthropus*) Charles Boise (*boisei*)

*Sivapithecus*

Siva (an Indian god) ape (*pithecus*)

*Proconsul*

Before (Pro) Consul (*consul*) a chimp at the London Zoo

Primate (Order)

Principle or First

Anthropoidea (Suborder)

Human feet

Hominoidea (Superfamily)

Man

Hominidae (Family)

Man

Other basic genus names you need to know

*Pan* – Chimpanzee

*Gorilla* – Gorilla

*Pongo* – Orang-utan