



Chromatography



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Chromatography is a collective term for a set of analytical techniques used to separate mixtures. *Chroma* means color and *graph* means to write or draw. Paper chromatography is an analytical technique used to separate mixtures of chemicals (sometimes colored pigments) using a partitioning method. The paper in this method is called the **stationary phase** because it does not move and serves as a substrate or surface for the separation. **Analytes** (substances being analyzed) are separated from each other based on a **differential affinity** to a solvent. The solvent dissolves and carries the analytes along the matrix of the stationary phase. Since the solvent moves through a wicking action, it is called the **mobile phase**.

The distance that the analyte migrates along the paper related to the total distance that the solvent or mobile phase moves is called the **Retention Factor** or **R_f**.

Tags: [quantitative reasoning](#), [guided inquiry](#)