

epithelium noun

ep·i·the·li·um (,e-pə-'thē-lē-əm 🔊)

plural **epithelia** (,e-pə-'thē-lē-ə 🔊)

- 1** : a membranous cellular tissue that covers a free surface or lines a tube or cavity of an animal body and serves especially to enclose and protect the other parts of the body, to produce secretions and excretions, and to function in assimilation
- 2** : a usually thin layer of parenchyma that lines a cavity or tube of a plant

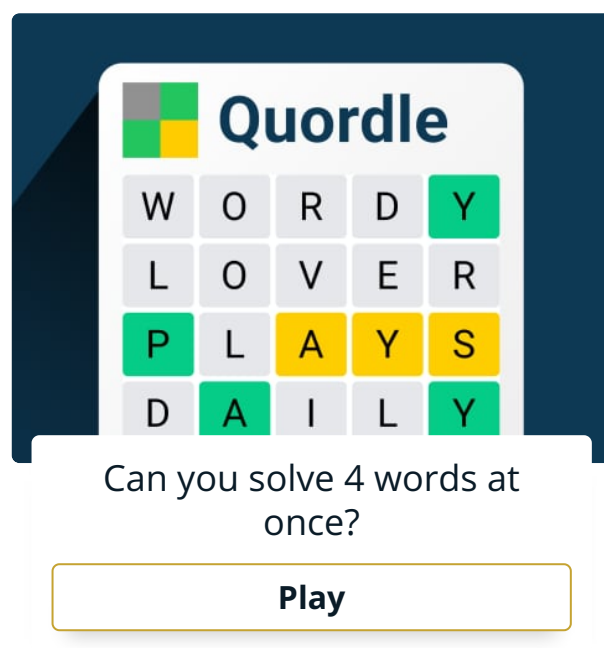
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Two light microscope images representing the junctional **epithelium**.

— Hannah Millington, *MSNBC Newsweek*, 30 July 2025

Our intestinal lining, or **epithelium**, rapidly and continually renews itself, replacing its



Tellurium mesh devices were implanted into a narrow space between the photoreceptor layer and the retinal pigment **epithelium**, a site where the implants could interface with the neurons.

— *ArsTechnica*, 12 June 2025

A number of other mammals have structures inside their noses called the vomeronasal organ (VNO) and main olfactory **epithelium** (MOE) designed to detect pheromones.

— Bruce Y. Lee, *Forbes.com*, 29 Mar. 2025

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Etymology

New Latin, from *epi-* + Greek *thēlē* nipple — more at [FEMININE](#)

First Known Use

1748, in the meaning defined at [sense 1](#)

Time Traveler

The first known use of ***epithelium*** was in 1748

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Style

MLA

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epithelium noun

ep-i-the-li-um

ep-ə-'thē-lē-əm 🔊

plural epithelia

-lē-ə 🔊

2 : a usually thin layer of cells of a plant that is part of the parenchyma and lines a cavity or tube

-lē-əl **adjective**

epithelium **noun**

ep-i-the-li-um (ep-ə-'thē-lē-əm ◀▶)

plural epithelia (-lē-ə ◀▶)

: a membranous cellular tissue that covers a free surface or lines a tube or cavity of an animal body and serves especially to enclose and protect the other parts of the body, to produce secretions and excretions, and to function in assimilation

Britannica.com: [Encyclopedia article about epithelium](#)

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