

Vocabulary: Hypotheses and Theories

- Hypothesis – a tentative explanation that can be tested by doing experiments.
 - The plural of *hypothesis* is *hypotheses*.
 - Hypotheses are often written as if/then statements. For example “If fertilizer is added to the soil, then the plants will grow more quickly.”
- Theory –a set of ideas that tie together many different observations of natural and physical phenomena.
 - Unlike hypotheses, theories are well-established and highly reliable. However, even theories can be modified or overturned by new evidence.
 - Current scientific theories include:
 - Atomic theory
 - Big bang theory
 - Cell theory
 - Germ theory of disease
 - Quantum mechanical theory
 - Theory of evolution
 - Theory of plate tectonics
 - Theory of relativity