

Terminology

- as with any technical subject, there are numerous terms used to describe the different appearances on a radiograph. Some knowledge of the common terms can be helpful when reading reports. If writing to another colleague, it is important to remember that those reading the report may not understand complex terms. Useful terms include;

sclerotic	— increased bone density
lytic	— bone destruction
cortex	— compact (dense) bone forming the bone surface
medulla	— trabecular bone in the bone marrow
articular	— refers to a joint (an articulation)
demineralization	— decreased bone density (as occurs with osteomalacia/osteopenia/osteoporosis)
ankylosis	— fusion
osteo-	— prefix meaning bony (e.g. osteosarcoma)
chondro-	— prefix meaning cartilaginous (e.g. chondrosarcoma)
fibro-	— prefix meaning fibrous (e.g. fibrosarcoma)
arthro-	— prefix meaning joint (e.g. arthritis)
spondylo-	— prefix meaning spinal (e.g. spondyloarthropathy)
dactyl-	— prefix meaning digit (either finger or toe, e.g. dactylitis)

The figures below show the terminology given to the different portions of a long bone (fig 2.1) and the location of abnormalities in bone (fig 2.2).

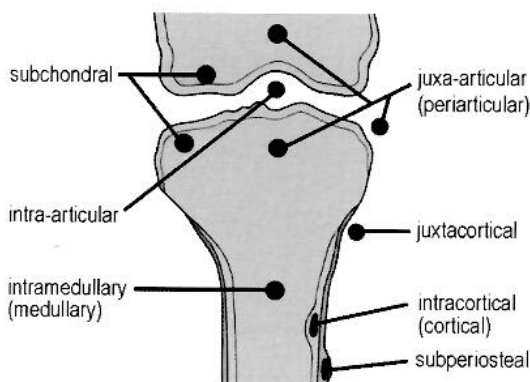


Figure 2.1
Terminology used to describe the different portions of a long bone.
(from Greenspan A, *Orthopedic Radiology* 2nd ed, Raven Press 1992, with permission)

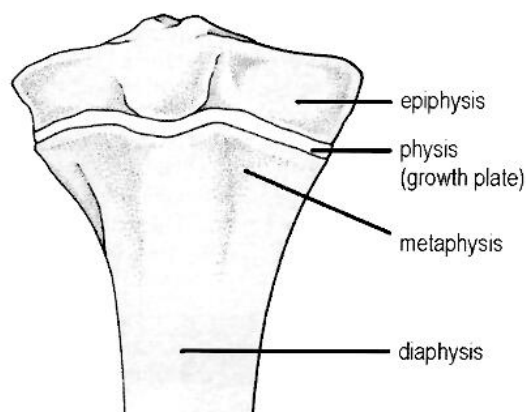


Figure 2.2
Terminology used to identify the location of a lesion in the long bone of the growing skeleton. At maturity (post-skeletal fusion) the physis (growth plate) fuses and is no longer visible.
(from Greenspan A, *Orthopedic Radiology* 2nd ed, Raven Press 1992, with permission)

For description of radiographic projections and positions, the following terms are often helpful:

AP	— anteroposterior
PA	— posteroanterior
lateral	— from the side
oblique	— between lateral and AP (or PA)
decubitus	— lying horizontal
supine	— lying on the back
prone	— lying face down
erect	— standing
axial	— along the axis (of an anatomic structure)
cephalic	— towards the head
caudal	— towards the feet