

Curiosity: One Word, Two Models

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“Equilibrium” appears in gas systems and in solutions, but the evidence students use can be different. A gas-particle diagram may help compare the number of gas particles on each side after a volume change. A solution concentration card may make a quotient calculation practical. Neither shortcut works without the reaction, conditions, and model assumptions that make it meaningful.

The useful habit is to ask: what does this evidence actually support? A quotient comparison can identify a net direction in a stated model. A particle count can support a limited compression prediction. Neither one reports a molecular mechanism, how long the adjustment takes, or the exact final composition.