

TABLE 3-1 Properties and Conventions Associated with the Common Amino Acids Found in Proteins

Amino acid	Abbreviation/ symbol	M_r^*	pK_a values			pI	Hydropathy index [†]	Occurrence in proteins (%) [‡]
			pK_1 (—COOH)	pK_2 (—NH ₃ ⁺)	pK_R (R group)			
Nonpolar, aliphatic R groups								
Glycine	Gly G	75	2.34	9.60		5.97	-0.4	7.2
Alanine	Ala A	89	2.34	9.69		6.01	1.8	7.8
Proline	Pro P	115	1.99	10.96		6.48	1.6	5.2
Valine	Val V	117	2.32	9.62		5.97	4.2	6.6
Leucine	Leu L	131	2.36	9.60		5.98	3.8	9.1
Isoleucine	Ile I	131	2.36	9.68		6.02	4.5	5.3
Methionine	Met M	149	2.28	9.21		5.74	1.9	2.3
Aromatic R groups								
Phenylalanine	Phe F	165	1.83	9.13		5.48	2.8	3.9
Tyrosine	Tyr Y	181	2.20	9.11	10.07	5.66	-1.3	3.2
Tryptophan	Trp W	204	2.38	9.39		5.89	-0.9	1.4
Polar, uncharged R groups								
Serine	Ser S	105	2.21	9.15		5.68	-0.8	6.8
Threonine	Thr T	119	2.11	9.62		5.87	-0.7	5.9
Cysteine [§]	Cys C	121	1.96	10.28	8.18	5.07	2.5	1.9
Asparagine	Asn N	132	2.02	8.80		5.41	-3.5	4.3
Glutamine	Gln Q	146	2.17	9.13		5.65	-3.5	4.2
Positively charged R groups								
Lysine	Lys K	146	2.18	8.95	10.53	9.74	-3.9	5.9
Histidine	His H	155	1.82	9.17	6.00	7.59	-3.2	2.3
Arginine	Arg R	174	2.17	9.04	12.48	10.76	-4.5	5.1
Negatively charged R groups								
Aspartate	Asp D	133	1.88	9.60	3.65	2.77	-3.5	5.3
Glutamate	Glu E	147	2.19	9.67	4.25	3.22	-3.5	6.3

* M_r values reflect the structures as shown in Figure 3-5. The elements of water (M_r , 18) are deleted when the amino acid is incorporated into a polypeptide.

†A scale combining hydrophobicity and hydrophilicity of R groups. The values reflect the free energy (ΔG) of transfer of the amino acid side chain from a hydrophobic solvent to water. This transfer is favorable ($\Delta G < 0$; negative value in the index) for charged or polar amino acid side chains, and unfavorable ($\Delta G > 0$; positive value in the index) for amino acids with nonpolar or more hydrophobic side chains. See Chapter 11. From Kyte J. & Doolittle, R.F. (1982) A simple method for displaying the hydrophobic character of a protein. *J. Mol. Biol.* **157**, 105-132.

‡Average occurrence in more than 1,150 proteins. From Doolittle, R.F. (1989) Redundancies in protein sequences. In *Prediction of Protein Structure and the Principles of Protein Conformation* (Fasman G.D. ed.), pp. 599-623, Plenum Press, New York.

§Cysteine is generally classified as polar despite having a positive hydrophathy index. This reflects the ability of the sulfhydryl group to act as a weak acid and to form a weak hydrogen bond with oxygen or nitrogen.

(see Fig. 1-19) All molecules with a chiral center are also **optically active**—that is, they rotate plane-polarized light (see Box 1-2).

KEY CONVENTION: Two conventions are used to identify the carbons in an amino acid—a practice that can be

confusing. The additional carbons in an R group are commonly designated β , γ , δ , ϵ , and so forth, proceeding out from the α carbon. For most other organic molecules, carbon atoms are simply numbered from one end, giving highest priority (C-1) to the carbon with the substituent containing the atom of highest atomic number.