

chain (in polymers)

The whole or part of a *macromolecule*, an *oligomer molecule* or a *block*, comprising a linear or branched sequence of *constitutional units* between two boundary constitutional units, each of which may be either an *end-group*, a *branch point* or an otherwise-designated characteristic feature of the macromolecule.

Notes:

1. Except in linear single-strand macromolecules, the definition of a chain may be somewhat arbitrary.
 2. A cyclic macromolecule has no end groups but may nevertheless be regarded as a chain.
 3. Any number of branch points may be present between the boundary units.
 4. Where appropriate, definitions relating to ‘macromolecule’ may also be applied to ‘chain’.
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