If the interchange of two ligands on an atom in a molecule results in a stereoisomer of the molecule, the atom is called a **stereocenter** or **stereogenic center**.

**eg. 1:**

![Chemical structure 1](image1)

Interchange of, say, the ethyl group and the hydrogen atom on the carbon atom shown in red in 1 results in 2, which is a stereoisomer of 1. (1 and 2 are enantiomers.)

![Chemical structure 2](image2)

Thus, the highlighted carbon atom in 1 is a stereocenter.

**eg. 2:**

![Chemical structure 3](image3)

Interchange of the two ligands on the carbon atom shown in red in 3 results in 4, which is a stereoisomer of 3. (3 and 4 are diastereomers.)

![Chemical structure 4](image4)
Thus, the highlighted carbon atom in 3 is a stereocenter.

see also chiral center

Contributors

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