Flavor: In particle physics, flavor has nothing to do with your taste buds. Instead, the term signifies different kinds of particles. There are six “flavors” or varieties of quarks: up, down, top, bottom, strange and charm. There are also six flavors of leptons: the electron, muon and tau, and their corresponding neutrinos (the electron, muon and tau neutrinos).

Jet: This is your captain speaking. In particle physics, jets are showers of hadrons (particles made of quarks and gluons) that often emerge from high-energy collisions in places like the Large Hadron Collider. They’re caused when an energetic quark or gluon starts to head off on its own. Quarks and gluons don’t like to appear solo, so as the energetic particle pulls some friends out of the vacuum, creating a shower of particles headed in roughly the same direction, a jet is born.

Flux: Flux isn’t a word we’d want to hear in physics. It is typically a device that tells something off. In particle physics experiments, a flux is the amount of particles headed in roughly the same direction. A jet is born!

Inflation: Inflation probably makes you think of a balloon blowing up or currency going down in value. But it could also inspire thoughts of the beginning of our universe. Physicists refer to inflation as the period just after the Big Bang when space expanded exponentially in all directions, causing small quantum variations to expand to an enormous scale. This ultimately led to the large-scale structure of matter in the universe that we see today in things like galaxy clusters.

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Field: Physical fields can be divided with brush or by layers of wax and flowers. Fields of physics, however, are more monotonous, and usually related to infinity. They permeate the universe, becoming apparent only when they encounter something that can interact with them. Electrically charged particles can interact with the electromagnetic field; particles with mass can interact with the gravitational field; and part of what gives those particles mass is the Higgs field.

Trigger: We typically think of a trigger as a device that tells something off. In particle physics experiments, a trigger is the system that tells a computer or computer in a split second to capture the data from a certain collision. It’s a way of focusing on just the most interesting and relevant particle interactions at experiments that produce far more data than can be reasonably recorded, stored and analyzed.

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WIMP: While “wimp” is an insult used to imply someone lacks courage or is weak, a WIMP is a strong candidate for dark matter. WIMP is an acronym for “weakly interacting massive particle,” a hypothetical particle that would be massive enough to explain mysterious gravitational effects cosmologists see in the universe but that would interact with other matter rarely enough to explain why it has yet to be observed. They’re one of several ideas for what makes up the invisible substance that is thought to vastly outnumber regular matter in our universe.

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Entangle: When most of us deal with something entangled, it’s usually something like the cables of a pair of headphones. But for particle physicists, entanglement refers to what Einstein called “spooky action at a distance” — the way that two particles can be separated by great distances but “connected” in such a way that influencing one seems to affect the other instantaneously.