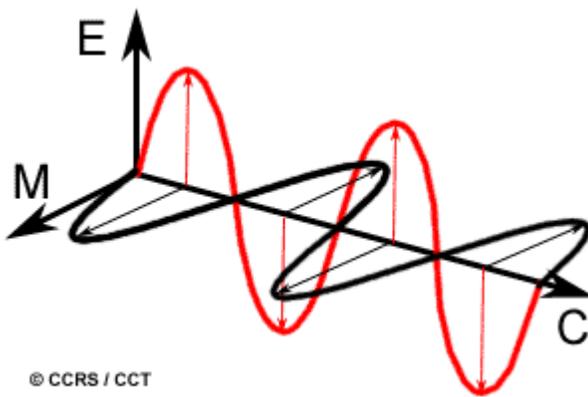
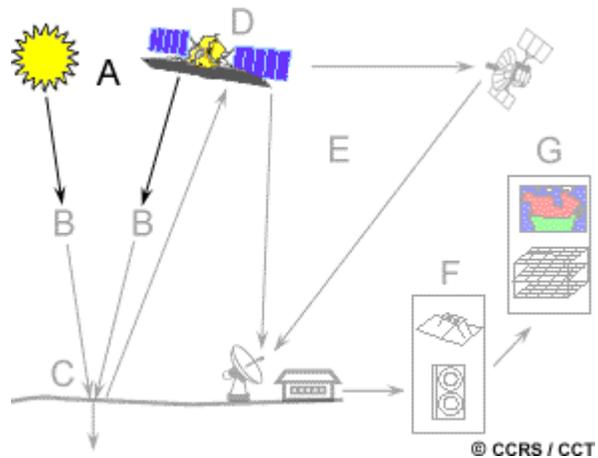


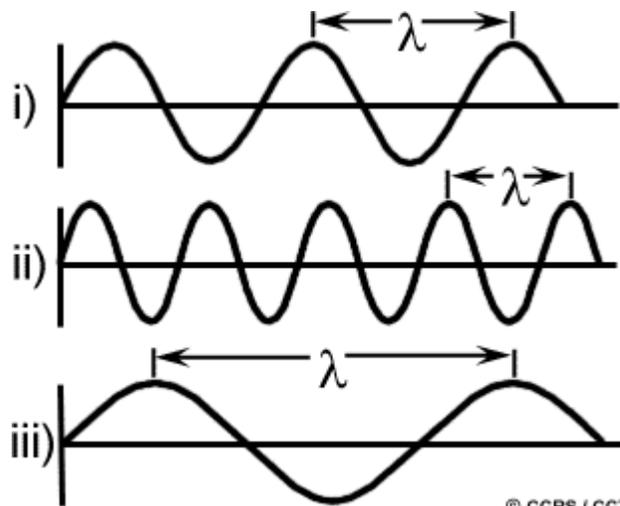
1. Electromagnetic Radiation



All electromagnetic radiation has fundamental properties and behaves in predictable ways according to the basics of wave theory.

Electromagnetic radiation consists of an electrical field (E) which varies in magnitude in a direction perpendicular to the direction in which the radiation is traveling, and a magnetic field (M) oriented at right angles to the electrical field. Both these fields travel at the speed of light (c).

Two characteristics of electromagnetic radiation are particularly important for understanding remote sensing. These are the **wavelength and frequency**.



The wavelength is the length of one wave cycle, which can be measured as the distance between successive wave crests. Wavelength is usually represented by the Greek letter lambda (λ). Wavelength is measured in metres (m) or some factor of metres such as **nanometres** (nm, 10^{-9} metres), **micrometres** (μm , 10^{-6} metres) (μm , 10^{-6} metres) or centimetres (cm, 10^{-2} metres). Frequency refers to the number of cycles of a wave passing a fixed point per unit of time. Frequency is normally measured in **hertz** (Hz), equivalent to one cycle per second, and various multiples of hertz.

Wavelength and frequency are related by the following formula:

$$c = \lambda \nu$$

where:

λ = wavelength (m)

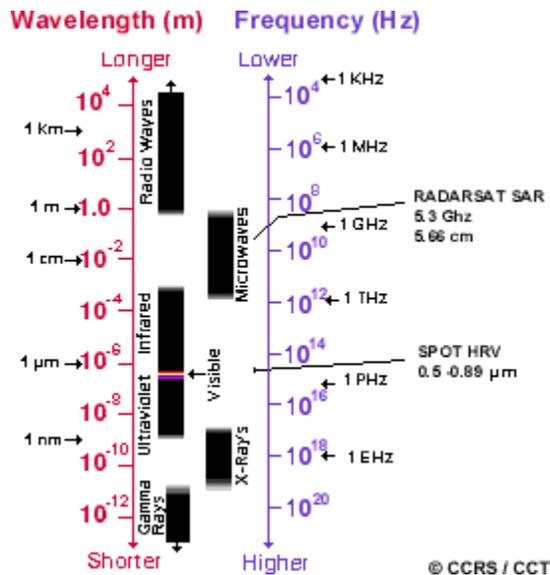
ν = frequency (cycles per second, Hz)

c = speed of light (3×10^8 m/s)

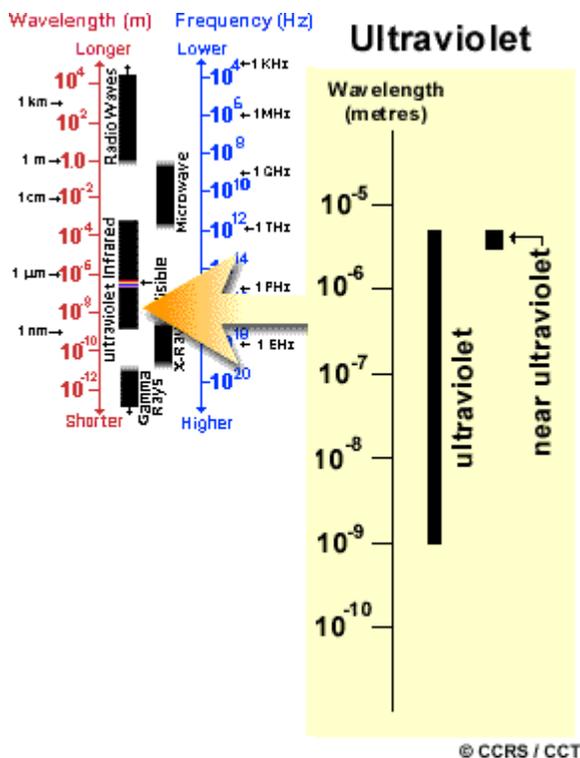
Therefore, the two are inversely related to each other. The shorter the wavelength, the higher the frequency. The longer the wavelength, the lower the frequency. Understanding the characteristics of electromagnetic radiation in terms of their wavelength and frequency is crucial to understanding the information to be extracted from remote sensing data. Next we will be examining the way in which we categorize electromagnetic radiation for just that purpose

2. The Electromagnetic Spectrum

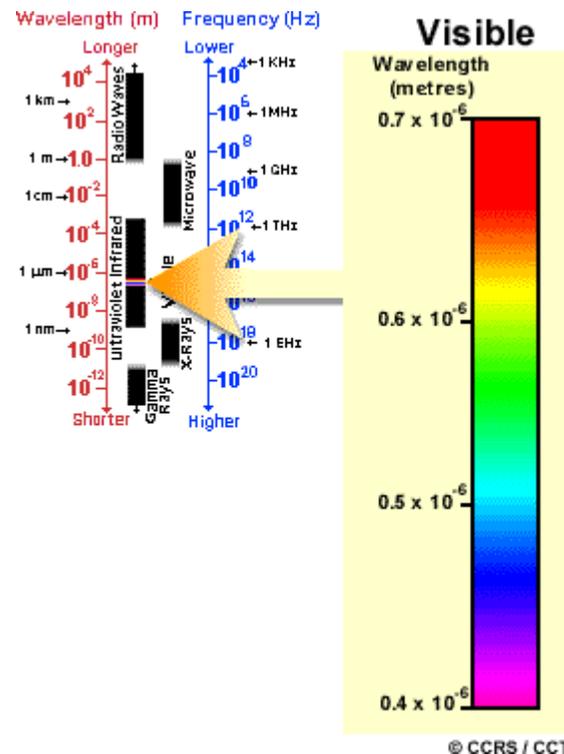
The **electromagnetic spectrum** ranges from the shorter wavelengths (including gamma and x-rays) to the longer wavelengths (including microwaves and broadcast radio waves). There are several regions of the electromagnetic spectrum which are useful for remote sensing.



For most purposes, the **ultraviolet or UV** portion of the spectrum has the shortest wavelengths which are practical for remote sensing. This radiation is just beyond the violet portion of the visible wavelengths, hence its name. Some Earth surface materials, primarily rocks and minerals, fluoresce or emit visible light when illuminated by UV radiation.

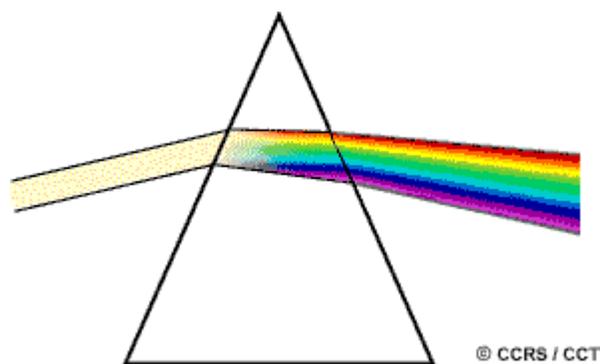


The light which our eyes - our "remote sensors" - can detect is part of the **visible spectrum**. It is important to recognize how small the visible portion is relative to the rest of the spectrum. There is a lot of radiation around us which is "invisible" to our eyes, but can be detected by other remote sensing instruments and used to our advantage. The visible wavelengths cover a range from approximately 0.4 to 0.7 μm . The longest visible wavelength is red and the shortest is violet. Common wavelengths of what we perceive as particular colours from the visible portion of the spectrum are listed below. It is important to note that this is the only portion of the spectrum we can associate with the concept of **colours**.

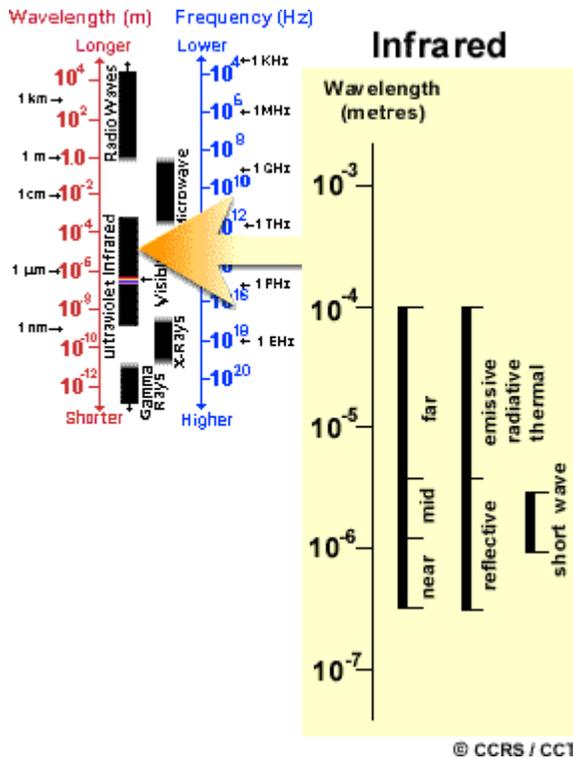


- **Violet:** 0.4 - 0.446 μm
- **Blue:** 0.446 - 0.500 μm
- **Green:** 0.500 - 0.578 μm
- **Yellow:** 0.578 - 0.592 μm
- **Orange:** 0.592 - 0.620 μm
- **Red:** 0.620 - 0.7 μm

Blue, green, and red are the **primary colours** or wavelengths of the visible spectrum. They are defined as such because no single primary colour can be created from the other two, but all other colours can be formed by combining blue, green, and red in various proportions. Although we see sunlight as a uniform or homogeneous colour, it is actually composed of various wavelengths of radiation in primarily the ultraviolet, visible and infrared portions of the spectrum. The visible portion of this radiation can be shown in its

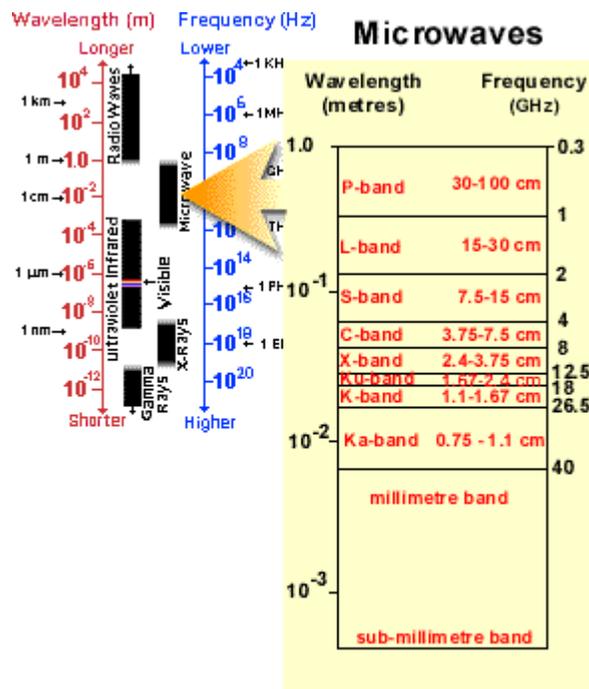


component colours when sunlight is passed through a **prism**, which bends the light in differing amounts according to wavelength.



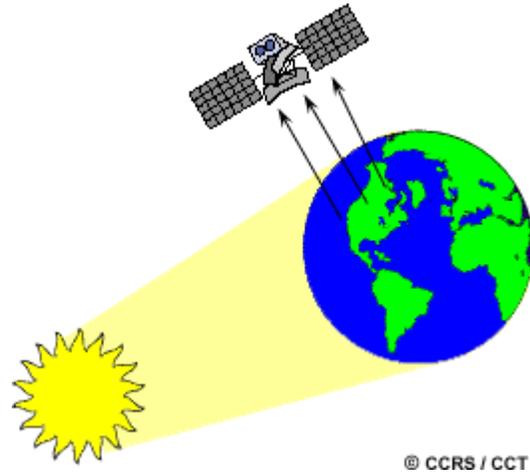
The next portion of the spectrum of interest is the infrared (IR) region which covers the wavelength range from approximately 0.7 μm to 100 μm - more than 100 times as wide as the visible portion! The infrared region can be divided into two categories based on their radiation properties - the **reflected IR**, and the emitted or **thermal IR**. Radiation in the reflected IR region is used for remote sensing purposes in ways very similar to radiation in the visible portion. The reflected IR covers wavelengths from approximately 0.7 μm to 3.0 μm . The thermal IR region is quite different than the visible and reflected IR portions, as this energy is essentially the radiation that is emitted from the Earth's surface in the form of heat. The thermal IR covers wavelengths from approximately 3.0 μm to 100 μm .

The portion of the spectrum of more recent interest to remote sensing is the **microwave region** from about 1 mm to 1 m. This covers the longest wavelengths used for remote sensing. The shorter wavelengths have properties similar to the thermal infrared region while the longer wavelengths approach the wavelengths used for radio broadcasts. Because of the special nature of this region and its importance to remote sensing in Canada, an entire chapter (Chapter 3) of the tutorial is dedicated to microwave sensing.

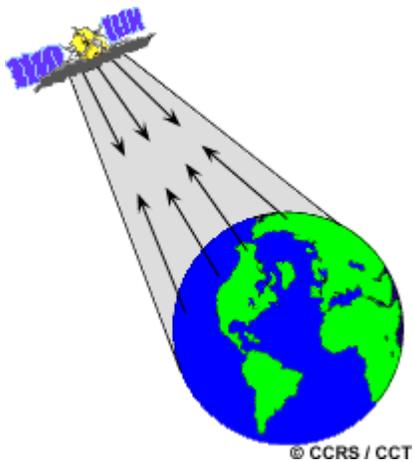


3. Passive and Active sensors of remote sensing-----

Introduction:-- The sun is a main source of energy or radiation of the entire universe. The sun provides a very convenient source of energy for remote sensing. The sun's energy is either **reflected**, as it is for visible wavelengths, or absorbed and then **re-emitted**, as it is for thermal infrared wavelengths. The remote sensing system mainly divided into two categories- **1. Passive sensor** and **2. Active sensor**



1. Passive sensor-- Remote sensing systems which measure energy that is naturally available are called **passive sensors**. It can only be used to detect energy when the naturally occurring energy is available. For all reflected energy, this can only take place during the time when the sun is illuminating the Earth. There is no reflected energy available from the sun at night. Energy that is naturally emitted (such as thermal infrared) can be detected day or night, as long as the amount of energy is large enough to be recorded.



2. Active sensors-- on the other hand, provide their own energy source for illumination. The sensor emits radiation which is directed toward the target to be investigated. The radiation reflected from that target is detected and measured by the sensor. Advantages for active sensors include the ability to obtain measurements anytime, regardless of the time of day or season. Active sensors can be used for examining wavelengths that are not sufficiently provided by the sun, such as microwaves, or to better control the way a target is illuminated. However, active systems require the generation of a fairly large amount of energy to adequately illuminate targets. Some examples of active sensors are a laser fluorosensor and a synthetic

aperture radar (SAR).

