

surfactant (surface active agent)

A substance which lowers the surface tension of the medium in which it is dissolved, and/or the interfacial tension with other phases, and, accordingly, is positively adsorbed at the liquid/vapour and/or at other interfaces.

Source:

PAC, 1972, 31, 577 (*Manual of Symbols and Terminology for Physicochemical Quantities and Units, Appendix II: Definitions, Terminology and Symbols in Colloid and Surface Chemistry*) on page 611