Structural parts of flowers

Flowers are composed of both male (stamens) and female (carpels) reproductive structures, which are frequently surrounded by attractive or protective leaf-like structures. The flower functions to protect the developing gametes as well as to ensure pollination and fertilization. The floral structures that you should become familiar with are illustrated below:

List of floral structures (adapted from Morgan and Carter - 1993):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sepal</td>
<td>outer whorl of bracts; may be green, brown or colored like petals; may appear as small scales or be petal-like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petal</td>
<td>colored, white, or even greenish whorl of bracts located just inside the sepals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stamen</td>
<td>male (pollen-bearing) reproductive structure, composed of filament and anther.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>filament</td>
<td>thin stalk that supports the anther.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anther</td>
<td>pollen-producing structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpel</td>
<td>female reproductive structure, composed of the stigma, style, and ovary; often pear-shaped and located in the centre of the flower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ovule</td>
<td>develops in the ovary and contains the female gametophyte.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ovary</td>
<td>base of the carpel; protects the ovules inside; matures to fruit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>style</td>
<td>tissue connecting stigma to ovary, often long and narrow, but may be short or absent; pollen grows through this tissue to fertilize the egg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stigma</td>
<td>receptive tip of the carpel, often sticky and hairy, where pollen is placed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>