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Mineral wells high school

About 3,700 minerals are found in the earth's crust, according to KidsGeo.com. Igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks are found all over the earth's surface and on the ocean floor. Minerals used by humans are most often found in mines and mining operations on all inhabited continents. The United States contains several mines that produce valuable minerals. Arizona and Michigan have copper mines that produce industrial and ornamental minerals. California extracts boron from hot springs that also make carbonate and sulfate minerals. Magnet Cove in Arkansas is known for titanium-based minerals such as rutile, anatase and brookite. International mines also harvest minerals that humans need. Locations in New South Wales, Australia produce copper, lead and silver. Cornwall, England has mines that have been worked for centuries extracting silver, tin, lead, copper, iron and tungsten. Ontario, Canada has areas with cobalt and silver. A mine in Saxony, Germany, has been in use since ancient Roman times and produces more than 300 minerals. According to Maps of the World, uranium is mined in Canada, Australia, Africa, Central Asia and France. Gold is mined in countries such as Russia, Canada, Brazil, South Korea and South Africa. The world's diamond mines are located in Brazil, Southern Africa, India and Siberia. The most common minerals found in the earth's crust include silicate rocks such as quartz, mica and olivine. The main mineral classes are halides, oxides, sulfides, sulfates and carbonates. Some common examples of minerals include quartz, graphite, talc and amethyst. Other examples include diamonds, gold, silver, copper, rubies, turquoise, topaz and sulfur. With few exceptions, minerals are objects that form naturally without the intervention of humans. Unlike carbon compounds in living materials such as plants, humans and animals, most minerals are completely inorganic. Minerals are solid objects, which means they usually do not evaporate, tilt or melt. Most minerals are crystalline objects that have a specific arrangement and recipe for atoms. There are some unnatural substances that are still called minerals, because until the 1990s, some chemical compounds that formed when artificial materials broke were classified as minerals, although they were not classified as such any longer. Mercury is a unique mineral in that it behaves like a liquid at room temperature. In some areas, however, mercury behaves strictly like a mineral because it solidifies and forms crystals when subjected to extremely cold conditions. Some types of minerals, such as graphite and diamonds, are formed from organic compounds. Although most minerals are crystalline, some have crystals so small that they are undetectable to the naked human eye, and a small amorphous mineraloids do not form crystals. Almost all rocks are made of minerals. Exceptions are obsidianas (which is made of volcanic glass) and and (which is made of organic carbon.) Learning the basics of mineral identification is easy. All you need are some simple tools (like a magnet and a magnifying glass) and your own powers of careful observation. Have a pen and paper or a computer handy to record your notes. Cyndi Monaghan/Getty Images Use the largest mineral sample you can find. If your mineral is in pieces, keep in mind that they may not all be from the same rock. Finally, make sure your sample is free of dirt and debris, clean and dry. Now you are ready to start identifying your mineral. Andrew Alden Luster describes how a mineral reflects light. Measuring it is the first step in mineral identification. Always check the brightness on a fresh surface; you may need to cut a small portion to expose a clean sample. Brightness ranges from metallic (highly reflective and opaque) to dull (nonreflective and opaque.) Among them are half a dozen other categories of brightness that assess the degree of transparency and reflexivity of a mineral. The Mohs scale is low-tech, but time-tested. Andrew Alden Hardness is measured on the mohs scale of 10 points, which is essentially a scratch test. Take an unknown mineral and scratch it with a known hardness object (such as a nail or a mineral like quartz.) Through testing and observation, you can determine the hardness of your mineral, a key identification factor. For example, talcum powder has a Mohs hardness of 1; you could take it apart between your fingers. A diamond, on the other hand, has a hardness of 10. It's the hardest known stuff. Watch out for color until you learn what colors to trust. Andrew Alden Color is important in mineral identification. You will need a fresh mineral surface and a strong and clear light source to examine it. If you have an ultraviolet light, make sure the mineral has a fluorescent color. Note whether it displays other special optical effects, such as iridescence or color changes. Color is a very reliable indicator in opaque and metallic minerals such as opaque mineral lazurite blue or brass yellow of metallic mineral pyrite. In translucent or transparent minerals, however, color is less reliable as an identifier because it is usually the result of a chemical impurity. Pure quartz is light or white, but quartz can have many other colors. Try to be precise in your ID. Is it a pale or deep shadow? Does it resemble the color of another common object, such as bricks or blueberries? Is it uniform or stained? Is there a pure color or a variety of shades? Andrew Alden Streak describes the color of a finely crushed mineral. Most minerals leave a white streak regardless of their overall color. But some minerals leave a distinct streak that can be used to identify them. To identify your mineral, you will need a streak plate or something like that. A tile of broken or even a useful sidewalk can do. Scratch your mineral through the ray board with a scribble motion, then look at the Hematite, for example, will leave a red-brown streak. Keep in mind that most professional stripe plates have a Mohs hardness of about 7. Harder minerals will scratch the place and not leave a streak. Andrew Alden's mineral habit (its general form) can be especially useful for identifying some minerals. There are over 20 different terms describing the habit. A mineral with visible layers, such as Rhodochrosite, has a banding habit. Amethyst has a drusy habit, where jagged projectiles line the inside of a rock. Close note and maybe a magnifying glass are all you need for this step in the mineral identification process. How the minerals break is a key clue to their identification. Andrew Alden Cleavage describes how a mineral breaks down. Many minerals break along flat flat planes or necklines. Some are cosite in only one direction (such as mica), others in two directions (such as feldspar), and some in three directions (such as halite or rock salt because they have distinct flavors. Borax, for example, tastes sweet and slightly alkaline. But be careful. The molecular structure of a mineral, and the neckline is present even when the mineral does not form good crystals. The neckline can also be described as perfect, good or poor. The fracture is a break that is not flat, and there are two types: conchoidal (shell-shaped, as in quartz) and uneven. Metallic minerals can have a hackly (irregular) fracture. A mineral can have a good neckline in one or two directions, but fractures in another direction. To determine the neckline and fracture, you will need a rock hammer and a safe place to use it in minerals. A magnifying glass is also useful, but not necessary. Carefully break the mineral and observe the shapes and angles of the pieces. It can break into leaves (a neckline), splinters or prisms (two necklines), cubes or rhombs (three necklines) or something else. Always test for magnetism with a dark mineral — it's not difficult. Andrew Alden's mineral magnetism may be another identification feature in some cases. Magnetite, for example, has a strong attraction that will attract even weak magnets. But other minerals have only a weak attraction, nobly chromate (a black oxide) and pyrrrolith (a bronze sulfide.) You're going to want to use a strong magnet. Another way to test magnetism is to see if your specimen attracts a compass needle. Andrew Alden Taste can be used to identify vaporisminerals (evaporative-formed minerals) such as halite or rock salt because they have distinct flavors. Borax, for example, tastes sweet and slightly alkaline. But be careful. Some minerals can get sick if ingested in sufficient amounts. Gently touch the tip of the tongue on a fresh face of the mineral, then spit it out. Fizz refers to the effervescent reaction of certain carbonate minerals in the presence of an acid like vinegar. Dolomite, found in marble, will make a if it falls into a small acid bath, for example. Heft describes how heavy or dense a mineral feels in the hand. Most minerals are about times as dense as water; that is, they have a specific gravity of about 3. Write down a visibly light or heavy mineral for its size. Sulfides like Galena, which is seven times denser than water, will have a remarkable weight. Andrew Alden The final step in mineral identification is to pick up your list of features and consult a specialized source. A good guide for rock-strainer minerals should list the most common ones, including hornblende and feldspar, or identify them by a common feature like metallic glow. If you still can't identify your mineral, you may need to consult a more comprehensive mineral identification guide. Guide.

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