

What Are Minerals?

Science Words

Say each word quietly to yourself. Then read the meaning.

Read the tip to help you remember.

mineral [MIN•er•uhl] any nonliving solid that has a crystal form.

Mineral contains the word *mine*. Many *minerals* are found in mines. People may make a mine or a mine may form naturally as an underground cave. All minerals form in nature. No minerals are human-made.



These are examples of different minerals.

What Are Minerals?

Science Concepts

Read the Ideas more than once. Do your best to remember them.

1. A mineral is a nonliving solid that has a crystal form.
2. Minerals can form under the ground, in caves, and in the air.
3. The particles in a crystal combine to form a shape that is repeated over and over again.
4. Each mineral is made of a set of nonliving things called elements.
5. Hardness is a property of minerals. It is a mineral's ability to scratch another mineral.
6. Frederick Mohs developed a scale to compare the hardness of different minerals. A mineral with a higher number on the scale can scratch a mineral with a lower number.
7. Luster is another property of minerals. It describes how minerals reflect light.
8. Copper, gold, and silver each have a metallic luster; talc and gypsum each have an earthy luster.
9. The way a mineral breaks is another property. Minerals that have smooth and straight broken sides have cleavage. Minerals that do not have smooth break lines have fracture.
10. Another property of a mineral is the color, or streak, left behind when a mineral is rubbed against a white tile called a streak plate.