



(Photo by Art Wolfe, Inc.)

PART

1

Geology

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The Study of Minerals

The ability to identify minerals using the simplest of techniques is a necessity for the Earth scientist, especially those scientists working in the field. In this exercise you will become familiar with the common physical properties of minerals and learn how to use these properties to identify minerals (Figure 1.1). In order to understand the origin, classification, and alteration of rocks, which are for the most part aggregates (mixtures) of minerals, you must first be able to identify the minerals that comprise them.



Figure 1.1 Quartz crystals. Slender, six-sided, transparent crystals that will scratch glass. The shape of the crystals and their hardness are two physical properties used to identify this mineral. (Photo by E. J. Tarbuck)

Objectives

After you have completed this exercise, you should be able to:

1. Recognize and describe the physical properties of minerals.
2. Use a mineral identification key to name minerals.
3. Identify several minerals by sight.
4. List the uses of several minerals that are mined.

Materials

hand lens

Materials Supplied by Your Instructor

mineral samples	dilute hydrochloric acid
streak plate	set of quartz crystals
magnet	(various sizes)
glass plate	contact goniometer
binocular microscope	crystal growth solution(s)

Terms

mineral	translucent	cleavage plane
rock-forming mineral	transparent	direction of cleavage
luster	color	fracture
metallic luster	streak	specific gravity
nonmetallic luster	hardness	magnetism
opaque	crystal form	striations
	contact goniometer	tenacity
	cleavage	

Introduction

A **mineral** is a naturally occurring, inorganic solid with an orderly internal arrangement of atoms (called *crystalline structure*) and a definite, but not fixed, chemical composition. Some minerals, such as gold and diamond, are single chemical elements. However, most minerals are compounds consisting of two or more elements. For example, the mineral halite is composed

Table 1.1 Mineral Uses

MINERAL	USE
Chalcopyrite	Mined for copper
Feldspar	Ceramics and porcelain
Fluorite	Used in steel manufacturing
Galena	Mined for lead
Graphite	Pencil "lead," lubricant
Gypsum	Drywall, plaster of paris, wallboard
Halite	Table salt, road salt, source of sodium and chlorine
Hematite	Mined for iron
Magnetite	Mined for iron
Pyrite	Mined for sulfur and iron
Quartz	In the pure form, for making glass
Sphalerite	Mined for zinc
Talc	Used in ceramics, paint, talcum powder

of the elements sodium and chlorine. The distinctive crystalline structure and chemical composition of a mineral give it a unique set of physical properties such as its luster, its hardness, and how it breaks. The fact that each mineral has its own characteristic physical and chemical properties can be used to distinguish one mineral from another.

Of the nearly 4,000 known minerals, only a few hundred have any current economic value. An example would be the mineral gypsum, used for making drywall and wallboard. Table 1.1 lists a few of the minerals that are mined as well as their uses. Of the remaining minerals, no more than a few dozen are abundant. Collectively, these few often occur with each other in the rocks of Earth's crust and are classified as the **rock-forming minerals**.

Physical Properties of Minerals

The physical properties of minerals are those properties that can be determined by observation or by performing some simple tests. The primary physical properties that are determined for all minerals include optical properties (in particular, luster, the ability to transmit light, color, and streak), hardness, crystal form, cleavage or fracture, and specific gravity. Secondary (or "special") properties, including magnetism, taste, feel, striations, tenacity, and the reaction with dilute hydrochloric acid, are also useful in identifying certain minerals.

Optical Properties

Of the many optical properties of minerals, four—luster, the ability to transmit light, color, and streak—are frequently determined for hand specimens.

Luster Luster describes the manner in which light is reflected from the surface of a mineral. Any mineral that shines with a metal-like appearance has a **metallic luster**. Those minerals that do not have a metallic lus-

ter are termed **nonmetallic** and may have one of a variety of lusters that include vitreous (glassy), pearly (like a pearl), or earthy (dull, like soil or concrete). In general, many minerals with metallic luster produce a dark gray, black, or other distinctively colored powder when they are rubbed on a hard porcelain plate (this property, called *streak*, will be investigated later).

Observe the mineral photographs shown in Figures 1.2 through 1.13. The minerals illustrated in Figures 1.5 and 1.6 have definite metallic lusters. The minerals in Figure 1.9 have nonmetallic, vitreous (glassy) lusters. Some minerals, such as hematite (Figure 1.7), occur in both metallic and nonmetallic varieties.

Transmission of Light The ability of a mineral to transmit light can be described as either **opaque**, when no light is transmitted (e.g., Figure 1.3); **translucent**, when light but not an image is transmitted; or, **transparent**, when an image is visible through the mineral (e.g., Figure 1.1). In general, most minerals with a metallic luster are opaque, while vitreous minerals are either translucent or transparent.

Examine the mineral specimens provided by your instructor, and answer the following questions.

- How many of your specimens can be grouped into each of the following luster types?

Metallic: _____ Nonmetallic-glassy: _____

- How many of your specimens are transparent, and how many are opaque?

Transparent: _____ Opaque: _____

Color Color, although an obvious feature of minerals, may also be misleading. For example, slight impurities in a mineral may result in one sample of the mineral having one color while a different sample of the same mineral may have an entirely different color. *Thus, color is one of the least reliable physical properties.*

- Observe the minerals in Figure 1.8. Both of the minerals shown are varieties of the same mineral, quartz. What is the reason for the variety of colors that quartz exhibits?

- Examine the mineral specimens supplied by your instructor, and describe those that appear to be the same mineral but with variable colors.

Streak The streak of a mineral is the color of the fine powder of a mineral obtained by rubbing a corner across a piece of unglazed porcelain—called a *streak plate*. Whereas the color of a mineral may vary from sample to sample, its streak usually does not and is

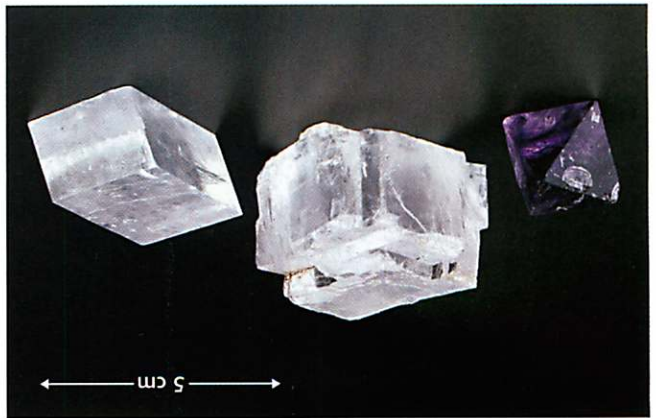


Figure 1.2 Fluorite (left), halite (center), and calcite (right) exhibit smooth cleavage planes that are produced when the mineral is broken. (Photo by Geoscience Resources/American Geological Institute).

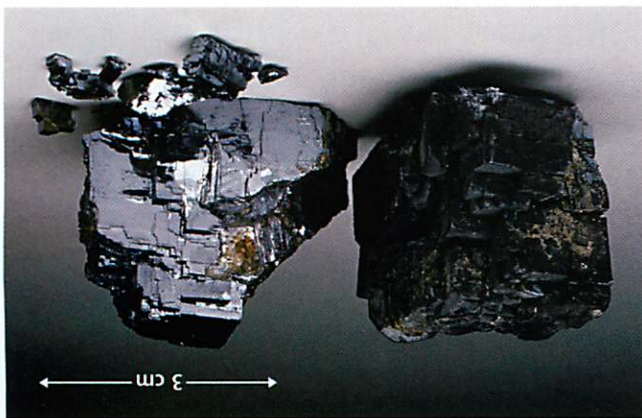


Figure 1.5 Galena. An ore of lead with a high specific gravity.

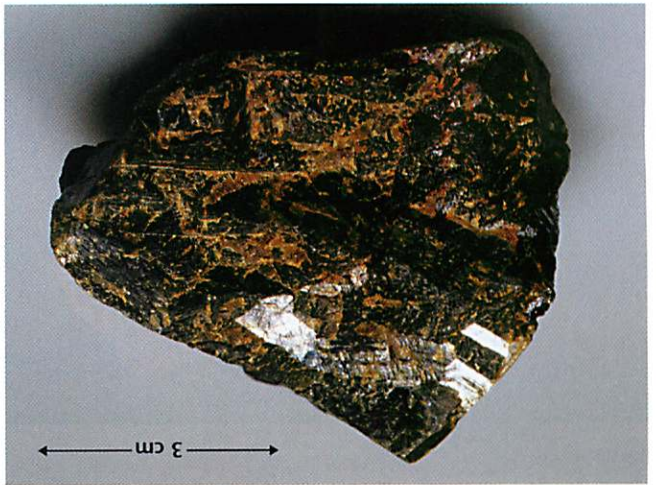


Figure 1.3 Sphalerite. An ore of zinc.

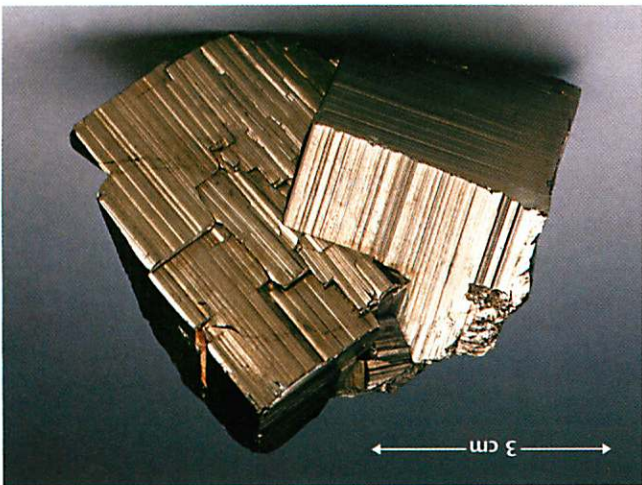


Figure 1.6 Pyrite. A brassy-yellow mineral with a metallic luster that is commonly known as "fool's gold."

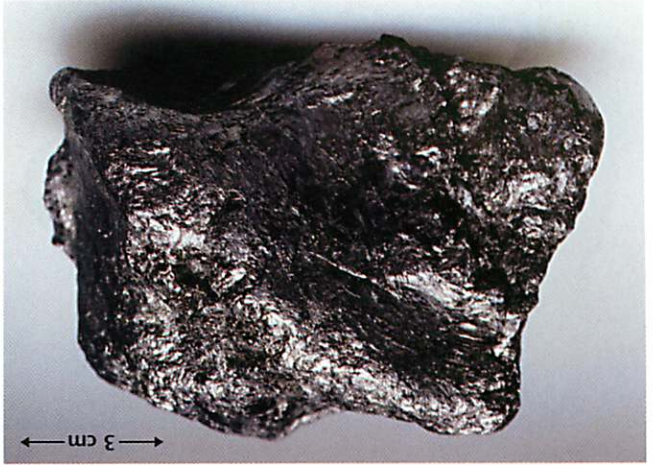


Figure 1.4 Graphite. A soft silver-gray mineral.

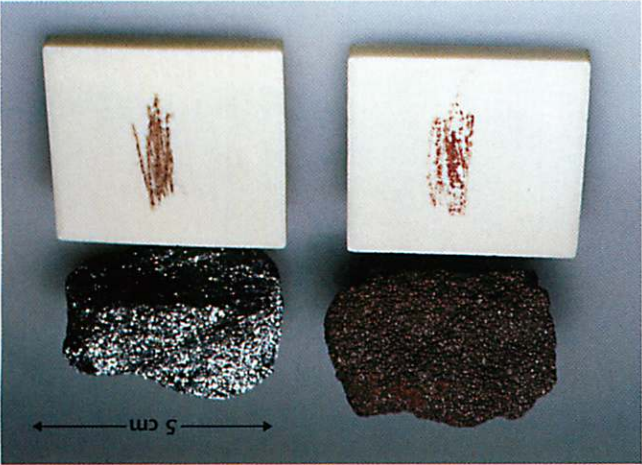


Figure 1.7 Hematite. An ore of iron that has both a metallic (right) and nonmetallic (left) form.



Figure 1.8 Two varieties of the mineral quartz. Rose quartz (right) and smoky quartz (left).

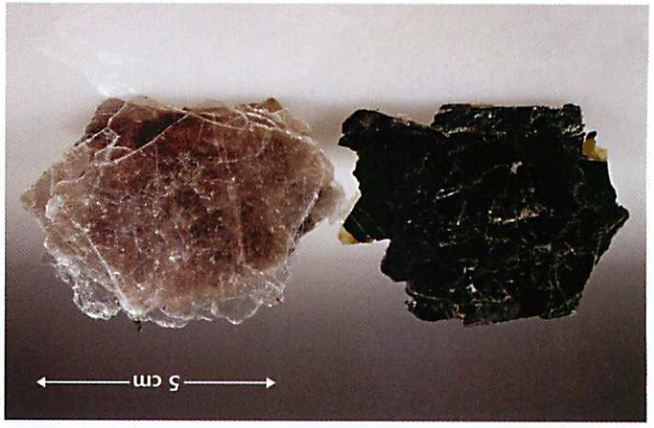


Figure 1.9 Biotite mica (black) and muscovite mica (light color) are similar in appearance, except for color.

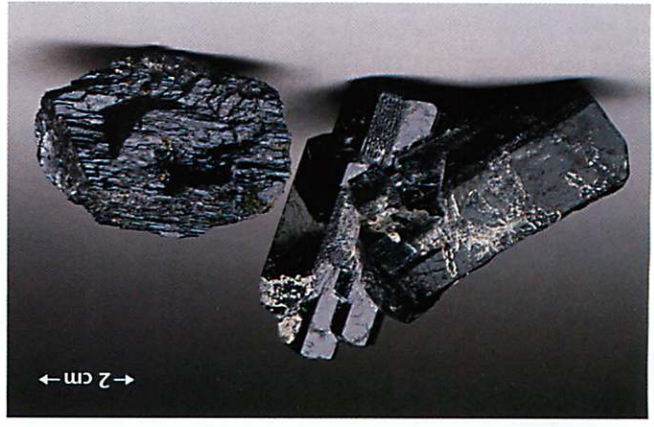


Figure 1.10 Hornblende. A generally green to black, rock-forming, amphibole mineral.

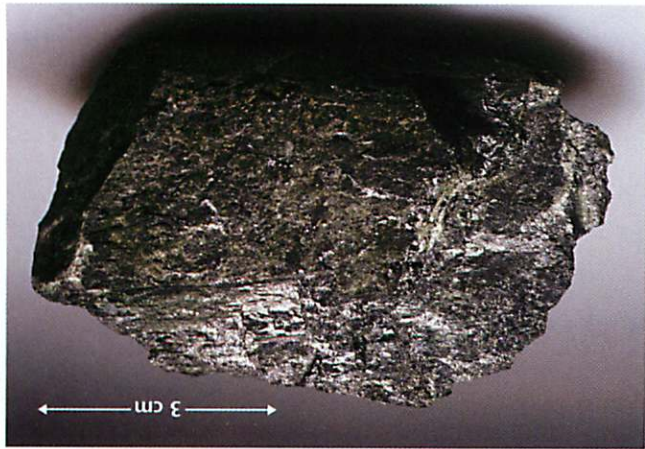


Figure 1.11 Augite. A dark green to black, rock-forming, pyroxene mineral.

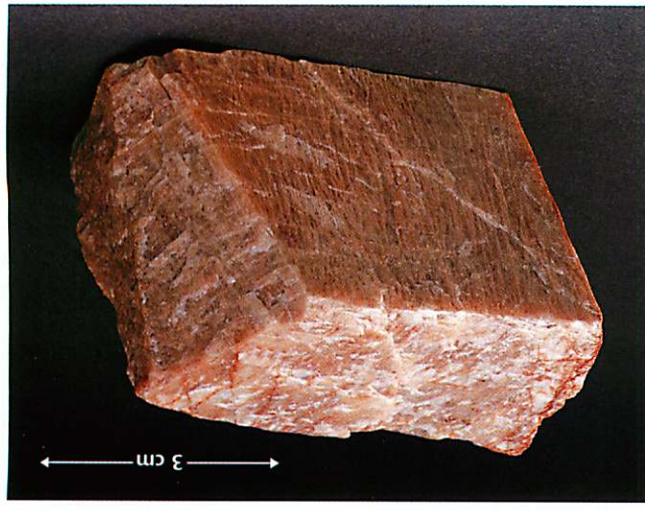


Figure 1.12 Potassium feldspar, variety microcline.

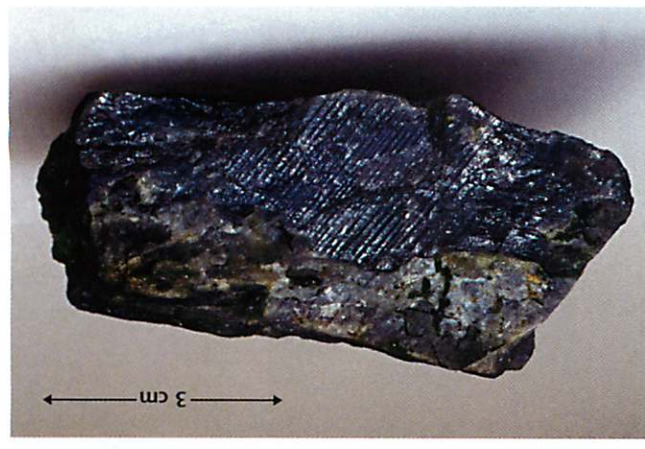


Figure 1.13 Plagioclase feldspar, variety labradorite.

therefore the more reliable property (see Figure 1.7). In many cases, the color of a mineral's streak may not be the same as the color of the mineral. [Note: Minerals that have about the same hardness as, or are harder than, a streak plate (about 7 on Mohs scale of hardness), may not powder or produce a streak.]

5. Select three of the mineral specimens provided by your instructor. Do they exhibit a streak? If so, is the streak the same color as the mineral specimen?

	COLOR OF SPECIMEN	STREAK
Specimen 1:	_____	_____
Specimen 2:	_____	_____
Specimen 3:	_____	_____

Hardness

Hardness, one of the most useful diagnostic properties of a mineral, is a measure of the resistance of a mineral to abrasion or scratching. It is a relative property in that a harder substance will scratch, or cut into, a softer one.

In order to establish a common system for determining hardness, Friedrich Mohs (1773–1839), a German mineralogist, developed a reference scale of mineral hardness. The Mohs scale of hardness (Figure 1.14), widely used today by geologists and engineers, uses 10 index minerals as a reference set to determine the hardness of other minerals. The hardness value of 1 is assigned to the softest mineral in the set, talc, and 10 is assigned to the hardest mineral, diamond. Higher-numbered minerals will scratch lower-numbered minerals. For example, quartz, with a hardness of 7, will scratch calcite, which has a hardness of 3. It should be remembered that Mohs scale is a *relative ranking* and does *not* imply that mineral number 2, gypsum, is twice as hard as mineral 1, talc.

Most people do not have a set of Mohs reference minerals available. However, by knowing the hardness of some common objects, such as those listed on Mohs scale in Figure 1.14, a hardness value can be assigned to a mineral. For example, a mineral that has a hardness greater than 5.5 will scratch glass. Table 1.2 can serve as a guide for determining the hardness of a mineral.

6. Test the hardness of several of the mineral specimens provided by your instructor by rubbing any two together to determine which are hard (the minerals that do the scratching) and which are soft (the minerals that are scratched). Doing this will give you an indication of what

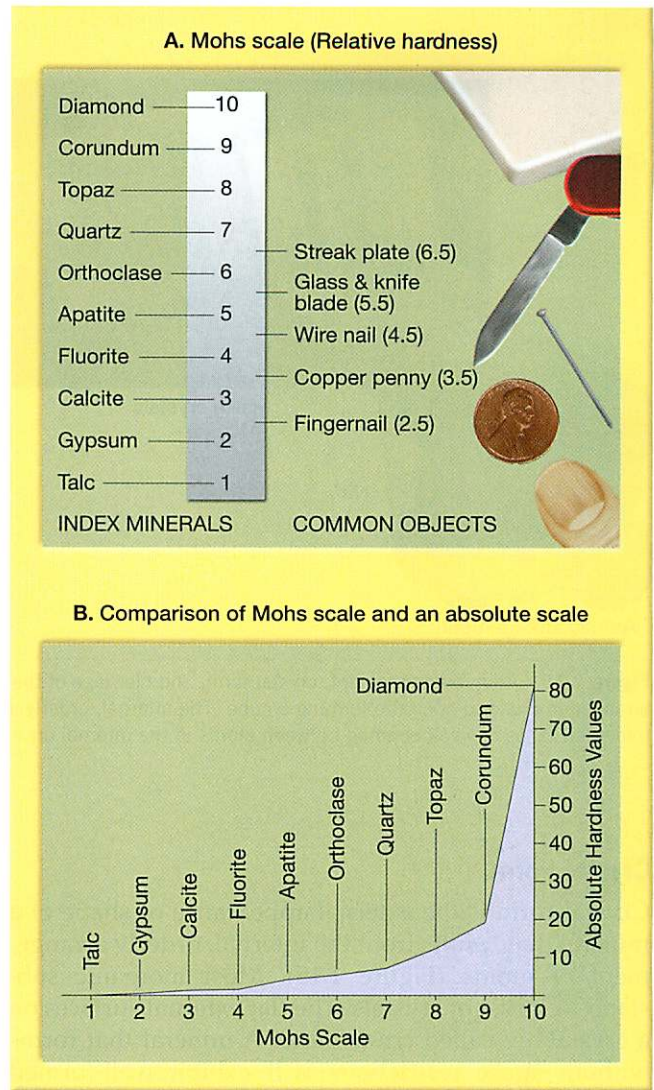


Figure 1.14 Hardness scales. **A.** Mohs scale of hardness, with the hardness of some common objects. **B.** Relationship between Mohs relative hardness scale and an absolute hardness scale.

is meant by the term “relative hardness” of minerals.

7. Use the hardness guide in Table 1.2 to find an example of a mineral supplied by your instructor that falls in each of the three categories.

Table 1.2 Hardness guide

HARDNESS	DESCRIPTION
Less than 2.5	A mineral that can be scratched by your fingernail (hardness = 2.5).
2.5 to 5.5	A mineral that cannot be scratched by your fingernail (hardness = 2.5), and cannot scratch glass (hardness = 5.5).
Greater than 5.5	A mineral that scratches glass (hardness = 5.5).

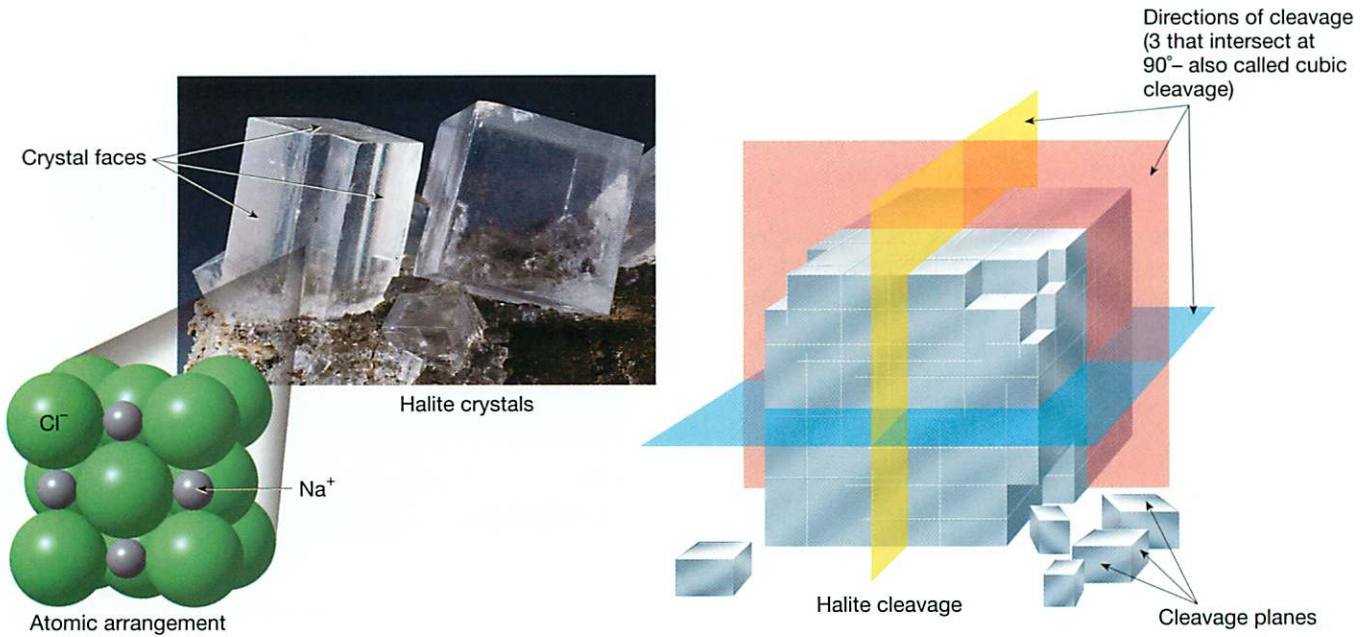


Figure 1.15 Atomic arrangement, crystal form, and cleavage of the mineral halite. Halite (NaCl) contains sodium and chlorine atoms arranged in a one-to-one ratio forming a cube. The internal, orderly arrangement of atoms produces the external cubic crystal form of the mineral. Planes of weak bonding between atoms in the internal crystalline structure are responsible for halite's cubic cleavage.

Crystal Form

Crystal form is the external appearance or shape of a mineral that results from the internal, orderly arrangement of atoms (Figure 1.15). Most inorganic substances consist of crystals. The flat external surfaces on a crystal are called *crystal faces*. A mineral that forms without space restrictions will exhibit well-formed crystal faces. However, most of the time, minerals must compete for space, and the result is a dense intergrown mass in which crystals do not exhibit their crystal form, especially to the unaided eye.

- At the discretion of your instructor, you may be asked to grow crystals by evaporating prepared concentrated solutions. Following the specific directions of your instructor, and after you have completed your experiment(s), write a brief paragraph summarizing your observations.

One of the most useful instruments for measuring the angle between crystal faces on large crystals is the **contact goniometer** (Figure 1.16).

- The mineral shown in Figure 1.1 has a well-developed crystal form with six faces that intersect

at about 120° and come to a point. Two varieties of the same mineral are shown in Figure 1.8. Why do those in Figure 1.8 not exhibit crystal form?

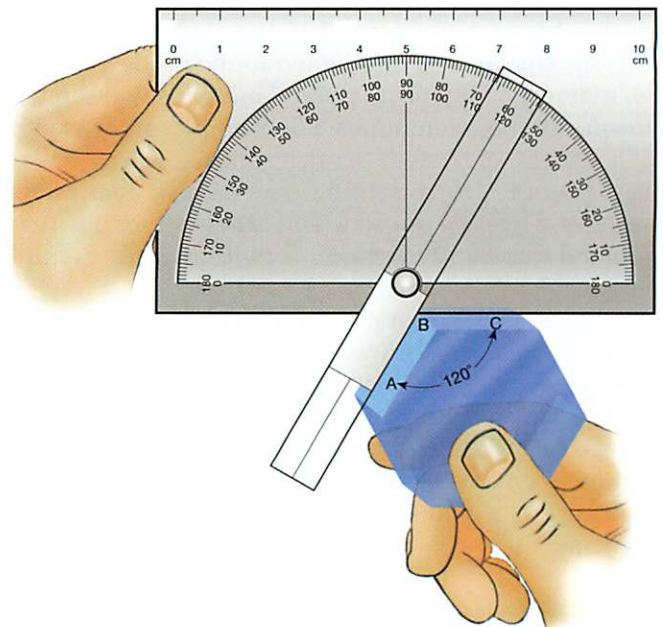


Figure 1.16 Contact goniometer. To use the instrument, hold the straight edge of the protractor in contact with one crystal face and the edge of the celluloid strip in contact with the other face. The angle is read where the fine line on the celluloid strip overlaps the degrees on the protractor. For example, the angle between the adjacent crystal faces on the mineral illustrated (angle ABC) is 120°.

10. Select one of the photographed minerals, other than Figure 1.1, that exhibits its crystal form and describe its shape.

Figure _____ : _____

11. Observe the various size crystals of the mineral quartz on display in the lab. Use the contact goniometer to measure the angle between similar, adjacent crystal faces on several crystals. Then write a statement relating the angle between adjacent crystal faces to the size of the crystal.

Cleavage and Fracture

Cleavage is the tendency of some minerals to break along regular planes of weak bonding between atoms in the internal crystalline structure (see Figure 1.15). When broken, minerals that exhibit cleavage produce smooth, flat surfaces, called **cleavage planes**.

Cleavage is described by (1) noting the number of **directions of cleavage**, which is the number of different sets of planes that form the surfaces of a mineral crystal when it cleaves, and (2) the angle(s) at which the directions of cleavage meet (see Figure 1.15). Each cleavage plane of a mineral crystal that has a different orientation is counted as a different direction of cleavage. When two or more cleavage planes are parallel or line up with each other, they are counted only once, as one direction of cleavage. Minerals may have one, two, three, four, or more directions of cleavage (Figure 1.17).




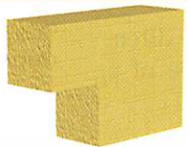
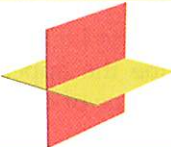




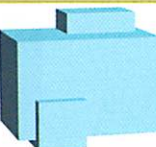

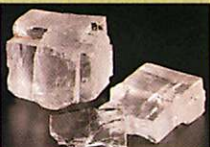




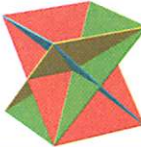

Number of Cleavage Directions	Shape	Sketch	Directions of Cleavage	Sample
1	Flat sheets			 Muscovite
2 at 90°	Elongated form with rectangle cross section (prism)			 Feldspar
2 not at 90°	Elongated form with parallelogram cross section (prism)			 Hornblende
3 at 90°	Cube			 Halite
3 not at 90°	Rhombohedron			 Calcite
4	Octahedron			 Fluorite

Figure 1.17 Common cleavage directions of minerals.

Observe the minerals shown in Figures 1.5 and 1.15. These minerals have broken with regularity and exhibit cleavage. The specimens shown are in the form of a cube. Although there are six planes of cleavage surrounding each specimen, each exhibits only three directions of cleavage: top and bottom form one parallel set of planes—hence the first direction of cleavage; the two sides are a second parallel set—a second direction of cleavage; and the front and back form the third direction of cleavage. The cleavage of both minerals is described as three directions of cleavage that intersect at 90° (also commonly called *cubic cleavage*) (see Figure 1.17).

Cleavage and crystal form are *not* the same. Some mineral crystals cleave while others do not. Cleavage is determined by the bonds that hold atoms together, while crystal form results from the internal, orderly arrangement of the atoms. The best way to determine whether or not a mineral cleaves is to break it and carefully examine the results.

Minerals that do not exhibit cleavage when broken are said to **fracture** (see Figure 1.4). Fracturing can be irregular, splintery, or conchoidal (smooth curved surfaces resembling broken glass). Some minerals may cleave in one or two directions and also exhibit fracturing (see Figure 1.12).

12. The minerals shown in Figure 1.9 have one direction of cleavage. Describe the appearance of a mineral that exhibits this type of cleavage.

13. Observe the photograph of calcite, the mineral on the right in Figure 1.2. Several smooth, flat planes result when the mineral is broken.

- a. How many planes of cleavage are present on the specimen?

_____ planes of cleavage

- b. How many directions of cleavage are present on the specimen?

_____ directions of cleavage

- c. The cleavage directions meet at (90° angles, angles other than 90°). Circle your answer.

14. Select one mineral specimen supplied by your instructor that exhibits cleavage. Describe its cleavage by completing the following statement.

_____ directions of cleavage at _____ degrees

Specific Gravity

Specific gravity is a number that represents the ratio of the weight of a mineral to the weight of an equal volume of water. For example, the mineral quartz, Figures 1.1 and 1.8, has a specific gravity of 2.65; this means it weighs 2.65 times more than an equal volume of water. The mineral galena, Figure 1.5, with a specific gravity of 7.4, feels heavy when held in your hand. With a little practice, you can estimate the specific gravity of a mineral by hefting it in your hand. The average specific gravity of minerals is about 2.7, but some metallic minerals have a specific gravity two or three times greater than the average. (*Note:* Exercise 23, “The Metric System, Measurements, and Scientific Inquiry,” contains a simple experiment for estimating the specific gravity of a solid.)

15. Find a mineral specimen supplied by your instructor that exhibits a high specific gravity by giving each mineral a heft in your hand.

Other Properties of Minerals

Luster, the ability to transmit light, hardness, color, streak, crystal form, cleavage or fracture, and specific gravity are the most basic and common physical properties used to identify minerals. However, other special properties can also be used to identify certain minerals. These other properties include:

Magnetism Magnetism is characteristic of minerals, such as magnetite, that have a high iron content and are attracted by a magnet. A variety of magnetite called *lodestone* is itself actually magnetic and will pick up paper clips (Figure 1.18).

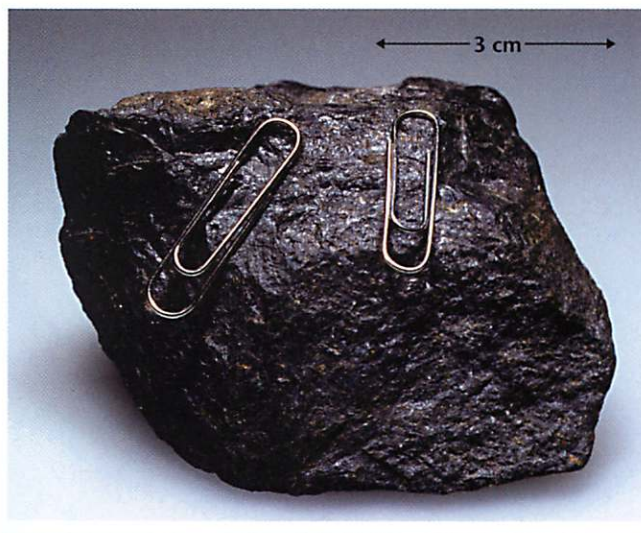






Figure 1.18 Magnetite, variety lodestone, has polarity like a magnet and will attract iron objects.

Specimen Number	Luster	Hardness	Color	Streak	Fracture or Cleavage (number of directions and angle of intersection)	Other Properties	Name	Economic Use or Rock-forming

Figure 1.19 Mineral identification chart.

METALLIC MINERALS			
Hardness	Streak	Other Diagnostic Properties	Name (Chemical Composition)
Harder than glass 	Black	Black; magnetic; hardness = 6; specific gravity = 5.2; often granular	Magnetite (Fe ₃ O ₄)
	Greenish-black	Brass yellow; hardness = 6; specific gravity = 5.2; generally an aggregate of cubic crystals	Pyrite (FeS ₂)-fool's gold
	Red-brown	Gray or reddish brown; hardness = 5-6; specific gravity = 5; platy appearance	Hematite (Fe ₂ O ₃)
Softer than glass but harder than a finger nail 	Greenish-black	Golden yellow; hardness = 4; specific gravity = 4.2; massive	Chalcopyrite (CuFeS ₂)
	Gray-black	Silvery gray; hardness = 2.5; specific gravity = 7.6 (very heavy); good cubic cleavage	Galena (PbS)
	Yellow-brown	Yellow brown to dark brown; hardness variable (1-6); specific gravity = 3.5-4; often found in rounded masses; earthy appearance	Limonite (Fe ₂ O ₃ · H ₂ O)
	Gray-black	Black to bronze; tarnishes to purples and greens; hardness = 3; specific gravity = 5; massive	Bornite (Cu ₅ FeS ₄)
Softer than your fingernail 	Dark gray	Silvery gray; hardness = 1 (very soft); specific gravity = 2.2; massive to platy; writes on paper (pencil lead); feels greasy	Graphite (C)

NONMETALLIC MINERALS			
Hardness	Cleavage	Other Diagnostic Properties	Name (Chemical Composition)
Dark colored Harder than glass	Cleavage Present	Greenish black to black; hardness = 5-6; specific gravity = 3.4; fair cleavage, two directions at nearly 90 degrees	Augite (Ca, Mg, Fe, Al silicate)
		Black to greenish black; hardness = 5-6; specific gravity = 3.2; fair cleavage, two directions at nearly 60 degrees and 120 degrees	Hornblende (Ca, Na, Mg, Fe, OH, Al silicate)
		Red to reddish brown; hardness = 6.5-7.5; conchoidal fracture; glassy luster	Garnet (Fe, Mg, Ca, Al silicate)
	Cleavage not prominent	Gray to brown; hardness = 9; specific gravity = 4; hexagonal crystals common	Corundum (Al ₂ O ₃)
		Dark brown to black; hardness = 7; conchoidal fracture; glassy luster	Smoky quartz (SiO ₂)
		Olive green; hardness = 6.5-7; small glassy grains	Olivine (Mg, Fe) ₂ SiO ₄

Figure 1.20 Mineral identification key.

NONMETALLIC MINERALS

	Hardness	Cleavage	Other Diagnostic Properties	Name (Chemical Composition)
Dark colored (continued)	Softer than glass but harder than a fingernail	Cleavage present	Yellow brown to black; hardness = 4; good cleavage in six directions, light yellow streak that has the smell of sulfur	Sphalerite (ZnS)
			Dark brown to black; hardness = 2.5–3, excellent cleavage in one direction; elastic in thin sheets; black mica	Biotite mica (K, Mg, Fe, OH, Al silicate)
		Cleavage absent	Generally tarnished to brown or green; hardness = 2.5; specific gravity = 9; massive	Native copper (Cu)
	Softer than your fingernail	Cleavage not prominent	Reddish brown; hardness = 1–5; specific gravity = 4–5; red streak; earthy appearance	Hematite (Fe ₂ O ₃)
			Yellow brown; hardness = 1–3; specific gravity = 3.5; earthy appearance; powders easily	Limonite (Fe ₂ O ₃ · H ₂ O)
	Light Colored	Harder than glass	Cleavage present	Pink or white to gray; hardness = 6; specific gravity = 2.6; two directions of cleavage at nearly right angles
Plagioclase feldspar (NaAlSi ₃ O ₈ to CaAl ₂ Si ₂ O ₈) (white to gray)				
		Cleavage absent	Any color; hardness = 7; specific gravity = 2.65; conchoidal fracture; glassy appearance; varieties: milky (white), rose (pink), smoky (gray), amethyst (violet)	Quartz (SiO ₂)
			White, yellowish to colorless; hardness = 3; three directions of cleavage at 75 degrees (rhombohedral); effervesces in HCl; often transparent	Calcite (CaCO ₃)
Softer than glass but harder than a finger nail		Cleavage present	White to colorless; hardness = 2.5; three directions of cleavage at 90 degrees (cubic); salty taste	Halite (NaCl)
			Yellow, purple, green, colorless; hardness = 4; white streak; translucent to transparent; four directions of cleavage	Fluorite (CaF ₂)
			Colorless; hardness = 2–2.5; transparent and elastic in thin sheets; excellent cleavage in one direction; light mica	Muscovite mica (K, OH, Al silicate)
Softer than your fingernail		Cleavage present	White to transparent, hardness = 2; when in sheets; is flexible but not elastic; varieties: selenite (transparent, three directions of cleavage); satin spar (fibrous, silky luster); alabaster (aggregate of small crystals)	Gypsum (CaSO ₄ · 2H ₂ O)
			White, pink, green; hardness = 1–2; forms in thin plates; soapy feel; pearly luster	Talc (Mg silicate)
		Cleavage not prominent	Yellow; hardness = 1–2.5	Sulfur (S)
			White; hardness = 2; smooth feel; earthy odor; when moistened, has typical clay texture	Kaolinite (Hydrous Al silicate)
			Pale to dark reddish brown; hardness = 1–3; dull luster; earthy; often contains spheroidal-shaped particles; not a true mineral	Bauxite (Hydrous Al oxide)

Figure 1.20 Mineral identification key (continued)

The Study of Minerals

Date Due: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

After you have finished Exercise 1, complete the following questions. You may have to refer to the exercise for assistance or to locate specific answers. Be prepared to submit this summary/report to your instructor at the designated time.

- Describe the procedure for identifying a mineral and arriving at its name.

- Name the physical property of a mineral that is described by each of the following statements.

PHYSICAL PROPERTY

Breaks along smooth planes: _____

Scratches glass: _____

Shines like a metal: _____

A red-colored powder on unglazed porcelain:

- Describe the shape of a mineral that has three directions of cleavage that intersect at 90°.

- Name two minerals you identified that have good cleavage. Describe the cleavage of each mineral.

MINERAL

CLEAVAGE

_____ :

_____ :

- Select five minerals you identified, and list their names and physical properties.

_____ :

_____ :

_____ :

_____ :

_____ :

- Name one mineral that you identified that has an economic use.

MINERAL

MINED FOR

_____ :

7. List the name and hardness of two minerals you identified.

MINERAL	HARDNESS
_____ :	_____
_____ :	_____

8. How many directions of cleavage do the feldspar minerals—potassium feldspar and plagioclase feldspar—have?

___ directions of cleavage

9. What was your conclusion concerning the angles between similar crystal faces on different size crystals of the same mineral?

10. List the name(s) of the minerals you identified that had a special property such as magnetism or feel. Write the special property that you observed next to the name of the mineral.

MINERAL	SPECIAL PROPERTY
_____ :	_____
_____ :	_____
_____ :	_____

11. What physical property most distinguishes biotite mica from muscovite mica?

12. Selecting from the minerals illustrated in Figures 1.1 through 1.13, list, by name, one mineral that exhibits each of the following:

one direction of cleavage: _____

striations: _____

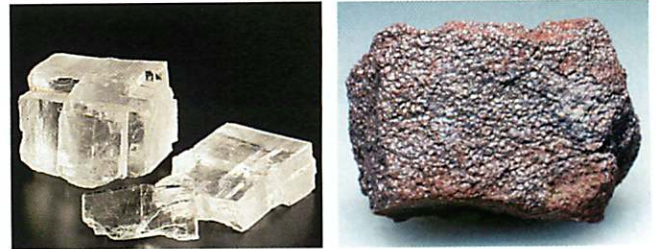
multiple colors: _____

cubic cleavage: _____

nonmetallic, vitreous luster: _____

fracture: _____

metallic luster: _____



A. B.

Figure 1.21 Two mineral specimens for use with question 13.

13. Referring to the minerals illustrated in Figure 1.21, list the physical properties of each mineral that can be determined from its photograph.

A: _____

B: _____

14. The mineral identification key, Figure 1.20, uses the property of luster as its primary division of minerals. Develop and describe an alternative classification key that uses another property, or properties, to divide minerals into groups.
