

Introduction to Minerals

It's all about scale:

Atoms>>>Elements>>>Minerals>>>Rocks>>>Continents>>>Planet

Basic Chem:

Atomic Structure

- Atom: smallest unit of an element that possesses the properties of that element
- Main building blocks-protons, neutrons and electrons although many other subatomic particles have been discovered in recent years.
 - Positive Charge:
 - Negative Charge:
 - No charge:
- A typical atom consist of a nucleus of protons and neutrons and a cloud of electrons surrounding the nucleus.
- The distinguishing feature of an atom of a given element is the number of protons in the nucleus. The number of electrons and neutrons in an atom in a given element can vary, but the **number of protons is constant**.
- Normally atoms are electronically neutral.

Isotopes

■Isotopes, which are varieties of a given atom (element), are produced by variations in the number of neutrons in the nucleus.

Examples: Carbon

Uranium

Why are these important to this class?

Ions

- ❖ Electronically charged atoms, called ions, are produced by the gain or loss of electrons.

Why do atoms become ions?

- ❖ Atoms combine, mostly through ionic or covalent bonding, to form minerals.

Ionic Bonding: involves the transfer of electrons from one atom to another.

Why does this occur? Examples.

Covalent Bonding: involves the sharing of electrons.

Why do atoms share instead of transferring? Examples.

Properties of Minerals

- Occur naturally as an inorganic solid.

Solid- atoms are arranged in a rigid framework

>crystal structure- 3d pattern

>amorphous solids- random – like glass

- Has a specific internal structure; that is its constituent atoms are precisely arranged into a crystalline solid.
- Has a chemical composition that varies within definite limits and can be expressed by a chemical formula.
- Has definite physical properties (hardness, cleavage, etc.) that result from its crystalline structure and composition.
- It is stable over relatively restricted range of T&P.

- ❖ Most elements are a combination of 2 or more elements

Examples:

- NaCl (Halite), PbS (Galena), CaCO₃ (Calcite)
- Native minerals will only be one element: Au, Cu, Ag, C, S

Polymorphism

Two distinct forms of the same compound.

- Diamond

- Graphite
- Both are composed of Carbon atoms

Mineral Groups

Non-silicates: Ore Family

1) Sulfides

2) Oxides

3) Hydroxides

Nonsilicates-Evaporites

4) Sulfates

5) Halides

6) Borates

Other Non-silicates

7) Carbonates

8) Phosphates

9) Native Elements

Silicates: composed of cations with various combinations of the silicon-oxygen tetrahedron.

1) Isolated Single Silicate (Nesosilicate)

2) Double Silicate (Sorosilicate)

3) Ring Silicate (Cyclosilicate)

4) Chain Silicate (Inosilicate)

a) Single Chain

b) Double Chain

5) Sheet Silicate (Phyllosilicate)

6) Framework Silicate (Tectosilicate)

Physical Properties of Minerals

Minerals are classified according to their physical properties.

1) Luster: the way a mineral reflects light.

2) Color: What color is it? Can be very deceptive. Fool's Gold.

3) Streak: the color of a mineral in powdered form. Most useful with metallic lustered minerals.

4) Hardness: a mineral's resistance to being scratched.

Scaled from 1-10, according to MOHS hardness scale.

1-Talc	2-Gypsum	3-Calcite	4-Fluorite	5-Apatite
6-Orthoclase	7-Quartz	8-Topaz	9-Corundum	10-Diamond

TGCFAOQTCD

5) Cleavage and Fracture: due to how a mineral breaks.

If the mineral has no weaknesses in its internal structure, it will fracture unevenly. If this uneven fracture produces smooth curved surfaces (kind of how glass breaks), it is called Conchoidal Fracture. When a mineral possesses weaknesses in its structure, it will break along planes (of weakness), which are called Cleavage Planes. These cleavage planes can exist in the form of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 6.

a) Basal or Planar Cleavage (One cleavage)

b) Blocky Cleavage (Two cleavages)

c) Cubic or Rhombohedral Cleavage (Three Cleavages)

d) Octohedral Cleavage (Four cleavages)

e) Hexagonal Cleavage (Six cleavages)

6) Other Special Properties

a) Heft: the mineral is heavy or light for its size (because of its composition).

- b) Acid Reaction: the mineral reacts to dilute HCl.
- c) Tenacity: the mineral peels into thin sheets (typically found with basal cleavage).
- d) Crystal Form: the shape of the mineral is crystal form.
- e) Striations: straight parallel lines on a cleavage face, commonly found on Plagioclase Feldspar.
- f) Magnetism: mineral is attracted to (or is) a magnet.