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# Glossary

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**Alike:** Acting or looking the same.

**Brainstorm:** To share ideas on a topic. People often brainstorm to solve a problem.

**Cleavage:** The process by which a mineral splits along a definite line.

**Communicate:** To share information and ideas through speaking, writing, or drawing.

**Compare:** To look at two or more things to see how they are alike or different.

**Compass:** A device used to tell direction by means of a magnetic needle.

**Conglomerate:** A type of rock formed from rounded pieces of other rock.

**Crust:** The hard, outside layer of the earth.

**Crystal:** A solid substance that has a definite shape or pattern.

**Data:** Information, such as that gathered during an experiment.

**Describe:** To use words to explain how something looks, feels, or acts.

**Different:** Not the same.

**Dull:** Not bright or shiny; not able to reflect light.

**Experiment:** A procedure that is carried out to investigate a scientific question.

**Fair test:** A test that compares two or more things by keeping everything the same except the thing being compared. A race is a fair test. Everyone starts at the same place and at the same time and ends at the same place. The only thing that is different is the speed of the runners.

**Field test:** A scientific test that is done in the area where the materials are found rather than in the laboratory. Rocks and minerals can be studied in the field.

**Formation:** A pattern or shape.

**Fossil:** Remains or traces of an organism that lived long ago that are preserved in the earth.

**Fracture:** The absence of cleavage.

**Gem:** A precious stone that has been cut and polished. Rubies and diamonds are gems.

**Geologist:** A scientist who studies rocks and minerals to learn more about the history of our earth.

**Glassy:** Shiny and smooth.

**Graph:** A diagram used to show the relationship between things.

**Guess:** To give an idea about something when you are not sure.

**Hard:** Firm, not soft.

**Hardness:** A property of a mineral. Hardness is tested by scratching a mineral sample with different objects. The harder a mineral, the more difficult it is to scratch.

**Identifying color:** The color of a mineral in powder form. Determined by performing a streak test.

**Igneous:** A type of rock that forms when melted rock cools.

**Impurity:** Something that mixes with another substance and usually reduces its quality.

**Investigate:** To study something closely and in an organized way.

**Lava:** Melted rock that erupts out of a volcano.

**Length:** The distance from one end of something to the other.

**Lodestone:** A form of the mineral magnetite; contains iron and acts as a magnet.

**Luster:** A property of a mineral. Luster is described by how the mineral reflects light.

**Magma:** Melted rock that is underground.

**Magnetism:** The ability of a substance to attract iron.

**Measure:** To find out the length, size, or weight of something.

**Metamorphic:** A type of rock that has been changed as a result of underground heat, pressure, and water.

**Mineral:** A solid substance found in nature that has distinctive properties, such as a crystal form.

**Mohs scale:** A system used to determine the relative hardness of minerals.

**Observe:** To use your senses to study something closely.

**Opaque:** Not able to let light pass through.

**Pattern:** A repeating arrangement of shapes, colors, numbers, or other things.

**Pebble:** A small, round stone.

**Physical property:** A characteristic of an object that can be studied through the senses.

**Plot:** To locate a point or points on a graph.

**Predict:** To say what you think is going to happen.

**Procedure:** A set of steps that tells how to do something.

**Property:** Something about an object that helps tell what it is.

**Rock:** Material found in nature that may be made up of one or more minerals; clay, sand, and other earth materials; and fossils.

**Rock cycle:** The process by which rocks change to form new rocks. The changes in rocks are caused by many things, including heat, rain and snow, and underground pressure.

**Same:** Alike, not different.

**Scratch:** To cut or scrape.

**Sediment:** Pieces of rocks, minerals, and organic materials that are carried by water, wind, or ice.

**Sedimentary:** A type of rock that is formed from sediments that are carried by wind or water, dropped, and cemented or packed together.

**Senses:** Touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing.

**Shape:** The form of an object.

**Size:** A measurement of how big something is.

**Soft:** Not hard or firm.

**Sort:** To put things together on the basis of a property, such as color or size.

**Streak test:** A test used to determine the identifying color of a mineral.

**Surface:** The outside or the top of an object.

**Tool:** An object used to do a task.

**Translucent:** Able to let some light pass through.

**Transparent:** Clear; able to let light through.

**Unit:** A fixed quantity used as a standard of measure. Inches, miles, meters, degrees, and kilograms are all units.

**Volcano:** An opening in the earth's crust through which lava, gases, and other materials can flow.

**Waxy:** Looking like wax; dull.

**Weather:** To age and break down as a result of the effects of wind, rain, and ice.

**Weight:** A measurement of how heavy something is.