

## Vocabulary: Mineral Identification



### Vocabulary

- Crystal – a solid formed by a repeating pattern of atoms.
- Density – a measure of how “light” or “heavy” a material is for its size.
  - To find density, divide the mass of the material by its volume.
  - Density is often measured in grams per milliliter (g/mL).
- Hardness – a measure of how easily a mineral can be scratched.
  - Hardness of minerals is measured on a scale of 1 to 10 called Mohs scale.
- Luster – the way a mineral reflects light.
  - Examples of luster include metallic, glassy, pearly, dull, waxy, resinous (like pine sap), greasy, chalky, and silky.
- Mass – the amount of matter in an object.
  - Mass is measured in grams (g).
- Mineral – a naturally formed, inorganic solid with a crystal structure and a definite chemical composition.
  - *Synthetic* (man-made) materials are not minerals.
  - *Organic* materials produced by plants and animals (such as sugars and proteins) are not minerals.
  - Substances with no crystal structure are not minerals. Glass is an example of this.
  - The chemical formula of a mineral tells you what’s in it. For example, quartz is made of silicon (Si) and oxygen (O) and has the formula  $\text{SiO}_2$ .
- Streak – the color of a mineral in powdered form.
  - Streak is observed by rubbing a mineral on a tile called a streak plate.
  - If a mineral is harder than a streak plate (about 6.5), it will not leave a streak.
- Volume – the amount of space an object takes up.
  - Volume is measured in milliliters (mL).