Mineral Vocabulary

Mineral-naturally occurring, inorganic solid formed from elements or compounds and having a definite chemical makeup and regular atomic structure

Physical property-observable characteristic that describes an object

Streak-color of a powder left by a mineral

Luster-how a mineral’s surface reflects light

Hardness-property of a mineral that relates to how much the mineral resists being scratched

Crystal-solid substance with its atoms arranged in a regular, 3-dimensional pattern

Cleavage-the tendency of some minerals to split along smooth, flat surfaces called planes

Fracture-tendency of some minerals to break into pieces with uneven surfaces

Crystallization-formation of crystals caused by processes such as cooling and evaporation

Gem-stone that has been cut and polished