

Name _____

Date _____

Mineral Identification

Minerals are very interesting and are lots of fun to learn about. We identify minerals by their properties. One property that we look at is how hard a mineral is. We use the Mohs Hardness Scale to measure a mineral's hardness by seeing how easily we can scratch a mineral. When we test or measure a mineral's hardness that is called a scratch test. The hardest mineral is a diamond, and the softest mineral is talc. We also use a streak test to help identify minerals. In a streak test we rub a mineral on an unglazed, white tile and see what color streak it leaves behind. Luster is the reflection of light from a mineral's surface. Minerals with a lot of luster look shiny. Sometimes minerals are the same color, which is why we often cannot use color to identify minerals. For example, pyrite and gold are both the same color and can be easily confused. Minerals also have many uses. Graphite is a mineral that is soft enough to leave a streak on paper and is used to make pencils.

Match the terms. Write the letter of the correct phrase in the blank on the left.

Column 1

- _____ 1. Talc
- _____ 2. diamond
- _____ 3. hardness
- _____ 4. luster
- _____ 5. Mohs
- _____ 6. streak

Column 2

- A. A scratch test measures a mineral's _____
- B. Name of the scale of hardness _____
- C. One of the softest known minerals _____
- D. The hardest known mineral _____
- E. Reflection of light from a mineral's surface _____
- F. Color left by a mineral on an unglazed tile _____

Answer the following questions.

7. What are two tests would you perform to help you identify an unknown mineral?

8. Why is it sometimes difficult to use color to identify minerals?

9. The mineral _____ is sometimes confused with gold because both minerals are the same _____.

10. The mineral _____ is soft enough to leave a streak on paper and is commonly used for _____.