

Rocks and Minerals Vocabulary

- Geologist - a person who studies rocks and minerals
- Sediment - bits of weathered rocks and minerals, pieces of dead plants and animals, sand and silt
- Sedimentary rocks - rocks formed from compacted sediment
- Igneous rocks - rocks formed from magma, or lava, that has cooled and hardened
- Metamorphic rocks - new rock formed from existing rock that is changed by heat and pressure inside the earth
- Mining - digging or extracting minerals from the earth
- Minerals - materials displaying a definite chemical formula and shape, form in the ground from one or more chemicals
- Rocks - solid material made from minerals that form the earth's crust
- Fossils - remains of living organisms found in sedimentary rocks which lets scientists learn about existing life from the past
- Crystal - the repeating pattern of a mineral having flat sides that meet in sharp edges and corners
- Rock cycle - the continuous changing of rocks from one form to another over long periods of time
- Organic rock - rock formed from once living organisms

Rock Names and Uses

- Pyrite - contains iron but has very little economic use in the U.S. "fools gold"
- Malachite - important source of copper; used to make jewelry
- Fluorite - source of fluorine in toothpaste and fluoride in water
- Kyanite - found with titanium minerals, generally just collector's item
- Mudstone - preserves mud cracks in nature after solidifying; used in pottery
- Coal - pressed organic matter, major fuel source here in Illinois
- Scoria - extrusive rock, came out of a volcano; used in landscaping
- Obsidian - same as scoria but cooled off very quickly (crystals form when it cools off slowly). Used to make some knives
- Gneiss - shows differentiation between mineral types with different colors; used in building material
- Iron Ore - magnetic properties; used to make iron and steel
- Tiger's Eye - gemstone, crystallized asbestos (not harmful because it is not fibrous)
- Quartz and Mica - can be useful in ceramics
- Selenite - transparent, crushed up into powder, baked and used for drywall
- Geode - quartz crystals, can be found all over Midwest
- Petrified wood - has traces of uranium
- Coprolite - fossilized dinosaur feces, lots of jewelry made from this