

Suzy's World

Rocks - What makes some rocks sparkle?

Fact

- Rocks are solid mixtures of one or more minerals.
- Minerals are non-living mixtures of elements (ingredients) that are found only in nature (like iron and zinc). They're the building blocks of rocks and sometimes they can form crystals.
- Crystals are solid substances that have their particles arranged in regular patterns and most crystals reflect light very well so they sparkle
- If rocks have crystal in their mixture, it's usually the crystal that gives them their sparkle.
- Some minerals are metallic so they reflect light too so if a rock has metallic minerals in it that will make them sparkle too

Do you know

- Quartz is one of the most common forms of crystal that you'll find in rocks.
- Quartz is usually clear or white but you can also find it in lots of other colours like pink or purple too.
- If you keep sparkly rocks in water it will show their sparkles off really well.
- Plants and vegetables get the minerals they need to grow from the rocks and soil that they're growing in.
- When we eat the vegetables, we get the minerals we need to grow too.

Experiments you can do

- Start your own rock collection. It's cheap and easy to do because you can find different kinds of rocks just about anywhere and the library has lots of great books about rocks.
- You don't need to haul home huge pieces of rock just choose little pieces that you like the look of. Wash them in water to see if the colour of the rocks change very much – you might be surprised. If you want to show how the rock can change with water you might like to paint half of the rock with clear nail polish – just ask first!!! :o)

Other Investigations

Go crystal gazing. Most malls have a crystal shop in them so you might like to visit one and have a look at the various crystals that are available. Some are shaped like pebbles but some are shaped like rods or are in clusters of rods with lots of flat surfaces and that's how they form naturally.