

Lecture Notes Earth Science

Chapter 2

Minerals and Rocks • *Section 1 Summary*

Key Concepts

- What is a mineral?
- What are the three major groups of rock, and how do they form through the rock cycle?
- How are minerals and rocks used and processed?

A mineral is a naturally occurring, inorganic solid that forms on or beneath Earth's surface. Almost all minerals have a crystal shape. Each mineral has a definite chemical composition. More than 3,000 minerals have been identified.

Rocks are made up of a combination of minerals. Geologists classify rocks into three major groups: igneous rock, sedimentary rock, and metamorphic rock. The rocks in each group form through different steps in the rock cycle.

Igneous rocks form from molten material deep inside Earth. The material slowly cools and hardens to form a rock. If the material cools slowly, large crystals form. If the material cools quickly, small crystals form.

Sedimentary rocks are made from pieces of rocks that have been broken down by processes involving water and weather. The pieces are called sediment. **Sediment** can also contain remains of plants and animals. The sediment gets moved by water and wind and gets deposited in layers. Over millions of years, the sediments are squeezed together and become sedimentary rock.

Metamorphic rocks form when rocks are exposed to a great increase in temperature and pressure. This occurs deep within Earth's interior where it is hotter and the overlying rock cause great pressure. Minerals may get changed to other minerals forming a new rock. Mineral grains also become aligned in response to the increased pressure. If the heat and pressure become too great, the rock melts and the rock cycle begins again.

Minerals are the source of gemstones, metals, and other materials used to make many products. Gemstones are hard, colorful minerals that are used not only for jewelry but also for cutting, grinding and polishing. Minerals are used in foods, medicine, fertilizer, and building materials. Minerals are also the source of metals such as copper, iron, and silver.

Today, people use rocks for building materials and in industrial processes. A rock that contains a metal or mineral that can be mined and sold for a profit is called an **ore**. **To produce metal from ore, the ore must be mined, or removed from the ground. Then the ore must be processed to extract the metal.** Mining is done in one of three ways. Strip mining removes the overlying layers of soil and rock to reveal the ore beneath. Open pit mining involves digging a huge pit to get to the ore. Shaft mining is used when the ore occurs in veins far beneath the surface.

The mined ore must be processed before it can be used. During **smelting**, the ore is mixed with other substances and then melted. The useful ore separates from the rest of the rock. The pure ore is removed.

Rocks and Weathering ■ *Section 2 Summary*

Key Concepts

- How do weathering and erosion affect Earth's surface?
- What are the causes of mechanical weathering and chemical weathering?

Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals

R Bogdan



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Table of Contents Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals

1. Understanding the eBook Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - The Rise of Digital Reading Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - Exploring Different Genres
 - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
 - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
 - Popular eBook Platforms
 - Features to Look for in an Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - User-Friendly Interface

4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - Personalized Recommendations
 - Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals User Reviews and Ratings
 - Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals and Bestseller Lists
5. Accessing Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals Free and Paid eBooks
 - Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals Public Domain eBooks
 - Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals eBook Subscription Services
 - Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals Budget-Friendly Options
6. Navigating Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals eBook Formats
 - ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
 - Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals Compatibility with Devices
 - Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals Enhanced eBook Features
7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
 - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - Highlighting and Note-Taking Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - Interactive Elements Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
8. Staying Engaged with Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - Joining Online Reading Communities
 - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
 - Following Authors and Publishers Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - Benefits of a Digital Library
 - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
 - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
 - Minimizing Distractions
 - Managing Screen Time
11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - Setting Reading Goals Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time

12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Chapter 2 Weathering And Soil Section 1 Summary Minerals
 - Distinguishing Credible Sources
13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
 - Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
 - Exploring Educational eBooks
14. Embracing eBook Trends
 - Integration of Multimedia Elements
 - Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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