

Student Instructions for Performing the Streak Test

1. Gently stroke one edge of mineral A across the surface of the white tile. Now stroke it over the black tile.



2. Record the color of the streak in the space labeled "Streak color" on the profile sheet for mineral A.

3. Repeat this test for each of the other 11 minerals. Record the color of the streak of each mineral on its profile sheet.

4. Wash the tile with water, soap, and a paper towel.



Reading Selections

Hematite

Hematite is found all over the world. Some forms of hematite look like a black, bumpy rock. They leave a gray or black streak.

Another type of hematite leaves a red-brown streak that looks like dried blood. Many early peoples, including American Indians in the Southwest United States, ground hematite into powder and mixed it with liquid to make a dark-red paint.

They covered the walls of caves with paintings of horses, buffaloes, and other animals. Today, hematite is still used to color paints.

But hematite has another major use. It is one of the minerals from which we get iron, one of the strongest of all metals.

Iron is the main ingredient in steel. It was discovered in Egypt about 3,000 years ago. That was when the “Iron Age” began. The discovery of iron was one of the most important events in the history of our civilization.

Can you find hematite in your set of minerals?



Graphite

Did you know that you hold graphite in your hand almost every day? Graphite is the “lead” in your pencil. The word “graphite” comes from the Greek word that means “to write.” People began writing with sticks of graphite about 400 years ago. That caused a lot of dirty fingers!

But graphite still had a big advantage over ink—because it is so soft, it’s easy to erase mistakes! The wooden pencil was invented in the late 1700s in France.

Graphite has many other uses that are related to its special properties. Graphite feels slippery. It is used for lubricants, which make machine parts slide over one another easily. Graphite can withstand very high temperatures, and it conducts electricity. For these reasons, it is used to make electrodes. Electrodes carry electricity from one place to another.

Do you think one of your minerals might be graphite? Can you describe its streak? How does it feel?

