Properties of Common Minerals

LUSTER	HARD-NESS	CLEAVAGE	FRACTURE	COMMON COLORS	DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS	USE(S)	COMPOSITION*	MINERAL NAME
Metallic luster	1–2	✔		silver to gray	black streak, greasy feel	pencil lead, lubricants	C	**Graphite**
	2.5	✔		metallic silver	gray-black streak, cubic cleavage, density = 7.6 g/cm^3	ore of lead, batteries	PbS	**Galena**
	5.5–6.5		✔	black to silver	black streak, magnetic	ore of iron, steel	Fe_3O_4	**Magnetite**
	6.5		✔	brassy yellow	green-black streak, (fool's gold)	ore of sulfur	FeS_2	**Pyrite**
Either	5.5 – 6.5 or 1		✔	metallic silver or earthy red	red-brown streak	ore of iron, jewelry	Fe_2O_3	**Hematite**
Nonmetallic luster	1	✔		white to green	greasy feel	ceramics, paper	$Mg_3Si_4O_{10}(OH)_2$	**Talc**
	2		✔	yellow to amber	white-yellow streak	sulfuric acid	S	**Sulfur**
	2	✔		white to pink or gray	easily scratched by fingernail	plaster of paris, drywall	$CaSO_4 \cdot 2H_2O$	**Selenite gypsum**
	2–2.5	✔		colorless to yellow	flexible in thin sheets	paint, roofing	$KAl_3Si_3O_{10}(OH)_2$	**Muscovite mica**
	2.5	✔		colorless to white	cubic cleavage, salty taste	food additive, melts ice	NaCl	**Halite**
	2.5–3	✔		black to dark brown	flexible in thin sheets	construction materials	$K(Mg,Fe)_3AlSi_3O_{10}(OH)_2$	**Biotite mica**
	3	✔		colorless or variable	bubbles with acid, rhombohedral cleavage	cement, lime	$CaCO_3$	**Calcite**
	3.5	✔		colorless or variable	bubbles with acid when powdered	building stones	$CaMg(CO_3)_2$	**Dolomite**
	4	✔		colorless or variable	cleaves in 4 directions	hydrofluoric acid	CaF_2	**Fluorite**
	5–6	✔		black to dark green	cleaves in 2 directions at 90°	mineral collections, jewelry	$(Ca,Na)(Mg,Fe,Al)(Si,Al)_2O_6$	**Pyroxene** (commonly augite)
	5.5	✔		black to dark green	cleaves at 56° and 124°	mineral collections, jewelry	$CaNa(Mg,Fe)_4(Al,Fe,Ti)_3Si_6O_{22}(O,OH)_2$	**Amphibole** (commonly hornblende)
	6	✔		white to pink	cleaves in 2 directions at 90°	ceramics, glass	$KAlSi_3O_8$	**Potassium feldspar** (commonly orthoclase)
	6	✔		white to gray	cleaves in 2 directions, striations visible	ceramics, glass	$(Na,Ca)AlSi_3O_8$	**Plagioclase feldspar**
	6.5		✔	green to gray or brown	commonly light green and granular	furnace bricks, jewelry	$(Fe,Mg)_2SiO_4$	**Olivine**
	7		✔	colorless or variable	glassy luster, may form hexagonal crystals	glass, jewelry, electronics	SiO_2	**Quartz**
	6.5–7.5		✔	dark red to green	often seen as red glassy grains in NYS metamorphic rocks	jewelry (NYS gem), abrasives	$Fe_3Al_2Si_3O_{12}$	**Garnet**

*Chemical symbols:

Al = aluminum	Cl = chlorine	H = hydrogen	Na = sodium	S = sulfur
C = carbon	F = fluorine	K = potassium	O = oxygen	Si = silicon
Ca = calcium	Fe = iron	Mg = magnesium	Pb = lead	Ti = titanium

✔ = dominant form of breakage