

**FOSS Earth Materials Module**  
**Glossary**  
**2005 Edition**

Acid: No definition (TG)

Balance: A tool that measures mass. (TG)

Basalt: A dark rock formed from cooling lava (TG)

Calcite: One of the most common minerals on Earth; composed of calcium carbonate, calcite is the major mineral in such common rocks as limestone and marble. (TG)

Carat: A unit of weight for precious stones, equal to 200 milligrams (140 carats is equal to just under 1 ounce). (SS)

Circumference: The distance around a circular object. (TG)

Crystal: The solid form of a material that can be identified by its natural shape or pattern. (TG, SS)

Deposit: Earth material that has been laid down by the action of wind, water, ice, or volcanic eruption. (SS)

Depth: The thickness of an object. (TG)

Diameter: The distance across a circular object. (TG)

Dissolve: To mix a solid substance with a liquid until it breaks down into such small pieces that it seems to disappear. (TG)

Earth materials: The various solids, liquids, and gases that make up the earth. (TG)

Erosion: The wearing away of earth materials by water, wind, or ice. (SS)

Evaporate: To dry up. (TG, SS)

Evidence: Signs or facts on which a conclusion can be based. (TG)

Excavate: To dig out; to uncover by digging. (SS)

Feldspar: The most abundant mineral in the earth's crust; a group of related minerals that come in a variety of colors and are one of the components found in granite. (TG)

Fluorite: A mineral that comes in a variety of colors, can be scratched with a paper clip, and glows under an ultraviolet light source. (TG)

Fossil: Any remains, trace, or imprint of prehistoric animal or plant life preserved in the earth's crust. (SS)

Gemstone: A mineral or other earth material that can be cut and polished to set in a piece of jewelry. (SS)

Geologist: A person who studies the earth and the materials of which it is made. (TG, SS)

Geology: The scientific study of Earth's history and structure. (TG)

Glacier: A large, slow-moving mass of ice and snow that forms in places where the rate of snowfall is faster than the rate the snow melts. (SS)

Granite: An igneous rock that forms when molten rock (magma) cools deep in Earth's crust, and is mainly composed of feldspar, quartz, black mica, and hornblende. (TG)

Gypsum: A mineral that forms when seawater evaporates under arid conditions, gypsum is known as calcium sulfate when combined with water, and anhydrite when water is not present. (TG)

Hardness: A property of minerals that refers to the resistance of minerals to being scratched. (TG)

Hornblende: A member of a group of minerals called the amphiboles; a component of granite that has long, needlelike crystals. (TG)

Igneous rock: A rock that forms from molten or melted rock.: (SS)

Limestone: A sedimentary rock that contains the mineral calcite. (TG)

Magma: Liquid or molten rock deep in the earth; the lava ejected when a volcano erupts. (SS)

Magnetometer: An instrument for measuring the earth's magnetic field and its changes. (SS)

Marble: A rock that derives from limestone as a result of pressure, temperature, and time. (TG)

Mass: Weight of an object (TG)

Memorial: Anything meant to help people remember some person or event. (SS)

Metamorphic rock: A rock that forms into another kind of rock by heat, pressure, or both. (SS)

Meteorite: Any solid object that falls from outer space through a planet's atmosphere and lands on the surface. (SS)

Meter tape: A tool that measures linear dimensions. (TG)

Mica: A mineral that pulls apart in thin, flexible sheets and is one of the components of granite. (TG)

Microscope: An instrument with lenses that makes small objects appear larger so they can be studied. (SS)

Mineral: A basic earth material; a rock ingredient that cannot be physically broken down any further. (TG, SS)

Monolith: A single large piece of stone. (SS)

Monument: A structure built to help people remember some person or event. (SS)

Obelisk: A tall, slender, four-sided stone pillar that has a pyramid on top. (SS)

Opaque: Any substance or object that does not let light shine through; not transparent. (SS)

Outcrop: A mass of rock exposed at the Earth's surface. (SS)

Plaster of Paris: The white powder that remains when gypsum is heated to drive out part of the water in it. (TG)

Property: Something that can be observed, such as size, color, shape, or texture. (TG)

Prospector: A person who searches for valuable resources, such as ores, minerals, and oil. (SS)

Pyramid: Any huge structure built with a square base and four sloping, triangular sides that meet at the top; also anything that has a similar shape. (SS)

Quartz: One of the most common minerals in the earth's crust; composed of silicon and oxygen and can be valued as gems in its colored forms. (TG)

Rock: An earth material made up of different ingredients called minerals. (TG)

Sandstone: A sedimentary rock mostly made of sand.: (TG)

Sediment: Solid matter such as sand or gravel deposited by wind, water, and ice. (SS)

Sedimentary rock: A layered rock formed by deposits of sediment. (SS)

Smelt: To melt or fuse ores in order to separate pure metals from impurities. (SS)

Texture: The surface properties of any material, especially as they apply to appearance or touch. (SS)

Vein: A continuous crack in rock filled with one or more minerals, especially metallic ores, differing from the surrounding rock. (SS)

Vinegar: A weak acid solution, called acetic acid. (TG)

Weigh: To find the mass of an object. (TG)