

Element Scavenger Hunt

Grades: 2-5

NGSS: PS1.A: Structure and Properties of Matter

Subject: Elements, atoms

Skills: Critical thinking, inference

Materials: Shoe box or box with dividers
Element Scavenger List

BACKGROUND

The periodic table is a list of the elements according to the structure of their atoms. The chart reads from left to right and top to bottom, and the elements are arranged by their atomic number. An atomic number is the number of protons in each atom. Elements are also placed in groups, arranged by columns that link elements together according to their properties. Some groups include noble gases, alkali metals, earth metals, transition metals, and nonmetals.

ACTIVITY

1. Go over the background information with your students and read *Women in Chemistry/ Las mujeres en la química*.
2. Tell students that they will be going on an Element Scavenger Hunt. This can be done either at home or at school. Regardless, students will need to bring their items into the classroom after the search is completed.
3. A hand out of the Element Scavenger Hunt List can be found in this activity. Tell students they should try to find one item from around their home (or whatever area you designate) for each element listed. If they cannot find all of the elements, that is okay. Consider having a prize for the student who finds the most.
4. Students will put their finds in a box and return to class. Have students break into groups to share their finds. If desired, have students label their finds and present them to the entire class.



DISCUSSION

Ask students if they were surprised about how many elements were easy to find. Then ask them if the elements they found are pure or part of a compound. (This is a great activity to pair with Poundcakium, which demonstrates the difference between an element and compound.) Most of the items brought in will be compounds. Atoms are the building blocks of everything in the world, which means that the air we breathe, cats and dogs, mountains and rivers, are all made of atoms and elements.



This activity is excerpted from the Teacher's Guide to:

Women in Chemistry

Hardback: 978-1-945779-10-7

Paperback: 978-1-938492-31-0

eBook: 978-1-945779-13-8

Las mujeres en la química

Paperback: 978-1-938492-32-7

eBook: 978-1-938492-33-4

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Element Scavenger Hunt List

Iron (Fe): Iron nails, iron pans, cereal, etc. Steel is a compound with iron inside, so steel wool, food cans, etc.

Copper (Cu): Copper piping, pennies, electrical wire etc.

Gold (Au): Gold nuggets, gold jewelry, gold leaf, etc.

Silver (Ag): Silver jewelry, silver coins, silver leaf, etc.

Aluminum (Al): Tin foil, knitting needles, drink cans, etc.

Carbon (C): Coal, pencil lead, diamonds, etc.

Zinc (Zn): US pennies made after 1982 have zinc in them.

Potassium (K): Bananas, hardwood ashes, avocado, etc.

Chlorine (Cl): Chlorine tablets for pools or water purification.

Sodium (Na): Table salt.

Oxygen (O): An empty bottle or jar with a cover

Flourine (F): Toothpaste.

Calcium (Ca): Bones, teeth, shells, etc.

Phosphorus (P): The heads of matches.