

Reading Selection

Feldspar

Feldspar is the German word for “field mineral.” Feldspar is the most common mineral in the earth’s crust. You can find feldspar almost anywhere in the world. You can see small pieces of it in the sand at the beach. Feldspar is also found in rocks. Some igneous rocks are made almost entirely of feldspar.

Sometimes feldspar is white. A beautiful and very rare gem, called the moonstone, is white feldspar. Feldspar can also be pink, green, or red. Geologists use names like “orthoclase,” “microcline,” and “plagioclase” to describe these different types of feldspar. You might say that all these minerals are members of the feldspar group or “family.” Orthoclase and plagioclase are a source of clay that is used to make dishes and pottery. The clay forms slowly from feldspar during weathering.

Much of the world’s best orthoclase is found in England. Kaolin, which comes from a weathered feldspar, is also used in a medicine called Kaopectate™. Have you ever been given Kaopectate™?

