CANADIAN ROCKS & MINERALS

Joanne Richter

Scholastic Canada Ltd.
Toronto New York London Auckland Sydney
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Scholastic Canada Ltd.
604 King Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5V 1E1, Canada

Scholastic Inc.
557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012, USA

Scholastic Australia Pty Limited
PO Box 579, Gosford, NSW 2250, Australia

Scholastic New Zealand Limited
Private Bag 94407, Botany, Manukau 2163, New Zealand

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CRYSTAL

Nearly every mineral grows into **crystals** – given enough room, and a lot of time. There are many different crystal shapes. Some crystals look like a bunch of grapes. Others look like pick-up sticks, or chunky building blocks. The shapes of crystals help scientists tell minerals apart.

GEM

Deep underground, a lot of heat and pressure can do amazing things to plain old rock. It can create mineral crystals that are extra hard and clear as glass, and often brightly coloured. These minerals are loved for their beauty. When they're cut and polished, they're known as **gems**.

Gems 101:

Not every gem is made of minerals. Pearls come from oysters, amber forms from fossilized tree resin and ammolite is made from fossilized shells!

Be a Rockhound!

Every rock tells a story. Once you get to know the story of each of the 13 rocks and minerals in this kit, you can start to build your collection!

Mineral shows, museums and gem stores are good places to find new samples, but you can also find and **identify** lots of interesting rocks right in your backyard.

Here are some questions to help you identify a mineral:

- **What colour is it?**
- **How hard is it?**
- **Does light shine through it?**
- **If it's been polished, is it shiny or dull?**
- **If you can see the mineral's crystal shape, what shape is it?**

Then try to learn as much as you can about your sample. Where was it found? How was it formed? How old is it? Write down what you know. Make a label for each sample. You can keep your rocks and minerals in an egg carton, jewellery box or small tackle box.

Tidy up!

When you find a new sample, clean it outdoors. Use water and an old, soft toothbrush.