

Mineral Streak Test

Streak Color for a Few Common Minerals

- * Black - Graphite
- * Black - Pyrite
- * Black - Magnetite
- * Black - Chalcopyrite
- * Gray - Galena
- * Limonite - Yellow-brown
- * Hematite - Red-brown



The red-brown streak of the mineral hematite.

The color of a mineral when it is powdered is called the streak of the mineral. Crushing and powdering a mineral eliminates some of the effects of impurities and structural flaws, and is therefore more diagnostic for some minerals than their color. Streak can be determined for any mineral by crushing it with a hammer, but it is more commonly (and less destructively) obtained by rubbing the mineral across the surface of a hard, unglazed porcelain material called a streak plate.

The color of the powder left behind on the streak plate is the mineral's streak. The streak and color of some minerals are the same. For others, the streak may be quite different from the color, as for example the red-brown streak of hematite, often a gray to silver-gray mineral. The combination of luster, color, and streak may be enough to permit identification of the mineral.

Examples of Streak

