



Rock STARS

 Crystals are the clear, sparkly gems that form when liquid rock inside the earth cools and hardens, or when liquid underground finds its way into cracks and slowly introduces natural chemicals, called minerals. Trillions of tiny building blocks (atoms, molecules and ions) join together and eventually grow into an amazing gem.

Check out our lowdown on some of the world's coolest crystals!



CLEAR QUARTZ

 Crystals get colours from impurities and have names such as tiger's eye and rose quartz. But clear quartz is pure, so it's colourless.


ROCK OUT! Have you ever seen a crystal ball in the movies? They're meant to be made from clear quartz, but the prop ones are probably just man-made glass!

AGATE

 Often found in volcanic rock, agate forms in curved bands of dazzling colours. It has been used for thousands of years to make jewellery, ornaments and even furniture.

ROCK OUT! In ancient times, people believed agate had the power to quench thirst, protect against fevers and even divert storms!


LAPIS LAZULI

 This beautiful blue stone was one of the first gems to be worn as jewellery. It often has gold-coloured flecks in it and is a mix of four different minerals.

ROCK OUT! The ancient Egyptians also used lapis lazuli for carvings and amulets – and even ground it into fine powder to use as make-up!



MALACHITE

 This stone gets its amazing swirly pattern from the copper in it. Its name comes from *mallo*, the Greek word for 'green herb'.


ROCK OUT! Malachite was used to add colour to paint until the 16th century, and is found in ancient Egyptian paintings. Cool!



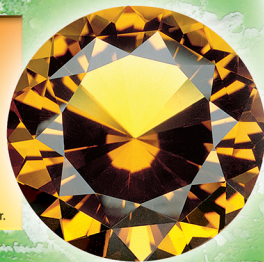
Did you know...

Most crystals were formed millions of years ago. Today, some people believe that precious stones have healing powers!


CITRINE

 Natural citrine is very rare, but when amethyst (another gem) is heated, it becomes citrine. The sunny-looking gem was carried as a lucky charm in ancient times.

ROCK OUT! Citrine is named after the French word for lemon, *citron* (pronounced sit-ron), because of its yellow colour.




MOONSTONE

 This cloudy white gem can have a blue or greenish tint. When light is reflected inside it, moonstone appears to shimmer. Wow!

ROCK OUT! The Romans used this crystal in jewellery and believed the stone was formed from the light of the moon. Imagine that!

JADE

 What people call jade can actually be one of two different gems – nephrite or jadeite. Both jades, which contain different minerals, can be white, green, grey, brown or lavender.

ROCK OUT! Around 600,000 years ago, before the discovery of metals, people shaped jade into tools, like knives and axes.

