

2.4: The Periodic Table

Learning Objectives

- Explain how elements are organized into the periodic table.
- Describe how some characteristics of elements relate to their positions on the periodic table.

In the 19th century, many previously unknown elements were discovered, and scientists noted that certain sets of elements had similar chemical properties. For example, chlorine, bromine, and iodine react with other elements (such as sodium) to make similar compounds. Likewise, lithium, sodium, and potassium react with other elements (such as oxygen) to make similar compounds. Why is this so?

In 1864, Julius Lothar Meyer, a German chemist, organized the elements by atomic mass and grouped them according to their chemical properties. Later that decade, Dmitri Mendeleev, a Russian chemist, organized all the known elements according to similar properties. He left gaps in his table for what he thought were undiscovered elements, and he made some bold predictions regarding the properties of those undiscovered elements. When elements were later discovered whose properties closely matched Mendeleev's predictions, his version of the table gained favor in the scientific community. Because certain properties of the elements repeat on a regular basis throughout the table (that is, they are periodic), it became known as the periodic table.

Mendeleev had to list some elements out of the order of their atomic masses to group them with other elements that had similar properties.

The **periodic table** is one of the cornerstones of chemistry because it organizes all the known elements on the basis of their chemical properties. A modern version is shown in Figure 2.4.1. Most periodic tables provide additional data (such as atomic mass) in a box that contains each element's symbol. The elements are listed in order of atomic number.

Period	Group																18			
1	1												2		18					
1	1 H Hydrogen Nonmetal												2 He Helium Noble Gas		18					
2	3 Li Lithium Alkali Metal		4 Be Beryllium Alkaline Earth												10 Ne Neon Noble Gas					
3	11 Na Sodium Alkali Metal		12 Mg Magnesium Alkaline Earth												17 Cl Chlorine Halogen		18 Ar Argon Noble Gas			
4	19 K Potassium Alkali Metal		20 Ca Calcium Alkaline Earth		21 Sc Scandium Transition Metal	22 Ti Titanium Transition Metal	23 V Vanadium Transition Metal	24 Cr Chromium Transition Metal	25 Mn Manganese Transition Metal	26 Fe Iron Transition Metal	27 Co Cobalt Transition Metal	28 Ni Nickel Transition Metal	29 Cu Copper Transition Metal	30 Zn Zinc Transition Metal	31 Ga Gallium Post-transition Metalloid	32 Ge Germanium Metalloid	33 As Arsenic Metalloid	34 Se Selenium Nonmetal	35 Br Bromine Halogen	36 Kr Krypton Noble Gas
5	37 Rb Rubidium Alkali Metal		38 Sr Strontium Alkaline Earth		39 Y Yttrium Transition Metal	40 Zr Zirconium Transition Metal	41 Nb Niobium Transition Metal	42 Mo Molybdenum Transition Metal	43 Tc Technetium Transition Metal	44 Ru Ruthenium Transition Metal	45 Rh Rhodium Transition Metal	46 Pd Palladium Transition Metal	47 Ag Silver Transition Metal	48 Cd Cadmium Transition Metal	49 In Indium Post-transition Metal	50 Sn Tin Post-transition Metal	51 Sb Antimony Metalloid	52 Te Tellurium Metalloid	53 I Iodine Halogen	54 Xe Xenon Noble Gas
6	55 Cs Cesium Alkali Metal		56 Ba Barium Alkaline Earth		*	72 Hf Hafnium Transition Metal	73 Ta Tantalum Transition Metal	74 W Tungsten Transition Metal	75 Re Rhenium Transition Metal	76 Os Osmium Transition Metal	77 Ir Iridium Transition Metal	78 Pt Platinum Transition Metal	79 Au Gold Transition Metal	80 Hg Mercury Transition Metal	81 Tl Thallium Post-transition Metal	82 Pb Lead Post-transition Metal	83 Bi Bismuth Post-transition Metal	84 Po Polonium Metalloid	85 At Astatine Halogen	86 Rn Radon Noble Gas
7	87 Fr Francium Alkali Metal		88 Ra Radium Alkaline Earth		**	104 Rf Rutherfordium Transition Metal	105 Db Dubnium Transition Metal	106 Sg Seaborgium Transition Metal	107 Bh Bohrium Transition Metal	108 Hs Hassium Transition Metal	109 Mt Meitnerium Transition Metal	110 Ds Darmstadtium Transition Metal	111 Rg Roentgenium Transition Metal	112 Cn Copernicium Transition Metal	113 Nh Nihonium Post-transition Metal	114 Fl Flerovium Post-transition Metal	115 Mc Moscovium Post-transition Metal	116 Lv Livermorium Post-transition Metal	117 Ts Tennessine Halogen	118 Og Oganesson Noble Gas
	*				57 La Lanthanum Lanthanide	58 Ce Cerium Lanthanide	59 Pr Praseodymium Lanthanide	60 Nd Neodymium Lanthanide	61 Pm Promethium Lanthanide	62 Sm Samarium Lanthanide	63 Eu Europium Lanthanide	64 Gd Gadolinium Lanthanide	65 Tb Terbium Lanthanide	66 Dy Dysprosium Lanthanide	67 Ho Holmium Lanthanide	68 Er Erbium Lanthanide	69 Tm Thulium Lanthanide	70 Yb Ytterbium Lanthanide	71 Lu Lutetium Lanthanide	
	**				89 Ac Actinium Actinide	90 Th Thorium Actinide	91 Pa Protactinium Actinide	92 U Uranium Actinide	93 Np Neptunium Actinide	94 Pu Plutonium Actinide	95 Am Americium Actinide	96 Cm Curium Actinide	97 Bk Berkelium Actinide	98 Cf Californium Actinide	99 Es Einsteinium Actinide	100 Fm Fermium Actinide	101 Md Mendelevium Actinide	102 No Nobelium Actinide	103 Lr Lawrencium Actinide	

Figure 2.4.1: Modern Periodic Table. (Public Domain; PubChem modified Leticia Colmenares). An interactive Periodic table can be found [here](#).

Elements that have similar chemical properties are grouped in columns called **groups** (or families). As well as being numbered, some of these groups have names—for example, *alkali metals* (the first column of elements), *alkaline earth metals* (the second

column of elements), *halogens* (the next-to-last column of elements), and *noble gases* (the last column of elements).

Each row of elements on the periodic table is called a **period**. Periods have different lengths; the first period has only 2 elements (hydrogen and helium), while the second and third periods have 8 elements each. The fourth and fifth periods have 18 elements each, and later periods are so long that a segment from each is removed and placed beneath the main body of the table.

Metals, Nonmetals, and Metalloids

Certain elemental properties become apparent in a survey of the periodic table as a whole. Every element can be classified as either a metal, a nonmetal, or a semimetal, as shown in Figure 2.4.2. A metal is a substance that is shiny, typically (but not always) silvery in color, and an excellent conductor of electricity and heat. Metals are also malleable (they can be beaten into thin sheets) and ductile (they can be drawn into thin wires). A nonmetal is typically dull and a poor conductor of electricity and heat. Solid nonmetals are also very brittle. As shown in Figure 2.4.2, **metals** occupy the left three-fourths of the periodic table, while **nonmetals** (except for hydrogen) are clustered in the upper right-hand corner of the periodic table. The elements with properties intermediate between those of metals and nonmetals are called **semimetals** (or **metalloids**). Elements adjacent to the **bold zigzag** line in the right-hand portion of the periodic table have semimetal properties.

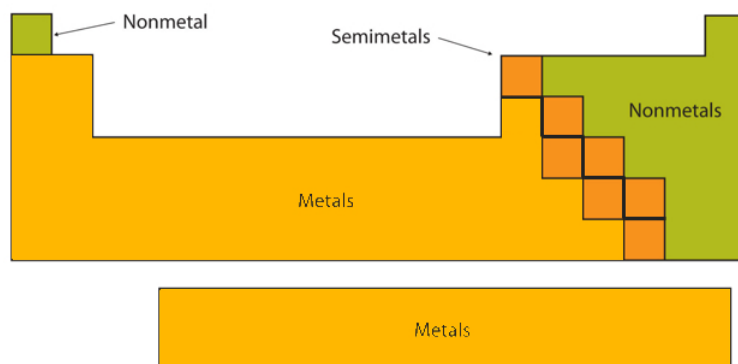


Figure 2.4.2: Types of Elements. Elements are either metals, nonmetals, or semimetals. Each group is located in a different part of the periodic table.

✓ Example 2.4.1

Based on its position in the periodic table, classify each element below as metal, a nonmetal, or a metalloid.

- Se
- Mg
- Ge

Solution

- The atomic number of selenium is 34, which places it in period 4 and group 16. In Figure 2.4.2, selenium lies above and to the right of the diagonal line marking the boundary between metals and nonmetals, so it should be a nonmetal. Note, however, that because selenium is close to the metal-nonmetal dividing line, it would not be surprising if selenium were similar to a semimetal in some of its properties.
- Magnesium lies to the left of the diagonal line marking the boundary between metals and nonmetals, so it should be a metal.
- Germanium lies within the diagonal line marking the boundary between metals and nonmetals, so it should be a metalloid.

? Exercise 2.4.1

Based on its location in the periodic table, do you expect indium (In) to be a nonmetal, a metal, or a semimetal?

Answer

metal

Representative, Transition, and Inner-transition

Another way to categorize the elements of the periodic table is shown in Figure 2.4.3. The first two columns on the left (groups 1 and 2) and the last six columns on the right (groups 13-19) are called the **main group** or **representative** elements. The ten-column block between these columns (groups 3-12) contains the **transition metals**. The two rows beneath the main body of the periodic table contain the **inner transition metals**. The elements in these two rows are also referred to as, respectively, the lanthanide metals and the actinide metals.

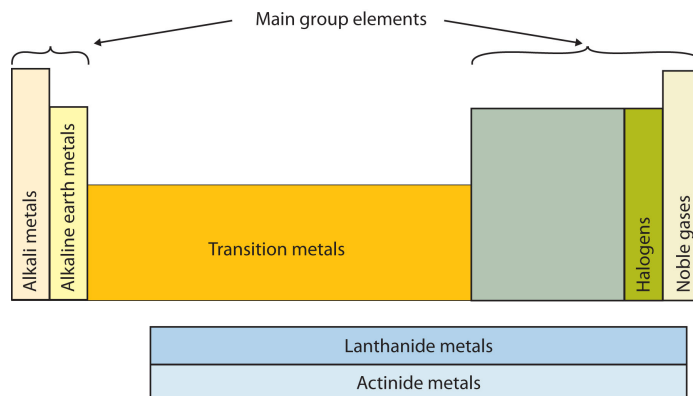


Figure 2.4.3: Special Names for Sections of the Periodic Table. Some sections of the periodic table have special names. The elements lithium, sodium, potassium, rubidium, cesium, and francium are collectively known as alkali metals.

To Your Health: Transition Metals in the Body

Most of the elemental composition of the human body consists of main group elements. The most abundant non-main group element is iron, at 0.006 percentage by mass. Because iron has relatively massive atoms, it would appear even lower on a list organized in terms of percent by *atoms* rather than percent by mass.

Iron is a transition metal and the chemistry of iron makes it a key component in the proper functioning of red blood cells.

Red blood cells are cells that transport oxygen from the lungs to cells of the body and then transport carbon dioxide from the cells to the lungs. Without red blood cells, animal respiration as we know it would not exist. The critical part of the red blood cell is a protein called *hemoglobin*. Hemoglobin combines with oxygen and carbon dioxide, transporting these gases from one location to another in the body. Hemoglobin is a relatively large molecule, with a mass of about 65,000 u.

The crucial atom in the hemoglobin protein is iron. Each hemoglobin molecule has four iron atoms, which act as binding sites for oxygen. It is the presence of this particular transition metal in your red blood cells that allows you to use the oxygen you inhale.

Other transition metals have important functions in the body, despite being present in low amounts. Zinc is needed for the body's immune system to function properly, as well as for protein synthesis and tissue and cell growth. Copper is also needed for several proteins to function properly in the body. Manganese is needed for the body to metabolize oxygen properly. Cobalt is a necessary component of vitamin B-12, a vital nutrient. These last three metals are present in the body in very small quantities. However, even these small quantities are required for the body to function properly.

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