

Family Activities

Mined or Grown?

Everything we use in our lives today has been made from a material that has either been grown or mined. Using objects in your house, help your child to identify which is which. It will be easier to start with the products that have been grown – EVERYTHING else has been mined. Remind them too that most objects are made from multiple products.

Grown Materials

The materials we use from grown products include more than just fruit and veg! It includes anything that comes from plants or animals. Grown materials are easier to identify as we're more familiar with living things than we are with minerals. Sometimes it's an obvious material – like wool from a sheep – but not always. Quite often, it is parts of the plant or animal that are treated to make it useable.

Here are some examples....

Grown Materials	Objects
Fruit, vegetables	Food
Animal skin	Leather, real fur
Trees (cellulose)	Paper, toilet paper
Trees (wood)	Furniture, pencils
Cotton	Clothes / linen
Jute / choir	Mats, sacking
Silk	Clothes
Bamboo	Garden stakes
Cork	Notice boards, bottle corks
Wool	Clothes, upholstery
Latex / rubber	Erasers, gloves, tires (note, over 50% of rubber today is synthetic rubber)

Mined Materials

Mined materials come from many, many different minerals found in the Earth's crust. Metals are chemically extracted from the minerals they are found in. For example, copper comes from the mineral called chalcopyrite which is copper sulphide – a chemical mixture of copper and sulphur. But it's not only metals that are useful. Minerals have different properties that make them useful in everything from medicine to electronics to making plastics.

Here are some examples...

Mined Materials	Objects
Quartz	Glass, anticoagulant in some milk powder/drinking chocolate (look under ingredients for 'silicon dioxide')
Mica	Makeup (add sparkle) (look under ingredients for 'mica')
Chalcopyrite (copper)	Pipes, wires
Galena (lead)	Batteries
Hematite (iron)	Steel
Sulphur	Matches
Bauxite (aluminum)	Pop cans
Talc	Baby powder
Feldspar	Ceramic glazes
Clay	Ceramics, crockery
Petroleum (oil)	Plastics
Chromite (chromium)	Chrome plating
Graphite	Pencil 'lead'
Gold	Jewellery, electronics
Wolframite (tungsten)	Light bulb filaments
Halite (salt)	Table salt, grit (de-icing)
Calcite (calcium carbonate)	Ant-acids
Fluorite	Toothpaste