

Year 8 – Matter Glossary

Key term	Definition
alkali metals	The elements in the left column of the Periodic Table including lithium, sodium, and potassium. Also called Group 1.
atom	The smallest part of an element that can exist.
chemical formula	A formula that shows the elements present in a compound and their relative proportions.
chemical properties	Features of the way a substance reacts with other substances.
chemical symbol	A one- or two-letter code for an element that is used by scientists in all countries.
compound	Pure substances made up of atoms of two or more elements, strongly joined together.
element(s)	Substances that all other materials are made up of, and which contain only one type of atom. An element cannot be broken down into other substances.
group	A column of the Periodic Table. The elements in a group have similar properties.
Group 0	Group 0 is on the right side of the Periodic Table. Group 0 elements include helium, neon, argon, and krypton. Also called the noble gases.
Group 1	The elements in the left column of the Periodic Table, including lithium, sodium, and potassium. Also called the alkali metals.
Group 7	Group 7 is second from the right of the Periodic Table. Group 7 elements include fluorine, chlorine, bromine, and iodine. Also known as the halogens.
halogen	The name for elements in the group that is second from the right of the Periodic Table. Halogens include fluorine, chlorine, bromine, and iodine. Also known as the Group 7 elements.
molecule	A group of two or more (up to thousands) atoms strongly joined together. Most non-metal elements exist either as small or giant molecules.
natural polymer	A polymer made by plants or animals. Examples include starch, wool, cotton, and rubber.

noble gases	The name for elements in the group on the right of the Periodic Table. Noble gases include helium, neon, argon, and krypton. Also known as the Group 0 elements.
period	A row of the Periodic Table. There are trends in the properties of the elements across a period.
Periodic table	A table which shows all the elements arranged in columns and rows. Elements with similar properties are grouped together.
physical properties	Features of a substance that can be observed without changing the substance itself.
polymer	A molecule made by joining up thousands of smaller molecules in a repeating pattern. Plastics are synthetic polymers, and starch is a natural polymer.
synthetic polymer	A polymer made by people, often in a factory. Examples include poly(ethene) and poly(propene).
trend	A pattern in properties, such as an increase or decrease.
unreactive	Elements that take part in few chemical reactions are unreactive.