

science weekly™

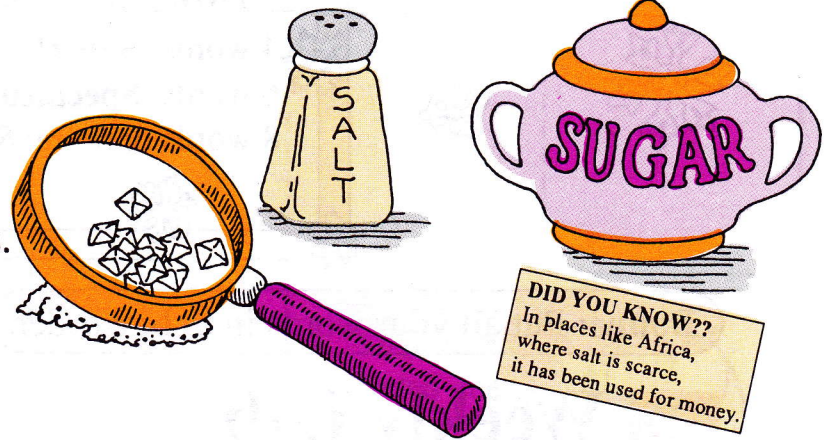
"Put a little science in your week"

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Crystals

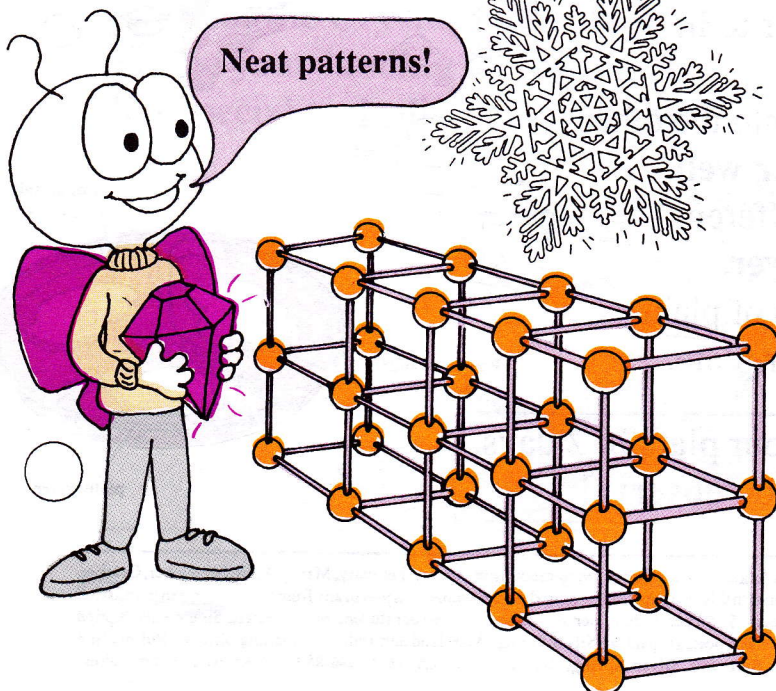
LEVEL C

What do diamonds, snowflakes, and salt all have in common? They are all **crystals**. Crystals are all around us. They are usually very, very small. Crystals come in many different shapes. Some are shaped like stars. Others may look like tiny boxes or pointy **spikes**. Some crystals **sparkle**, like diamonds and rubies.



Crystals are beautiful on the outside. They are also very special on the inside. Like everything else in the world, crystals are made of tiny, tiny parts called **molecules**. If you could divide something into smaller and smaller pieces, you would finally end up with a molecule.

Crystals can be made up of **millions** of these molecules. Most molecules are way too small to see even with a **microscope**. So why are the molecules in crystals so special? It's because they always line up in neat and tidy rows. They do this over and over and over. These neat **patterns** are what give crystals their special shapes.



Diamonds are beautiful crystals. They are also the **hardest material** in the world. In fact, diamonds are so hard they are sometimes used as cutting tools. They can cut through rock, metal, and even other crystals. Crystals help us do many jobs. Crystals are an important part of radios, TVs, computers, and other **electronic** machines. You will even find crystals in most watches. You use crystals all the time, without even knowing it!