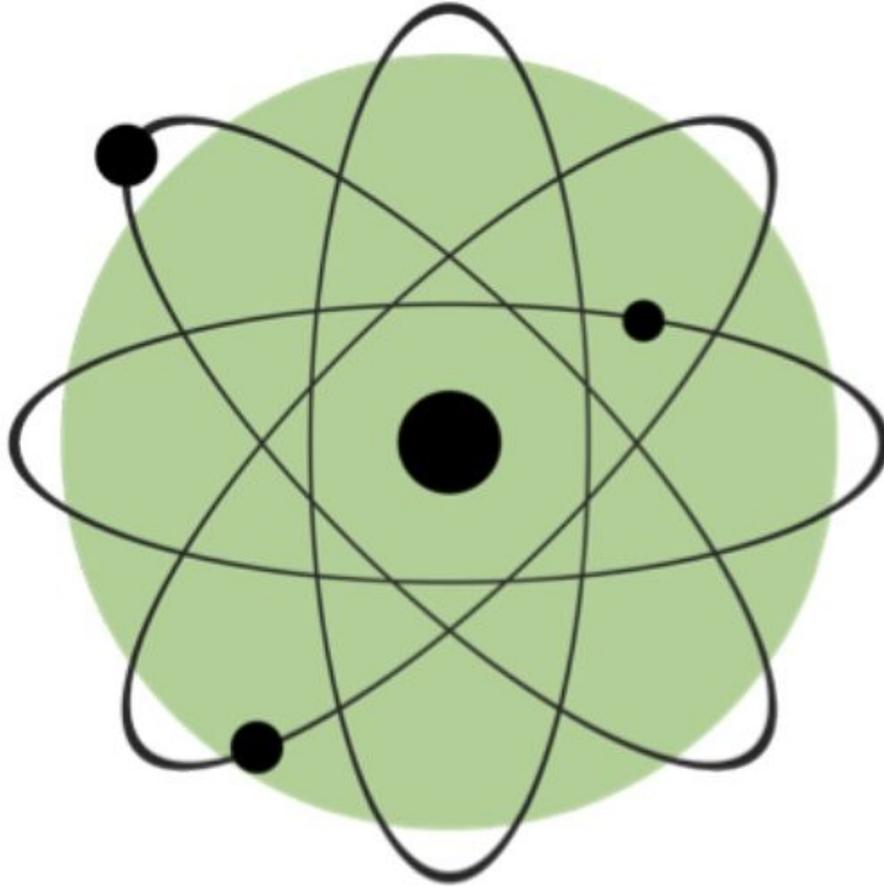


# Matter Is Everywhere!

by ReadWorks



Everything around us is made of matter—your clothes, the trees, even the water you drink! We divide matter into four major categories, which are called the four states of matter: liquid, gaseous, solid, and plasma. However, we will focus on the first three. Whatever the state of matter may be, all matter is made of tiny particles called atoms. These particles are too tiny to see with the naked eye; they're even too small to see with a regular microscope. If you line up a million atoms next to each other, they will be as thick as a single piece of human hair. So, we can only look at atoms through very powerful tools, one of them being the "scanning tunneling" microscope.

## How Do We Know?

We can easily see liquids and solids around us, but most gases aren't visible. We can't see the air around us, but it is still made of atoms that constantly move around freely in space. How can we tell?

Take a balloon, for example. When we pump air into a balloon, it visibly inflates. That means that gaseous matter is filling the balloon and taking up space. The more air we blow into the balloon, the bigger it gets.

Therefore, we can observe the way gas moves around space. In the same way, inflatable pool toys also fill with air so that they can float on water. When we fill the plastic shells with air, the toys take shape. Since air is lighter than water, the pool toys can rest on the water without sinking. And then we can enjoy a sunny day while floating in a pool!

## Moving Atoms

Atoms are constantly moving. However, atoms move at different speeds within different states of matter. Atoms move more slowly when they are more densely packed. Atoms in solids are usually tightly packed and have less space to move around freely. This means that atoms in most solids move more slowly than atoms in most liquids. The atoms in gas usually move the fastest. Since the atoms usually move more freely in liquids and gases, they can undergo a process called diffusion. (Solids can diffuse as well, although it's a much longer process.) Diffusion is the movement of particles from a higher concentration to a lower concentration. That's why, when you spray perfume in a corner of a room, you will eventually smell it on the other side of the room. The atoms from the perfume diffuse through the air. Because of this diffusion, the perfume scent is spread.

## Identification

We can identify materials according to a variety of properties. Scientists have determined several different measurements to help label materials. Some examples are temperature, hardness, color and length. Usually, these are used to measure solids, like rocks and minerals. However, temperature can be used to measure liquids as well. When geologists study rocks, they often use the Mohs scale of mineral hardness. This scale allows us to characterize the scratch resistance of various minerals. A diamond is described as hard because it is extremely difficult to scratch. Scientists can measure hardness with the Mohs scale and compare minerals to other minerals.

Scientists always use various methods to group materials together-that way, it's easier to study and compare them. That's another reason why we differentiate between liquids, gases, solids and plasmas!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Everything around us is made of
  - A. liquids
  - B. matter
  - C. plasma
  - D. gas
  
2. Why does the author describe the balloon and inflatable pool toys filling up with air?
  - A. in order to explain that it is impossible to observe the way gas moves around space
  - B. in order to explain that air is not made of atoms that take up space
  - C. in order to explain that air is made of atoms that take up space even though air is invisible
  - D. in order to prove that these are fun objects to inflate
  
3. Usually, atoms move slower in solids than they do in liquids. Which evidence from the passage best supports this statement?
  - A. Solids, liquids, and gases can all undergo the process of diffusion.
  - B. Diffusion is the movement of particles from a higher concentration to a lower concentration.
  - C. The atoms in gas move the fastest.
  - D. Atoms in solids are often more tightly packed than atoms in liquids, and have less space to move around freely.
  
4. Based on the passage, the corner where a perfume is initially sprayed has
  - A. has no concentration of perfume particles
  - B. has the same concentration of perfume particles as the rest of the room
  - C. a lower concentration of perfume particles than the other corners of the room
  - D. a higher concentration of perfume particles than the other corners of the room

5. What is this passage mainly about?

- A. matter and the properties it has in certain states
- B. the process of diffusion
- C. the different measurement scientists use to label materials
- D. the inflation of balloons and pool toys

6. Read the following sentences from the passage: "Whatever the state of matter may be, all matter is made of tiny particles called atoms. These particles are too tiny to see with the naked eye; they're even too small to see with a regular microscope. If you line up a million atoms next to each other, they will be as thick as **a single piece of human hair.**"

The author uses the example of "**a single piece of human hair**" to illustrate

- A. how atoms can be seen with a regular microscope
- B. how tiny atoms actually are
- C. how hairy atoms actually are
- D. how much they look like hair

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Scientists group materials together \_\_\_\_\_ it is easier to compare and study them that way.

- A. however
- B. but
- C. although
- D. because

**8.** Explain why atoms move at different speeds depending on whether they are in liquids or solids.

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**9.** What is diffusion?

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**10.** Explain whether smoke filling up a room is diffusion or not.

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