

Vocabulary



charge a property of matter

Matter can have a positive charge, a negative charge, or no charge. Matter has a positive charge when it loses electrons, leaving it with more positive than negative particles. Matter has a negative charge when it gains electrons, leaving it with more negative than positive particles. Charged matter attracts other matter that has an opposite charge. Charged matter repels other matter that has a like charge.

electron a negatively charged particle that surrounds the nucleus of an atom

When objects touch, one material can give up electrons to another. When an object gives up electrons it gains an overall positive charge.

neutral having neither a positive or negative charge

Atoms are usually neutral because they have equal numbers of protons (positively charged particles) and electrons (negatively charged particles). Objects that do not have a buildup of positive or negative charges are also neutral.

static electricity the buildup of charges on an object

Static electricity occurs when electrons move from one object to another. This leaves a buildup of charges on the surface of both objects.