

Vocabulary



atomic number the number of protons contained in an atom of an element
An atom of iron contains 26 protons, so the atomic number of iron is 26. Atomic number is used in identifying atoms.

element a pure substance made of only one type of atom
Copper, helium, calcium, and neon are all types of elements. Each element is made up of one kind of atom. A copper atom is different from a gold atom.

group a column on the periodic table
The elements in a group on the periodic table have similar properties. For example, fluorine and chlorine are in the same group. Both elements tend to react with the same elements and are gases at room temperature.

period a row on the periodic table
Elements in a period on the periodic table change in properties as you go across the row from left to right. But when you reach the end of a row and start the next row, the properties of the elements start over in a pattern like the row above it.

periodic table of the elements a chart that shows all the elements arranged by atomic number and by properties
The periodic table was developed by the Russian chemist Dmitri Mendeleev. The chart shows all the known elements on Earth. The elements are arranged according to their atomic numbers and their properties.