

Critical Minerals for a Thriving Society

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Critical minerals are found within many technologies people rely on, such as smartphones, medical devices, renewable energy systems, electric vehicles, and more. Of the many minerals used in modern products, about 60 are considered critical because they are essential to society and may be at risk of limited supply.

Geoscientists are at the center of the work done to discover mineral resources, including critical minerals and others. They study how minerals form, and guide how they are mined, processed, and used. Because each step interacts with Earth systems, scientists and engineers work to reduce environmental impacts while still supporting the materials needed for modern life.

As you explore this poster, consider where critical minerals come from and why not every mineral deposit is mined. Think about the waste and byproducts created at each stage of a mineral's life cycle and what happens to valuable materials when products are discarded instead of reused or recycled.



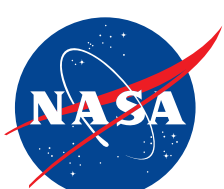
For more questions, activities, and resources related to this poster and Earth Science Week, visit www.earthsciweek.org/resources/2026.



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