



Rocks

Coal

Type:

Sedimentary; organic.

Texture/Appearance:

Peat is a brownish, matted variety of coal consisting of partly decomposed plant remains seen as visible vegetable matter. *Lignite* is a darker, more compact variety with partially decayed plant fragments. *Bituminous coal* is a dark brown to black layered rock with dull, pitchy or vitreous luster. Density and hardness increase from peat to lignite to bituminous coal.

Color:

Velvet black to dark brown.

Mineralogy/Chemistry:

Readily combustible carbonaceous rock with a carbon content ranging from 60% in peat, 70% in lignite and 80% in bituminous coal. Minor amts. of clay, quartz, calcite and sulfides may also be present and are usually referred to as "ash content".

Occurrence/Use:

Form by the accumulation, compaction and indurations of organic plant remains typically found in ancient swamps and inland lake basins. Often found associated with shales and sandstones. Vast coal deposits are mined in the Appalachians and western U.S. as well as Europe. All varieties can be used as fuels. Bituminous coal is also used to make coke.