

CHEMICAL SYMBOLS

LI: To understand and memorise the chemical symbols of elements.

SC: I can...

S - Recognise and identify the chemical symbols of at least 10 common elements.

D - Match the chemical symbols with their corresponding element names.

T - Show an understanding of the periodic table and its organisation of elements based on their chemical symbols.

All elements on the periodic table have names. As scientists, we use symbols when we write them instead of using their entire name. For example, Oxygen is 'O'. Find the elements in the chart below and write their chemical symbol in the column to the right.

Element	Symbol	Element	Symbol
Hydrogen		Mercury	
Nitrogen		Neon	
Gold		Magnesium	
Carbon		Nickel	
Argon		Calcium	

As you may have noticed, Carbon and Calcium both start with a 'C'. We can't have two symbols identical so they both can't be 'C' for their symbol. We usually go to the 2nd letter for one of them and use it in lowercase form. Therefore, Calcium is 'Ca'.

Sometimes we don't use the 2nd letter and we use a different letter in the name. For example, Zinc with Zn.

Lastly, not all symbols come from their names on the periodic table. Did you notice that Gold was not 'G' or 'Go'. Or that Mercury was not 'M' or 'Me'. These elements along with a few others get their symbol from Latin names. In Latin, Gold is Aurum, the symbol is 'Au'. In Latin, Mercury is Hydrargyrum (means liquid gold), thus its symbol is Hg.

Rule: 1st letter is always a capital letter, the next is always a lower case letter.

For each element, circle the correct symbol.

- 1) Chemical symbols are usually one or two letters long, but sometimes three letters are used.
- 2) Every chemical symbol starts with a CAPITAL letter, with the second or third letters written in lowercase.

For example:

Magnesium	Mg	mg	mG	MG
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Element				
Barium	Ba	BA	bA	ba
Gold	AU	Au	aU	Au
Nitrogen	N	n	Nitro	nitRO
Neon	ne	Ne	NE	nE
Carbon	C	c	CARBON	Carbo
Bromine	BR	Br	bR	br
Copper	Cu	CU	cu	cU
Iron	IRON	Fe	fE	IRo
Ununnilium	uun	uUn	Uun	UuN
Ununbium	Uub	uuB	uUB	UUb

Match the elements to their symbols.

Cobalt
Magnesium
Potassium
Boron
Fluorine
Beryllium

B
F
Mg
Co
Be
K