

Mohs Hardness Field Card

A scratch-resistance reference, not a stand-alone mineral identification.

01 THE REFERENCE SCALE

1	Talc
2	Gypsum
3	Calcite
4	Fluorite
5	Apatite
6	Orthoclase
7	Quartz
8	Topaz
9	Corundum
10	Diamond

Numbers rank resistance to scratching.
The intervals are not equal.

02 TEST, THEN RECORD

1. Choose your surface

Use a clean, accessible mineral grain and an identified reference. Note the grain tested; a rock may contain several minerals.

2. Compare both ways

Try a short scratch, then reverse the comparison where practical. Wipe residue with a damp cloth; inspect for a lasting groove with a hand lens.

3. Keep the result provisional

The material making a groove is at least as hard as the surface it scratches. Use known references to bracket the result. Record unclear results as inconclusive; use other ID clues too.

03 AVOID FALSE CERTAINTY

Rough comparisons: fingernail about 2.5; window glass often about 5.5 (GIA: 5-6). Coins and blades are not calibrated standards. A glass scratch does not identify diamond. Hardness is not toughness.

Before testing: obtain permission; scratches cause damage. Use a stable surface and eye protection, with adult supervision for children. Avoid sharp glass and fibrous, dusty, or potentially hazardous samples. Do not hammer or grind a specimen for this test.

04 YOUR OBSERVATIONS

Specimen / grain: _____ Place / date: _____

Reference used: _____ Sample scratches reference? _____

Reference scratches sample? _____ Range / uncertainty: _____

Sources checked 2026-09-23: NPS - Mohs scale; MSA - hardness method; GIA - durability; GIA - glass test.