

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](#).

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