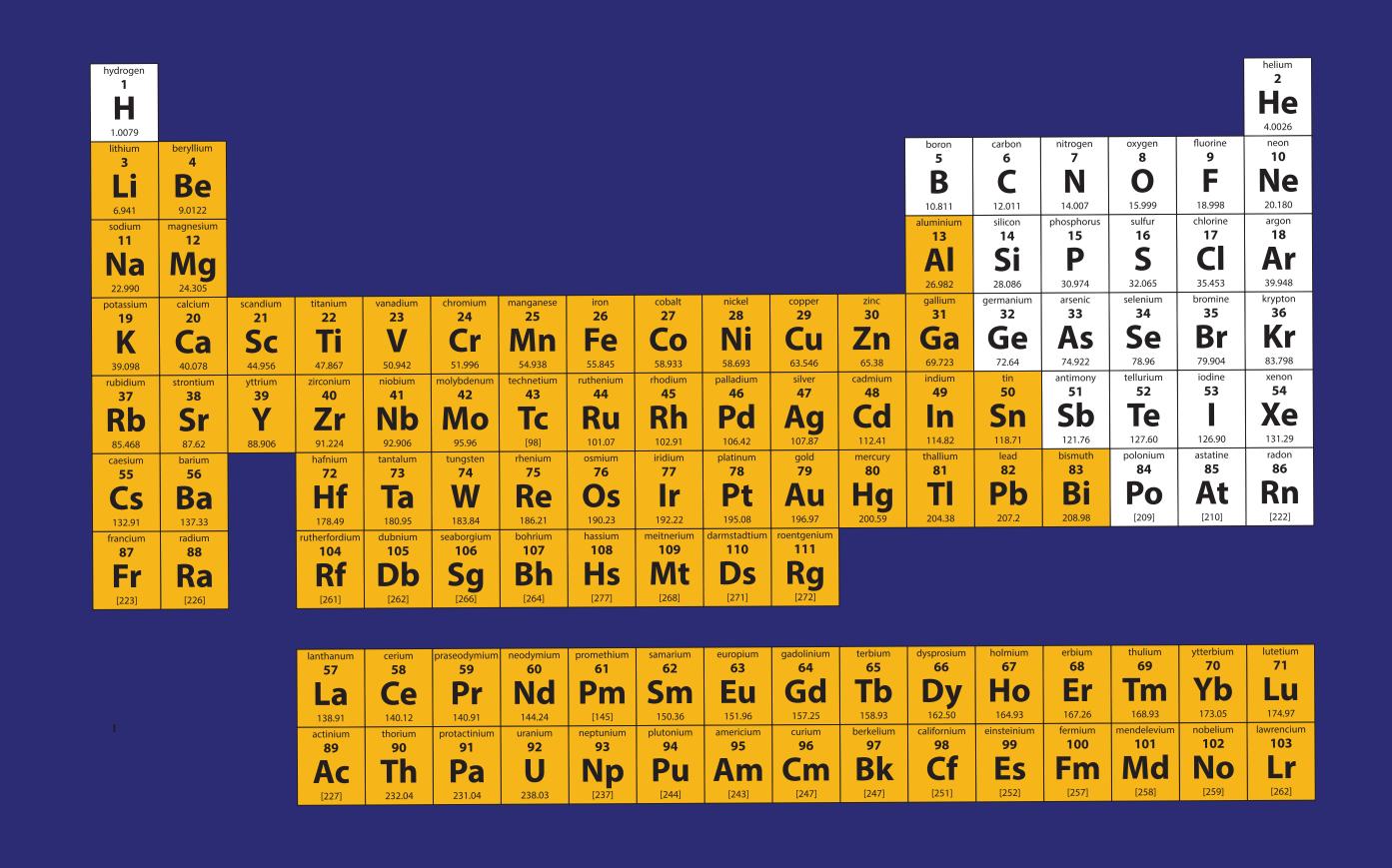
THE MATTER OF METAL



The question "what is a metal?" is obviously important! In chemistry, they are a broad category. In fact, most of the elements in the periodic table are metals! (The metallic elements are coloured in yellow).

This means that a lot more things contain metals (or their compounds) than you might think! Calcium, for example, the stuff in milk that helps your bones grow stronger, is a metal. Sodium and potassium are also metals, though (like calcium) they are rarely seen in their metallic form. They react so violently with water that they must be stored in special oil to prevent them burning away!. Nevertheless, they share all of the key features of metallic elements:





Metals are MALLEABLE, which means they can be hammered or pressed into shape without breaking or cracking. They are CONDUCTIVE to electricity and heat. Another important fact about most of the metals that we encounter on a daily basis, is that they are HARD and SHINY. These means that metals are not only be useful for many different jobs, but they are also very attractive. In the past, just like now, glittering jewellery and sharp tools were good ways to get noticed!