FIGURE 16 Some noble gases are used to make lighted signs of various colors.

is an element that has some characteristics of metals and some characteristics of nonmetals. All metalloids are solids at room temperature. They tend to be less malleable than metals but not as brittle as nonmetals. Some metalloids, such as antimony, have a somewhat metallic luster.

Metalloids tend to be semiconductors of electricity. That is, their ability to conduct electricity is intermediate between that of metals and that of nonmetals. Metalloids are used in the solid state circuitry found in desktop computers, digital watches, televisions, and radios.

Noble Gases

The elements in Group 18 of the periodic table are the noble gases. These elements are generally unreactive. In fact, it was not until 1962 that the first noble gas compound, xenon hexafluoroplatinate, was prepared. Low reactivity makes the noble gases very different from the other families of elements. Group 18 elements are gases at room temperature. Neon, argon, krypton, and xenon are all used in lighting. Helium is used in party balloons and weather balloons because it is less dense than air.

SECTION REVIEW

1. Use the periodic table to write the names for the following elements: O, S, Cu, Ag.
2. Use the periodic table to write the symbols for the following elements: iron, nitrogen, calcium, mercury.
3. Which elements are most likely to undergo the same kinds of reactions, those in a group or those in a period?
4. Describe the main differences between metals, nonmetals, and metalloids.

Critical Thinking

5. **INFERRING CONCLUSIONS** If you find an element in nature in its pure elemental state, what can you infer about the element's chemical reactivity? How can you tell whether that element is a metal or a nonmetal?