

DIAMONDS

Some of the earliest diamonds known came from India. In the 18th century they were found in Brazil, and in 1866, huge deposits were found near Kimberly in South Africa. The evidence of extensive diamond deposits has recently been found in Siberia, the continent of Africa still produces nearly all the world's supply of these stones.

The most valuable diamonds are large individual crystals of pure crystalline carbon. Less perfect forms known as 'boart' and 'carbonado' are clusters of tiny crystals. Until diamonds are cut and polished, they do not sparkle like those you see on a ring - they just look like small, blue grey stones.

In a rather crude form, the cutting and polishing of precious stones was an art known to the Ancient Egyptians, and in the middle ages it became widespread in North East Europe. However, a revolutionary change in the methods of cutting and polishing was made in 1476 when Ludwig Van Berquen of Bruges in Belgium invented the use of a swiftly revolving wheel with its edge faced with fine diamond powder. The name 'boart' is given to this fine powder as well as the natural crystalline material already mentioned. It is also given to badly flawed or broken diamond crystals, useless as jewels that are broken into powder for grinding purposes, the so-called 'industrial' diamonds.

Diamond itself is the only material hard enough to cut and polish diamonds - though recently, high intensity light beams called lasers have been developed which can bore holes in them. It may be necessary to split or cleave the large stones before they are cut and polished. Every diamond has a natural line of cleavage, along which it may be split by a sharp blow with a cutting edge.

A fully cut brilliant diamond has 58 facets, or faces, regularly arranged. For cutting or faceting, the stones are fixed into copper holders and held against a wheel, edged with a mixture of oil and fine diamond dust, which revolves at about 2500 revolutions a minute. Amsterdam and Antwerp, in Holland and Belgium respectively, have been the center of the diamond cutting and polishing industry for over 7 centuries.

The jewel value of brilliant diamonds depends greatly on their colour, or 'water' as it is called. The usual colors of diamonds are white, yellow, brown, green or blue-white; the blue-white brilliants are the stones of the 'finest water' and so command the highest prices. During their formation, some diamonds absorb metallic oxides from the surrounding rocks and take on their colour. Thus black, red and even bright pink diamonds have occasionally been found.

The trade in diamonds is not only in the valuable gem stones but also in the industrial' diamonds mentioned above. Zaire produces 70% of such stones. They are fixed into the rock drills used in mining and civil engineering, also for edging band saws for cutting stone. Diamond faced tools are used for cutting and drilling glass and fine porcelain, and for dentists' drills. They are used as bearings in watches and other finely balanced instruments. Perhaps you own some diamonds without knowing it - in your wristwatch.

Select the answer which is more accurate according to the information given in the passage.

1. Since 1866
 - a. Most of the world's diamonds have come from Siberia
 - b. huge deposits of diamonds were found near Kimberly in South Africa
 - c. Africa has produced nearly all the world's diamonds
 - d. Diamonds have been discovered in most parts of the world
2. Carbonado is the name given to
 - a. Only the very best diamonds
 - b. Lumps of pure carbon
 - c. Spanish diamonds
 - d. clusters of tiny crystals
3. The art of cutting and polishing precious stones remained crude until
 - a. The 14th century
 - b. The 15th century
 - c. The 16th century
 - d. The 17th century
4. During faceting, diamonds are held in copper holders
 - a. To facilitate accurate cutting
 - b. To make them shine more brilliantly
 - c. So that they can revolve more easily
 - d. As a steel holder might damage the diamond
5. Diamonds are
 - a. White, yellow, brown, green or blue-white
 - b. All the same colour
 - c. Either blue or white
 - d. Different colors depending on which the rocks they come from
6. Zaire produces
 - a. 70% of all the diamonds sold
 - b. 70% of the industrial diamonds sold

- c. 70% of all the precious stones sold
- d. 70% of the world's blue-white diamonds

Find the following words in the passage (the words have been underlined) and select the meaning you think is most likely to correspond among the choices given

7. Crude

- a. Rough
- b. Uncultured
- c. Simple
- d. Uneducated

8. Flawed

- a. Perfectly formed
- b. Liquid
- c. Badly finished
- d. Dropped to the ground

9. Cleave

- a. Move
- b. Clip together
- c. Break
- d. Cut with sharp knife

10. Fine

- a. High quality
- b. Soft
- c. Okay
- d. Payment