Module B. Colour from the Cosmos

Lesson 12: Colour, Light and Optics 1

Isotropic Minerals

Recall from previous lessons that some minerals belong to the isometric crystal system and others to the monoclinic, triclinic, orthorhombic, tetragonal, and hexagonal crystal systems. Minerals that belong to the isometric system are also isotropic minerals because they have only one refractive index that is applicable in all 3-dimensional orientations. Examples of isotropic minerals with a single refractive index are diamond (*n*=2.419) and spinel (*n*=1.725). Material from all crystal systems other than isometric show more than one refractive index and are termed anisotropic.