Coal may be broadly grouped into two major categories—steam coal and metal-

lurgical coal. This discussion is concerned mostly with the former, or that used

mainly for the production of steam in boilers. Practically all the coals used in the

production of metallurgical coke are of the bituminous rank. The bituminous

coals have caking or coking (agglomerating) characteristics; that is, they become

plastic or semiplastic when heated in the absence of air, which makes them ame-

nable for use in coal blends for coke. Bituminous coals that, have excessive

amounts of sulfur or ash for coke production are classified as stCttm coals.