

*** Name Origin:**

Latin: Latin: silex (flint).

*** Sources:**

Silicon is the second most abundant element and comprises 25% of the earth's crust. Makes up major portion of clay, granite, quartz (SiO_2), and sand.

*** Uses:**

Used in glass as silicon dioxide (SiO_2). It is used as a semiconductor to make microchips for electronics (like your computer). Silicon is also used in solar cells, tools, cement, grease and oils.

*** Additional Notes:**

Davy in 1800 thought silica to be a compound and not an element; later in 1811, Gay Lussac and Thenard probably prepared impure amorphous silicon by heating potassium with silicon tetrafluoride. Berzelius, generally credited with the discovery, in 1824 succeeded in preparing amorphous silicon by the same general method as used earlier, but he purified the product by removing the fluosilicates by repeated washings. Deville in 1854 first prepared crystalline silicon, the second allotropic form of the element. Silicon is present in the sun and stars and is a principal component of a class of meteorites known as "aerolites". It is also a component of tektites, a natural glass of uncertain origin. Natural silicon contains three isotopes. Fourteen other radioactive isotopes are recognized. Silicon makes up 25.7% of the earth's crust, by weight, and is the second most abundant element, being exceeded only by oxygen. Silicon is not found free in nature, but occurs chiefly as the oxide and as silicates. Sand, quartz, rock crystal, amethyst, agate, flint, jasper, and opal are some of the forms in which the oxide appears. Granite, hornblende, asbestos, feldspar, clay mica, etc. are but a few of the numerous silicate minerals. Silicon is prepared commercially by heating silica and carbon in an electric furnace, using carbon electrodes. Several other methods can be used for preparing the element. Amorphous silicon can be prepared as a brown powder, which can be easily melted or vaporized. Crystalline silicon has a metallic luster and grayish color. The Czochralski process is commonly used to produce single crystals of silicon used for solid-state or semiconductor devices. Hyperpure silicon can be prepared by the thermal decomposition of ultra-pure trichlorosilane in a hydrogen atmosphere, and by a vacuum float zone process. This product can be doped with boron, gallium, phosphorus, or arsenic to produce silicon for use in transistors, solar cells, rectifiers, and other solid-state devices which are used extensively in the electronics and space-age industries. Hydrogenated amorphous silicon has shown promise in producing economical cells for converting solar energy into electricity. Silicon is a relatively inert element, but it is attacked by halogens and dilute alkali. Most acids except hydrofluoric, do not affect it. Silicones are important products of silicon. They may be prepared by hydrolyzing a silicon organic chloride, such as dimethyl silicon chloride. Hydrolysis and condensation of various substituted chlorosilanes can be used to produce a very great number of polymeric products, or silicones, ranging from liquids to hard, glasslike solids with many useful properties. Elemental silicon transmits more than 95% of all wavelengths of infrared, from 1.3 to 6.7 mm. Silicon is one of man's most useful

elements. In the form of sand and clay it is used to make concrete and brick; it is a useful refractory material for high-temperature work, and in the form of silicates it is used in making enamels, pottery, etc. Silica, as sand, is a principal ingredient of glass, one of the most inexpensive of materials with excellent mechanical, optical, thermal, and electrical properties. Glass can be made in a very great variety of shapes, and is used as containers, window glass, insulators, and thousands of other uses. Silicon tetrachloride can be used to iridize glass. Silicon is important in plant and animal life. Diatoms in both fresh and salt water extract silica from the water to build up their cell walls. Silica is present in ashes of plants and in the human skeleton. Silicon is an important ingredient in steel; silicon carbide is one of the most important abrasives and has been used in lasers to produce coherent light of 4560 Å. Miners, stonecutters, and other engaged in work where siliceous dust is breathed in large quantities often develop a serious lung disease known as silicosis. Silicon carbide (SiC) is one of the hardest substances known.