Everyone loves sports and that is the talk of the town. Knowing the winner is a great asset, because that is a great ice breaker in a conversation. Knowing it makes you a person fun to be with.

Chemical trivialities are also ice breakers and fun things to talk about. You attract attention for being knowledgeable about chemical elements. These trivialities are zests of life.

Skills to Develop

- Tell some trivialities of the chemical elements.

Zests of Chemical Elements

The first known element, dirt (chemical symbol $\text{De}$), was characterized by Zog the Neanderthal somewhere in southern Europe before fire was invented. The second known element, rock (chemical symbol $\text{Rk}$) was discovered soon after.

The two most abundant elements in the Earth's crust are oxygen and silicon, which can be found, for example, in sand ($\text{SiO}_2$). Aluminum and iron are the next two most abundant elements.

The only element that was named after a LIVING person was Seaborgium. Because he was still alive (and they could prove it), the international committee debated for some time whether to name it after him.

The element with the highest boiling point 5930 K, tungsten was used for the filament of light bulbs by Edison. The one with the lowest boiling point is helium and not the lightest element hydrogen, since a hydrogen gas consists of $\text{H}_2$ molecules.

In principle, a bar of phosphorus may be used as a thermometer, because of its greatest linear thermal expansion. However, it is not reliable. Besides, it may ignite spontaneously in air.

Why do diamonds stay in a diamond ring? They have the smallest known thermal expansion coefficient.

Of all elements in solid state, the densest element is osmium (22.6 g/mL), not gold. Iridium is next (22.42), followed by platinum, rhenium, neptunium, plutonium and gold.

In terms of electric conductivity, the coinage metals are the best: silver, copper and gold so ordered, with aluminium in line as the next best. Alkali metals are good conductors, but they are not stable in air.

A light element with atomic number 43 does not naturally exist. In fact, the name of technetium is derived from the Greek word, *technikos*, which means artificial.

Late in its discovery is francium, an alkali metal which is highly reactive. All its isotopes are radioactive.

The shortest name of the elements is tin, $\text{Sn}$. This is one of the rare names for metal that does not end with "ium". The longest names are protactinium and praseodymium, both 12 letters long.
The melting point of gallium is 302 K (29°C). This element is a solid at room temperature, but in a room in the tropic climate, it is a liquid. It also melts in your hand (body temperature 310 K).

It's fun to read these little facts about elements. Its chemistry and history are full of mysteries. Finally, did you know that there are only two element names ending with a "y"? What are they? They are antimony and mercury.

Confidence Building Questions

1. **Give the chemical symbol of the element whose name is the shortest.**
   Hint: \ce{Sn}

   Do U know?: In Latin, tin is stannum.

2. **Give the symbol for the element whose name means artificial.**
   Hint: \ce{Tc}

   Do U know?: Its name is technetium, \ce{Tc}. Artificial elements mean synthetic, or man-made, elements.

3. **Give the symbol for the element that is the best electrical conductor.**
   Hint: \ce{Ag}

   Do U know?: In Latin \ce{Ag} is called argentum.

Contributors

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