

Al

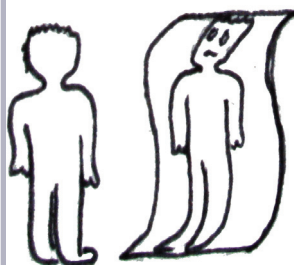
Aluminum is number 13 on the periodic table of elements and its symbol is Al. It is very abundant on Earth but is not found naturally by itself. It is usually combined with oxygen. To use the metal it has to be separated from the oxygen compound. Now, the process is much simpler, making this a widely used metal. It is a 100% recyclable material.



Aluminum is an easily malleable metal. It is not as strong as iron or steel, but because it is less susceptible to rust, it is sometimes used instead.



Aluminum is a good electrical conductor and has been used for wiring in homes, but is not as reliable as copper.



Highly polished aluminum is very reflective. It is so reflective it is often used instead of silver for mirrors.



Aluminum reacts to air and water and will rust. However, the rust is very strong and does not flake off so once the outer layer is covered the rest of the aluminum is protected.

Questions

1. Which metal does aluminum sometimes replace in mirrors?
2. Why doesn't aluminum rust all the way through?
3. If aluminum isn't as strong as steel, why isn't steel always used instead of aluminum?
4. Which element is aluminum usually combined with naturally in the Earth?