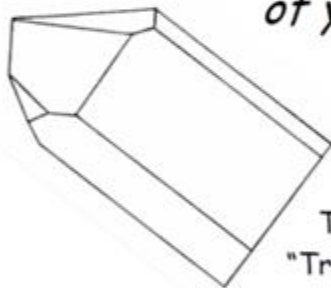
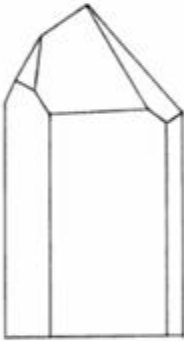


Triboluminescence

This activity is really, really cool - and it works!

What you need: Two clear quartz crystals. You don't want to use really nice, collector-quality crystals. Get two average, "I don't care if I damage them" crystals because, well, you are going to damage them.

What to do: Hold the edge or termination of one crystal on the face of the second crystal. Push the two crystals together as hard as you can. While still pushing them together, rub the first crystal across the face of the second crystal. You probably won't see anything with the lights off, so . . .



Now, turn the lights off in your room and repeat the steps. You will see a flash of yellow light inside the second quartz crystal!

What is happening here?

This is a special property called "Triboluminescence." "Luminescence" means "light."

"Tribo-" means "to rub." So, this is light created by rubbing, in this case, one crystal against another. Scientists really don't know why this works. It could have something to do with the pulling apart of electrical charges that quickly reconnect.

More Fun with Triboluminescence

You can create a flash of light with a wintergreen Life-saver™ candy. This only works for wintergreen, though. Put one in a plastic bag and squeeze it quickly with a pair of pliers. You will create a flash of light. This also works if you bite down on the candy really hard and fast with your mouth open, in the dark. But then, only your friends will see the light!



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