



Okenite was named in honor of the German naturalist, Lorenz Oken (1779-1851) of Munich. The original spelling was Ockenite. In 1830 it was changed to Okenite. (Picture Left: Public Domain.)

Oligoclase is a variety of Feldspar. It was named from the Greek words *oligos* meaning *little* and *klan* meaning *to break* because it was thought to have less perfect cleavage than the similar mineral Albite.

Olivinite was named after its olive-green color.

Olivine was named after its typical olive-green color.

Onyx was named from the Greek word *onyx* meaning *a finger nail or claw*. This name was originally given by Theophrastus and, later, by Pliny the Elder to a variety of two- and three-colored layered stones.

Opal was named from the ancient Latin name for this favorite gemstone, *Opalus*, which literally means *precious stone*. It was used by Pliny the Elder to refer to the mineral we today call Precious Opal. He wrote, "The flat precious stone called opalus is the most valuable of all the stones, but it is difficult to define it and describe it. It has the gentler fire of the ruby, the brilliant purple of the amethyst and the sea-green of the emerald, all shining together in an indescribable union."

The Latin word *opalus* was derived from the Greek word *opallios* which itself was derived from the Sanskrit word *upalah*.

Orpiment was named from the Latin word *auripigmentum* meaning *gold paint*, a reference to its common use in ancient days. It was also believed that it did not just have the color of gold, but actually contained gold.

Orthoclase is another variety of Feldspar. It has two cleavage planes which intersect at a right angle (90 degrees). The name, therefore, is from the Greek words *orthos* meaning *right* and *klan* meaning *to break*.