

Definitions of atoms and elements

Definitions tell us what words mean. Good definitions can be very useful, but sometimes definitions can be wrong, or just confusing. To be helpful a definition needs to be correct, and to make sense.

Below are two definitions of the word *element*. Read each definition carefully and decide (a) if you think it is correct, and (b) whether it is a definition that would help someone learning about science. Try to explain your reasons.

Definition 1

An element is a substance that is made of only one kind of atom.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is the definition correct? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Would the definition help someone to learn? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is correct | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is helpful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is wrong | <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not helpful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am not sure | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not sure |

I think this because:

Definition 2

An element is a substance which cannot be split up into simpler substances.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is the definition correct? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Would the definition help someone to learn? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is correct | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is helpful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is wrong | <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not helpful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am not sure | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not sure |

I think this because: