

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Activity 06-01

Symbols for Elements

Chemists usually do not write out the names of an element. Instead they use a symbol that is made up of one or two letters. Some symbols, such as O for oxygen, C for carbon, and S for sulfur are easy to remember. However, some elements have symbols that do not seem to be related to their names. Some of those elements were the first to be used by early chemists.

Use the periodic table to find out their symbols and at least two different reference materials to learn how they came to have these unusual symbols. Research the reason for the symbol using a minimum of two quality sources. Research what the name means, who named the element, and when it was named. Be sure to document the two resources that you use for each element. You may use the table below for notes.

Write a paragraph *for each* element describing how it was discovered and named.

Element Name in English	Symbol	Word from which the symbol originates	Meaning of the original word	When and by whom the element was discovered or named	Minimum of two sources for each element documented
Gold					
Silver					
Lead					
Potassium					
Tin					
Iron					
Mercury					
Tungsten					
Nihonium					

Modified from Chapter 3: Using Science Skills: Identifying Patterns - Symbols for Elements © 1988 Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Target 06-02c: Explain the origin of element symbols.

SEP 8: Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information