

REFLECTING LIGHT

KEY IDEAS

- Light reflects off surfaces
- Shiny or polished surfaces produce a reflected image
- Light can be reflected in different directions

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- When you look in a mirror, what do you see?
- What other surfaces can you think of that reflect like mirrors?
- How do you think you could make light change direction with mirrors?

LIGHT REFLECTS OF MATERIALS

- When light falls on materials, some of it is scattered in other directions.
- Good light transmitters, such as clear glass, scatter little of the light falling on them. Highly polished surfaces, such as mirror, may reflect most of the light in one specific direction.
- Other materials absorb only certain colors of light and reflect the other colors.

LIGHT CAN BE MADE TO CHANGE DIRECTION AND BE REFLECTED

- Light travels in straight lines but the direction of its travel can be changed by reflecting it off surfaces (much like a snooker ball changes direction when it hits the side cushion of the snooker table).
- Highly reflective surfaces, such as glass mirrors, shiny metal, or even polished furniture, cause light to form images so that we can see reflections of ourselves and the things around us.
- These images are reversed (a 'mirror' image).

MATERIALS REFLECT DIFFERENT COLORS AND ABSORB OTHER COLORS

- We see different colors in different materials and objects.
- For example, a ripe banana is seen as yellow and grass is seen as green.
- In fact, what we see is the color of the light reflecting off those items, while the other colors of light are absorbed by them.

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