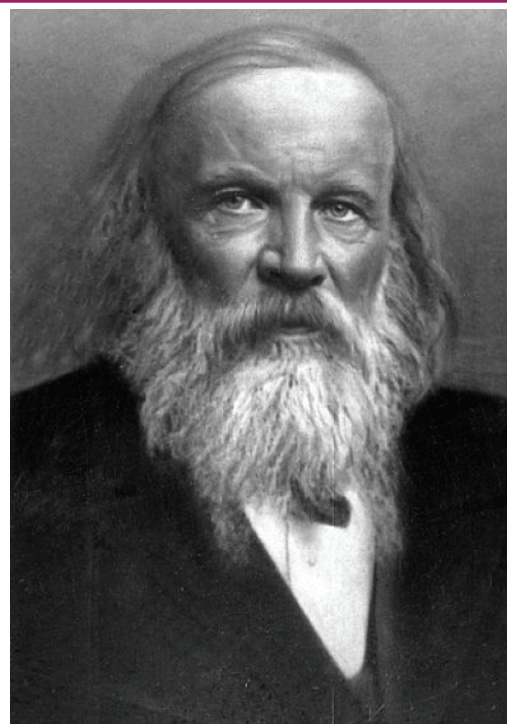
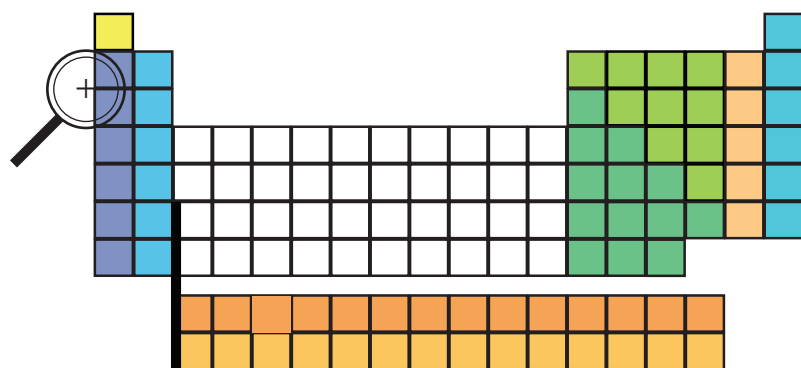


Discovering the Periodic Table

By the late 1800s scientists had discovered and named most of the elements, but they did not understand the elements or their behavior. An important discovery by Russian chemist Dmitri Mendeleev showed that when you arrange the elements in rows and columns you can see the similarities between them. His discovery proved that the elements repeat certain characteristics at regular intervals, or periodically.

Example: look at the far left column of the table. Lithium, sodium and potassium line up vertically, and they are all very similar metals. They are soft, low in density and solid at room temperature. They also have very similar reactions with other substances.



Photograph of Dmitri Mendeleev

3 6.941 Li Lithium
11 22.98977 Na Sodium
19 39.0983 K Potassium