

Physical Changes

Chapter 5: Changes Around Us: Physical and Chemical · Topic 1

Key Concept

Physical changes can usually be reversed by simple physical means — melted ice can be refrozen, torn paper pieces can (in theory) be taped back together, and dissolved sugar can be recovered by evaporating the water. Recognising a physical change is important in chemistry because it helps distinguish these temporary, reversible transformations from chemical changes, which permanently alter a substance's identity.

Quick Revision Notes

- A physical change alters form/state without forming a new substance.
- Physical changes are usually reversible by simple physical means.
- Examples: melting ice, tearing paper, dissolving sugar in water.
- Recognising physical vs chemical changes is a key chemistry skill.

Practice Questions

- 1 List two examples of physical changes you observe daily.
- 2 Explain how you could recover sugar after dissolving it in water.
- 3 Why is tearing paper considered a physical, not a chemical, change?