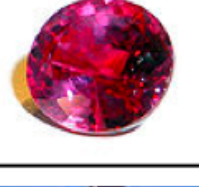


Selenite Gypsum

What is Selenite?

This mine contains a deposit of a transparent, crystalline form of gypsum called “selenite” (CaSO₄·2H₂O).

All varieties of gypsum are very soft minerals. In fact, the most important identifying characteristic of gypsum is its hardness. If you find a clear mineral, try scratching it with your fingernail. Gypsum has a hardness of 2 on Mohs Hardness Scale (see below), which is softer than your fingernail. Other transparent minerals, such as quartz and varieties of mica, are harder than your fingernail and will not be scratched.

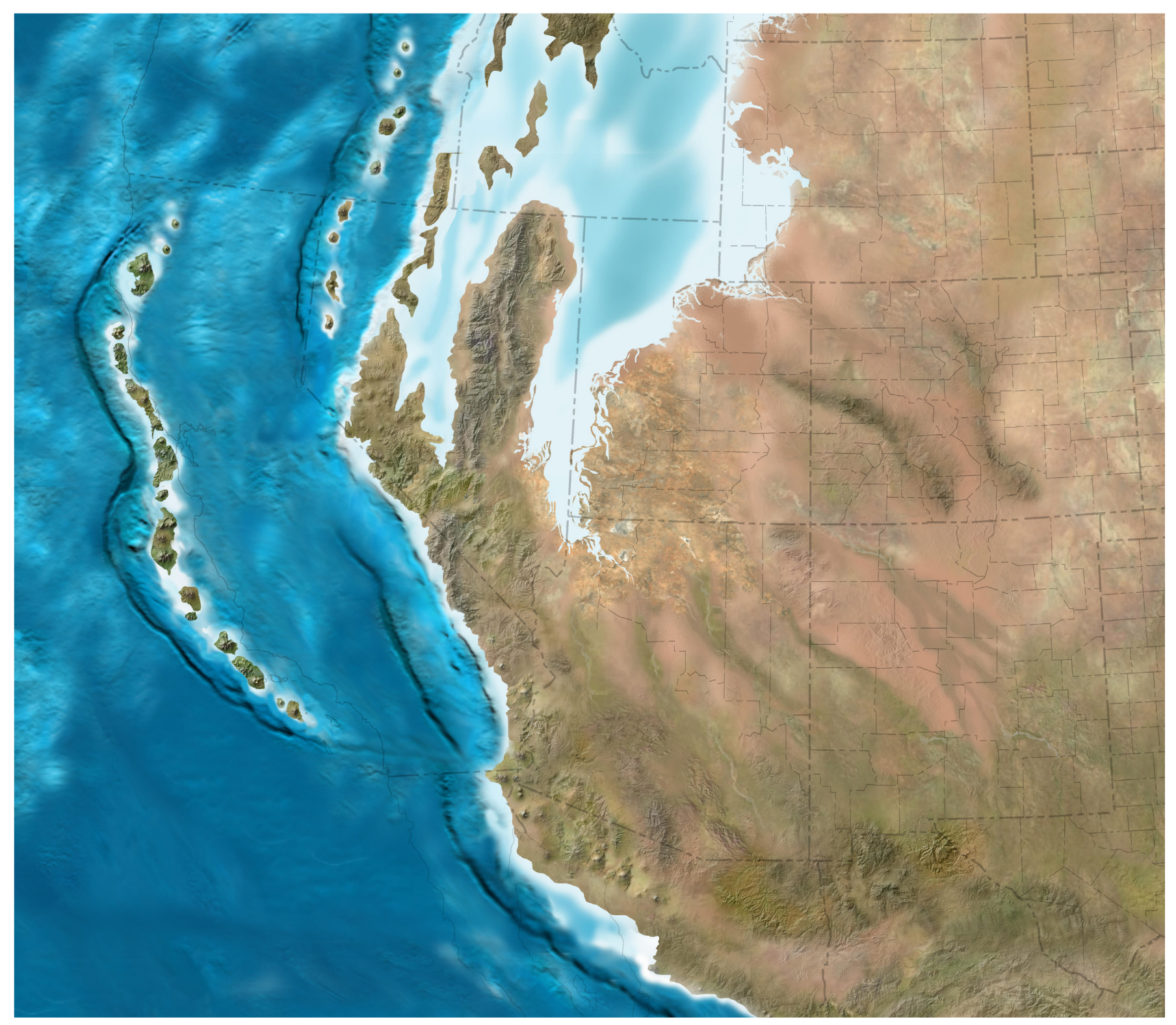
Mineral	Mohs Hardness	Image
Talc	1	
Gypsum	2	
Calcite	3	
Fluorite	4	
Apatite	5	
Feldspar	6	
Quartz	7	
Topaz	8	
Corundum	9	
Diamond	10	

Mohs Hardness Scale
www.thegemchronicles.com

How does Gypsum form?

Gypsum is commonly formed in highly evaporative environments, such as closed-basin lakes. In these lakes, a water source terminates in the lake basin. Dissolved ions within the water concentrate in the basin. As water evaporates, the minerals precipitate out of the water and form solid salts, including calcite, gypsum, and halite (table salt). An example of this type of environment is the Great Salt Lake.

This selenite was deposited as part of the Moenkopi Formation during the early Triassic about 250 million years ago for several million years. At this time, a large basin existed over the southern portion of Utah and this area of northern Arizona.



Map at time of deposition 250 million years ago
(Paleogeography of Southwest North America
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