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THE 2016 HIGH SCHOOL CRYSTALLIZATION CONTEST

During 2016, more than 200 high schools (secondary schools) throughout Spain participated in a crystallization contest; in total, more than 6,000 students took part. The students worked in their school laboratories to grow the best crystals they could for one or several of the four contest categories: crystallization of ammonium dihydrogen phosphate (ADP), crystallization in a geode, crystallization of sodium chloride, and making scientific videos about the crystallization processes that they had developed in their labs.



Participants preparing their crystals at the beginning of the regional contest in Aragón, Spain.

During the contest, after months of work, one could easily see how much knowledge the students had acquired when they showed and explained their experiments in the poster session. The contest, however, goes beyond this goal. Students also experience the importance of being systematic and careful when it comes to laboratory work and analysis, and teachers get to teach new ways to learn about crystals and crystallography. Arguably of most importance is that students, teachers, and parents all see that doing science can be very attractive and great fun.

The idea for the contest was born at the Factory of Crystallization, a Spanish research project headed by Juan Manuel García-Ruiz in the Laboratory of Crystallography (CSIC) in Granada. The first contest took place in Andalusia (Spain) and Puerto Rico during the 2010–2011 academic year. The idea proved successful and quickly spread to other Spanish regions in subsequent years. The Spanish Mineralogical Society is happy to participate as sponsor.

For more details: <http://www.lec.csic.es/concurso/>



A magnificent crystal cluster of ADP grown by students in their school laboratory at IES Salvador Victoria (Monreal del Campo, Teruel, Spain).

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