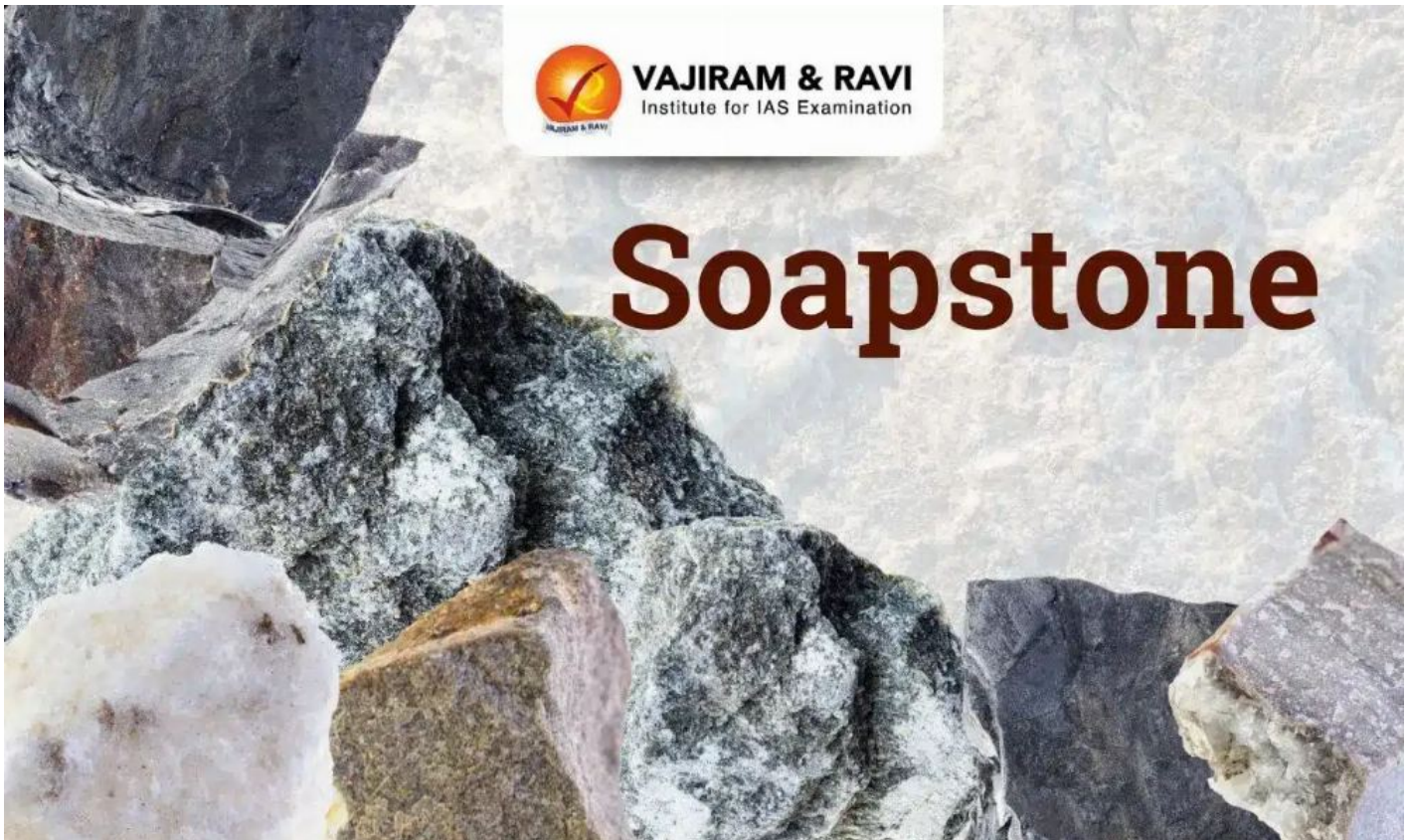


Soapstone, Formation, Application, Soapstone Reserves in India

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About Soapstone:

- It is also known as **Steatite**.
- It is a **metamorphic rock made of talc**, a naturally occurring mineral, and is used in construction and design for countertops, sinks, hearths, and sculptures.
- Depending on the quarry from which it is sourced, this natural stone also contains varying amounts of other minerals such as micas, chlorite, amphiboles, quartz, magnesite, and carbonates.
- **How Does Soapstone Form?**
 - Soapstone most often forms at **convergent plate boundaries** where broad areas of Earth's crust are subjected to heat and directed pressure.
 - Peridotites, dunites, and serpentinites in this environment can be metamorphosed into soapstone.
 - On a smaller scale, soapstone can form where **siliceous dolostones are altered by hot**, chemically active fluids in a process known as metasomatism.
- **Properties:** It is a relatively soft, very dense, highly heat-resistant material.

- **Major producing countries:** China, India, Brazil, USA and Finland
 - **Major reserves in India:** According to the Indian Bureau of Mines, the **states of Rajasthan** (57%) and **Uttarakhand** (25%) boast substantial reserves of soapstone in India.
 - **Applications**
 - Soapstone in powdered form, often combined with corn starch, is used as baby powder.
 - This mineral is used as a **thickening agent and lubricant**; is an ingredient in ceramics, paint, and roofing material; and is a main ingredient in many cosmetics.
 - Talc is used in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and other industries.
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Q1: What are minerals?

These are naturally occurring homogeneous solid with a definite chemical composition and a highly ordered atomic arrangement; it is usually formed by inorganic processes.

Source: IE

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/soapstone/>

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