Elements: What are they?

Elements make up all of the things we use. For the most part, all of those things we use, from soap, through wood, clothing, steel, water, the air we inhale, and so on are made up of a *mixture* of ELEMENTS.

We call those mixtures “compounds”, and they are made up of very specific combinations of ELEMENTS.

Occasionally we use (or interact with) some very pure substances that are almost completely made up of one ELEMENT. ‘Pure’ gold, silver, oxygen gas, ‘pure’ diamonds (‘pure’ carbon), copper, aluminum (foil), are a few examples of things we consider to be made up of only one ELEMENT. However, even these ‘pure’ examples often have little bits of other elements in them.

An ELEMENT is a substance (liquid, gas, or solid) that is made up of only one type of atom. Everything we use, see, feel, and look at is made up of a combination of about 90 naturally occurring elements. (there are more, but the rest only exist for a very short period of time).

Some of the more common elements are; Hydrogen, Lithium, Sodium, Potassium, Magnesium, Calcium, Iron, Nickel, Copper, Zinc, Aluminum, Carbon, Nitrogen, Oxygen, Helium, Gold, Silver, Lead, and Tin.