



7. TYPES OF GLASS

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PLEXIGLASS

Plexiglass is not glass but acrylic plastic. Its chief use is as a glass substitute.



Figure 7.1 Light can be led through glass as exemplified by this fibre-optics display.

INTRODUCTION

Glass has many uses in the home – as art and decoration, as containers, in building design, in information and communication technology, in electronics, optics, medicine, etc.

Different types of glass have different chemical compositions, depending on their use. Glass is divided into various types depending on the substances of which they are made. For example, they may be described as soda glass or borosilicate glass. This chapter will primarily describe the large family of glasses whose principal constituent is sand, i.e. silica glass.

The simplest and cheapest type of glass is soda glass, which is used to make windows and bottles, while crystal glass is notable for the amount of heavy oxides it contains. The composition of glass fibres may vary, even though the fibre materials are intended for similar applications – *Figure 7.1*.

There are also types of glass that have been specially developed for applications, in say, chemistry, electronics or optics. Sometimes a material is referred to as glass when this is not actually the case, e.g. plexiglass.