

Sorption: adsorption and absorption

Adsorption:

Individual entities are attached onto the surface of an impermeable solid.

vs.

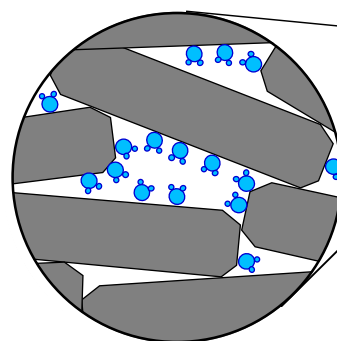
Absorption:

A collectivity is taken into a volume of a permeable material.

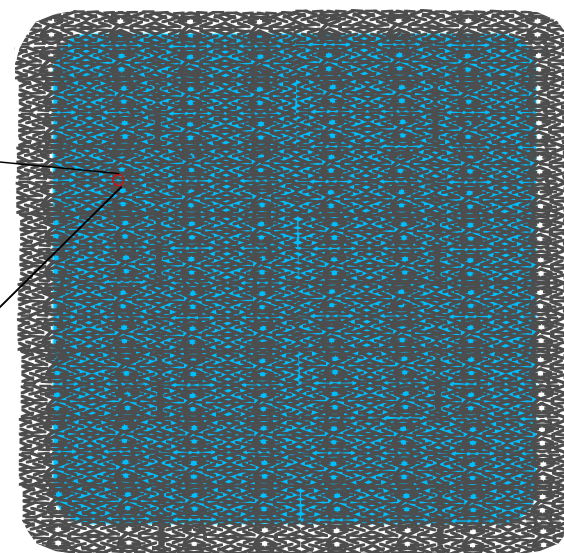
In the drying of dishes, a film of water adsorbed *on* a plate is absorbed *into* a towel.

Absorption at the macroscopic scale commonly involves adsorption at the nanoscopic scale.

For example, a molecule of H_2O * adsorbed on the surface of single crystal/grain is part of the water absorbed in a mass of those crystals/grains.



Adsorbed H_2O
on surfaces of crystals



Water absorbed
in a soil or sediment

* the H_2O is no longer "water" in "water" 's sense of a readily flowing liquid)