
**Methods for the petrographic analysis
of coals —**

**Part 4:
Method of determining
microlithotype, carbominerite and
minerite composition**

Méthodes d'analyse pétrographique des charbons —

*Partie 4: Détermination de la composition en microlithotypes,
carbominérîtes et minérîtes*

ISO 7404-4:2017

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Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee TC 27, *Solid mineral fuels*, Subcommittee SC 5, *Methods of analysis*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 7404-4:1988), which has been technically revised.

A list of all the parts in the ISO 7404 series can be found on the ISO website.

Introduction

Petrographic analyses have been recognized internationally as important in the context of the genesis, vertical and lateral variation, continuity, metamorphism and usage of coal. The International Committee for Coal Petrology (ICCP) has made recommendations concerning nomenclature and analytical methods and has published and described in detail the characteristics of a wide range of coals. This document agrees substantially with the text of relevant ICCP publications and incorporates many useful comments made by members of the ICCP and by member bodies of ISO/TC 27.

Petrographic analyses of a single coal provide information about the rank, the maceral and microlithotype compositions and the distribution of mineral matter in the coal. The reflectance of vitrinite is a useful measure of coal rank and the distribution of the reflectance of vitrinite in a coal blend, together with a maceral group analysis, can provide information about some important chemical and technological properties of the blend.

The ISO 7404 series is concerned with the methods of petrographic analysis currently employed in characterizing coal in the context of its technological and/or geological use. It establishes a system for petrographic analysis and comprises five parts, see ISO website:

Microlithotypes are the naturally occurring associations of macerals which characterize the microscopically visible different types of coal. By convention, the identity of a microlithotype is determined by the maceral group or groups occurring within an area of at least $50\text{ }\mu\text{m} \times 50\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ and which are present in amounts equal to or exceeding 5 % by volume. Hence, they can comprise a single maceral or maceral group if it exceeds these dimensions. Microlithotypes may include up to 20 % by volume of minerals such as clay, quartz and carbonates or up to 5 % by volume of sulfide minerals. If the content of mineral matter exceeds these amounts, the material is designated as minerite or carbominerite depending on the proportions of coal and mineral matter.

Carbominerites can be subdivided according to the type of mineral matter.

Microlithotypes contribute information on the genesis of coal seams and can assist in solving problems of seam correlation. Because they determine, together with rank and mineral matter, the hardness and density of the bulk coal substance, microlithotypes affect the behaviour of coal in mining and coal preparation processes. The different microlithotypes determine, under given geological conditions, the distribution of micro-cracks and to some extent the cleat in the coal. The results of maceral analyses can be interpreted more meaningfully from a knowledge of microlithotype composition. Such information can assist in explaining the behaviour of coal in commercial and experimental utilization processes where the association of macerals is known to be important.

NOTE The percentage volume of carbonate, clay and quartz minerals on the one hand and sulfide minerals on the other, which define the carbominerites and minerites, correspond to the densities which separate acceptable coal from middlings ($1,5\text{ g/cm}^3$) and from rejects in coal preparation.

