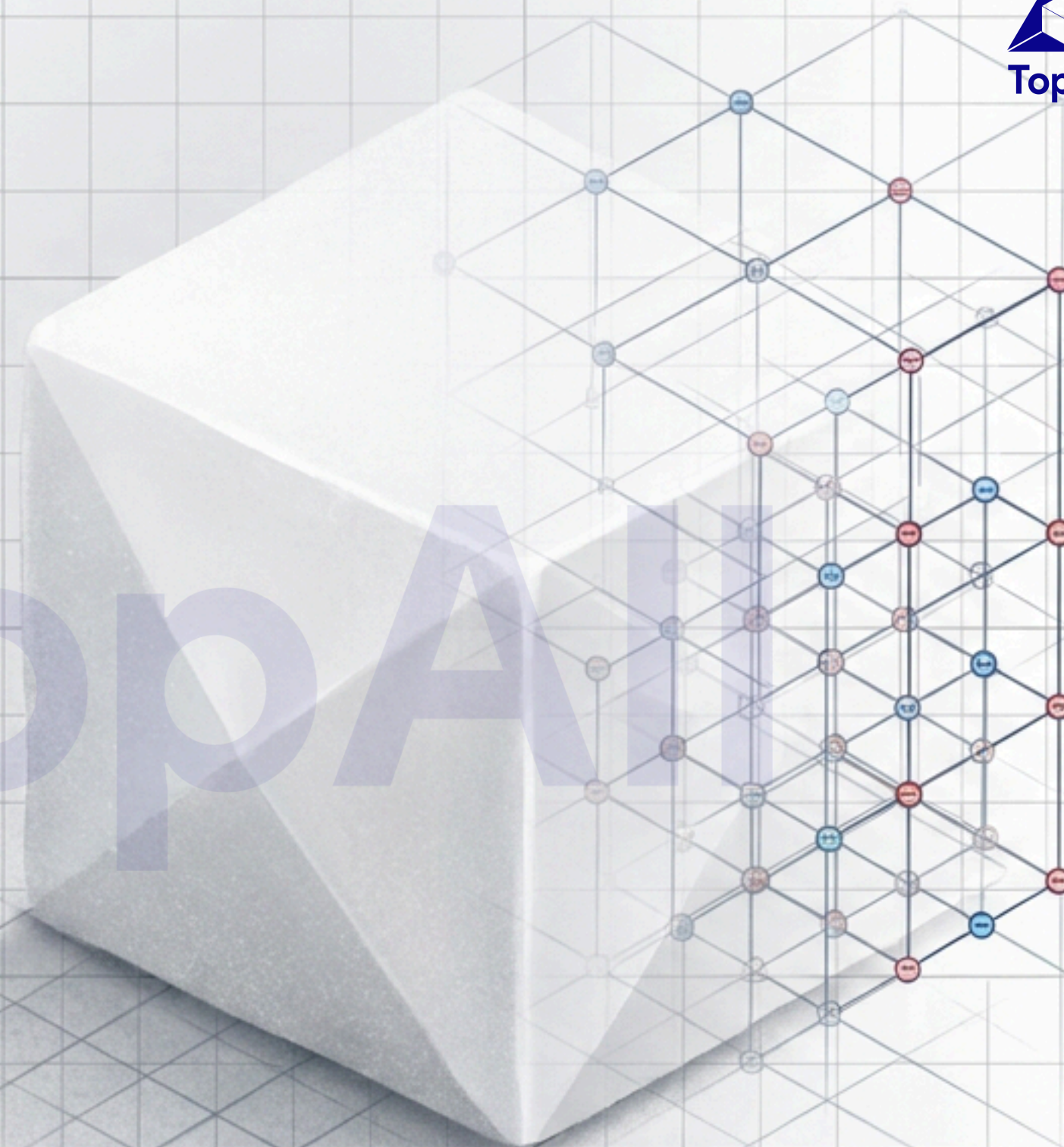
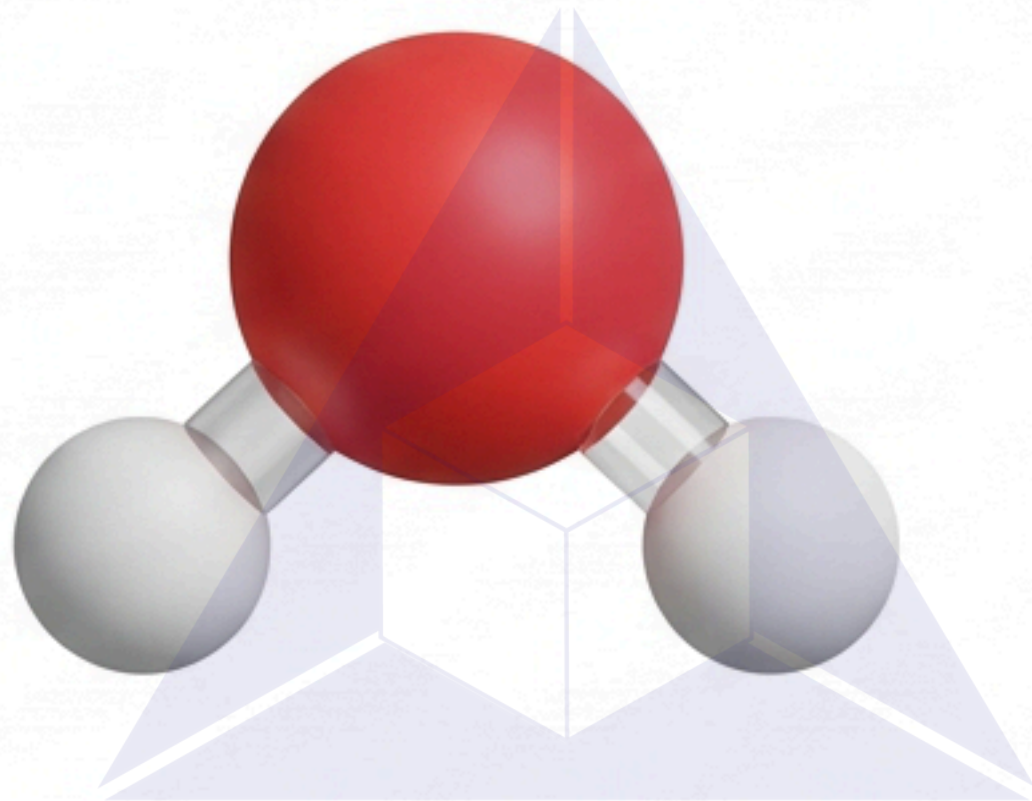


Formula Mass for Ionic Compounds

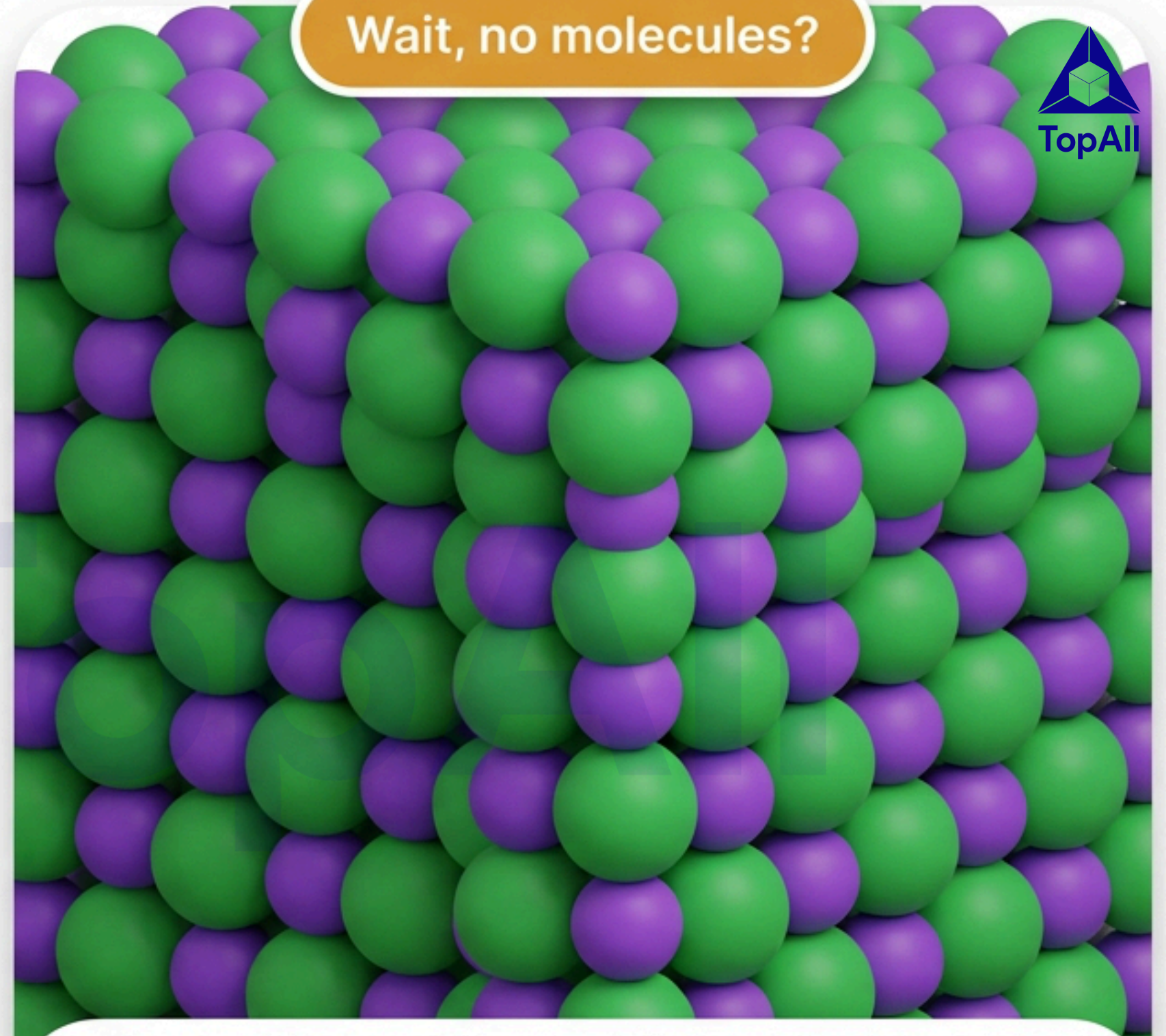
Why salt isn't a molecule,
and how we measure it.





Discrete Molecules: Defined boundaries, easy to isolate.

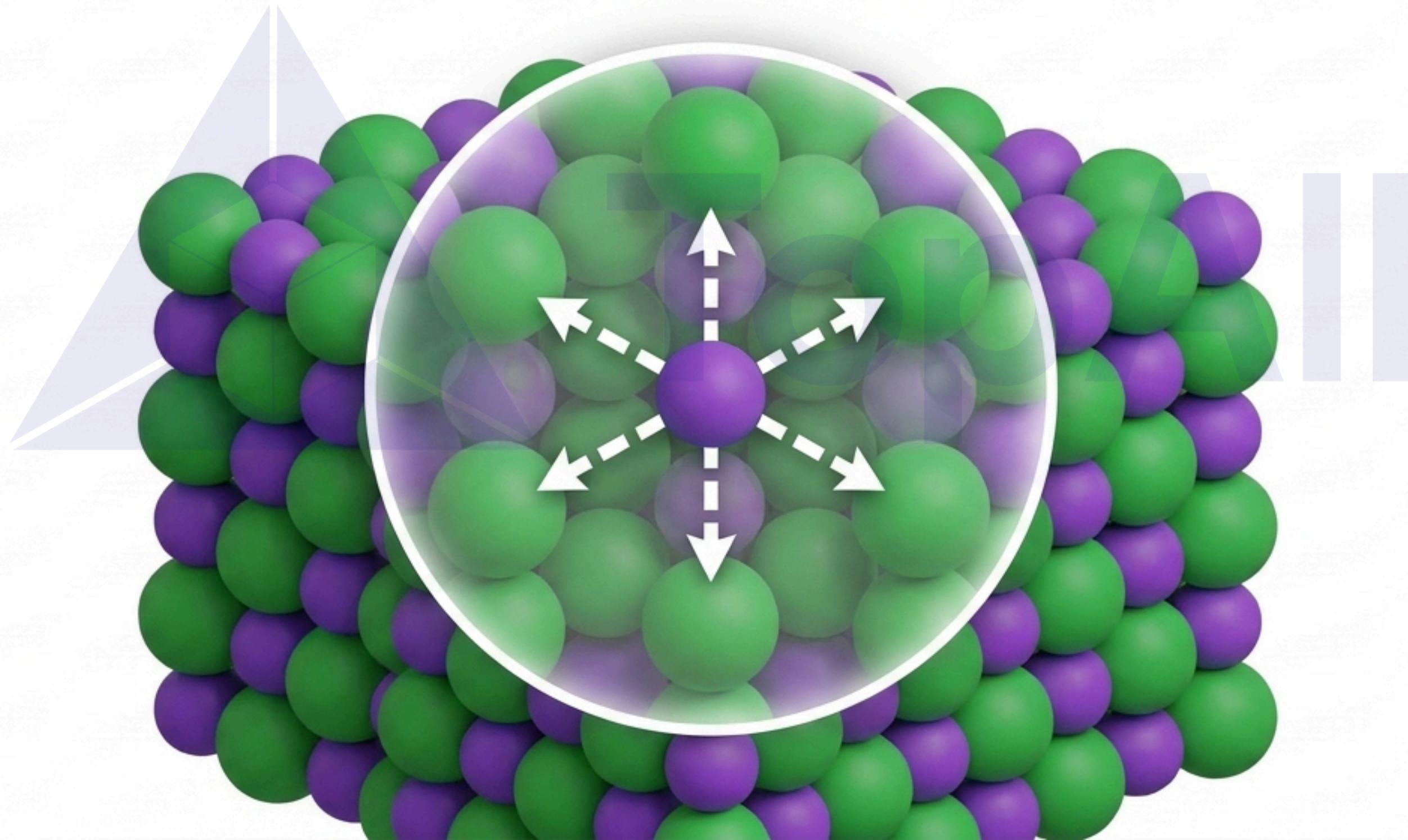
Wait, no molecules?



Ionic Compounds: Endless 3D grids. They do not exist as discrete, separated molecules.

The 3D Reality of Sodium Chloride

In solid sodium chloride, one Na^+ ion is surrounded by exactly six Cl^- ions (and vice-versa). The ions are locked in a continuous three-dimensional grid, making it impossible to single out one exclusive Na-Cl pair as a 'molecule'.





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Key Highlights

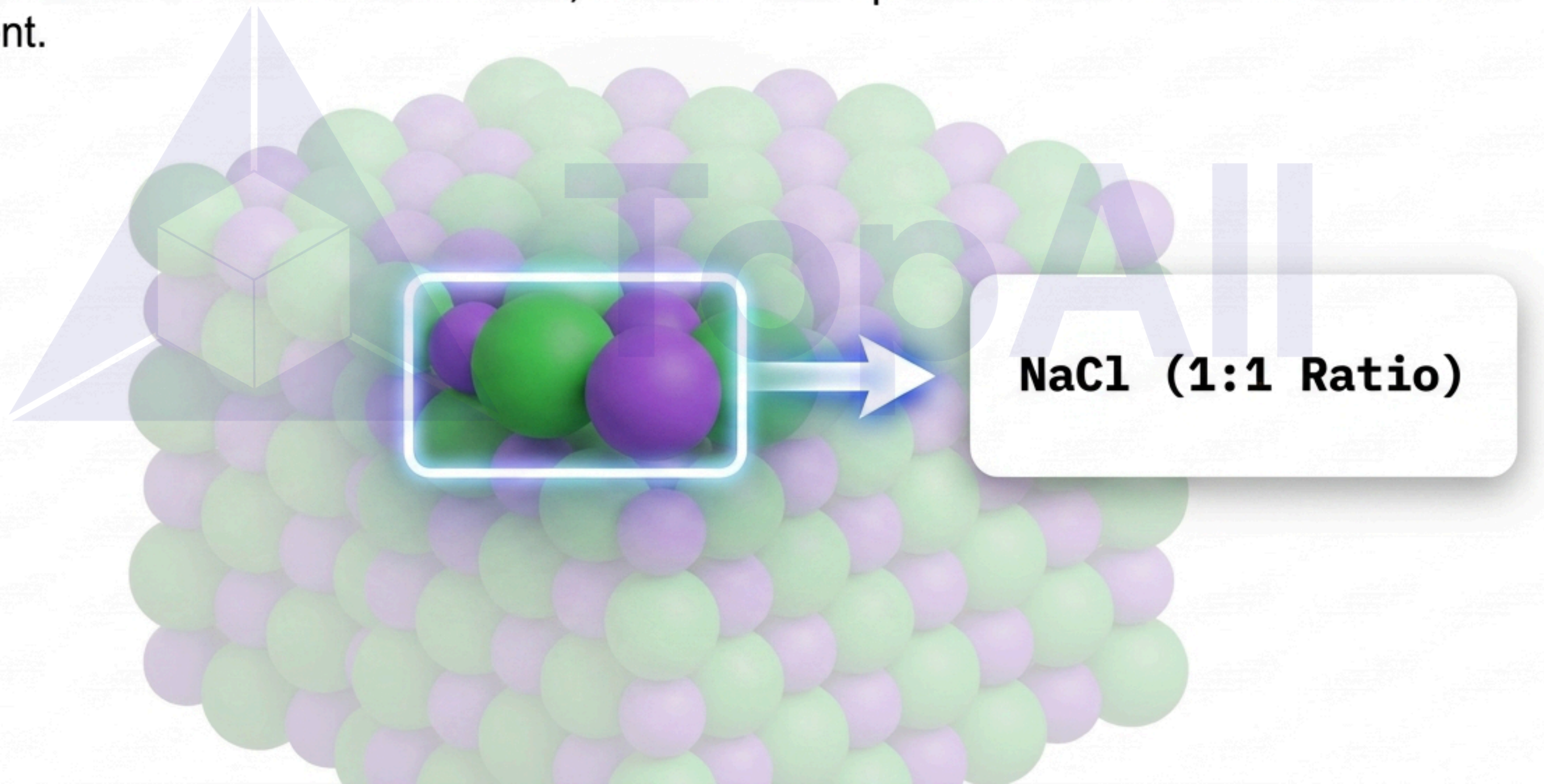
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Definition

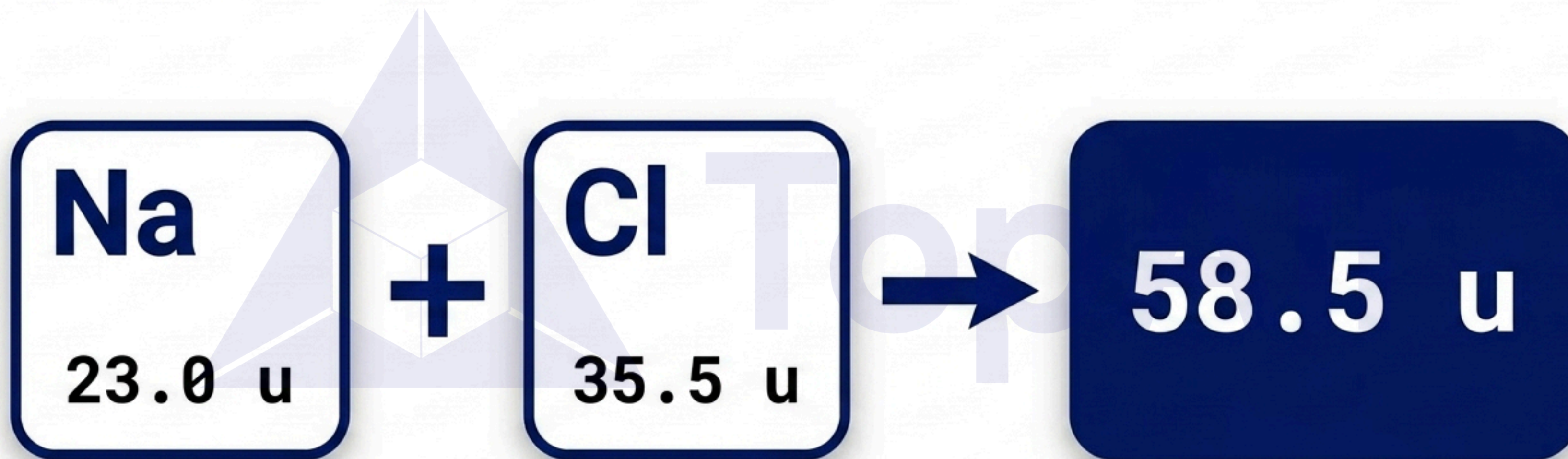
The Formula Unit Concept

Because there are no discrete molecules, we use the simplest whole-number ratio of the ions present.



Calculating Formula Mass

We calculate formula mass exactly like molecular mass, but applied to the empirical ratio (the formula unit).



The Golden Rule for Chemical Mass

Substance Type	Physical State	Mass Term to Use
Covalent	Discrete Molecule	Molecular Mass
Ionic	3D Lattice Grid	Formula Mass

Never use the term 'molecular mass' for a substance that doesn't form **molecules**. For ionic substances like NaCl, always use Formula Mass.



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