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This article reviews the development of concepts of chirality in chemistry. The story follows the parallel development of the optical properties of materials and the understanding of chemical structure until the two are fused in the recognition of the tetrahedral carbon atom in 1874. The different types of chiral molecule that have been identified since the first concept of the asymmetric carbon atom are introduced as is the notation used in various disciplines of chemistry to describe the relative or absolute configuration. In the final section, a polemical case for a unified nomenclature is presented.

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