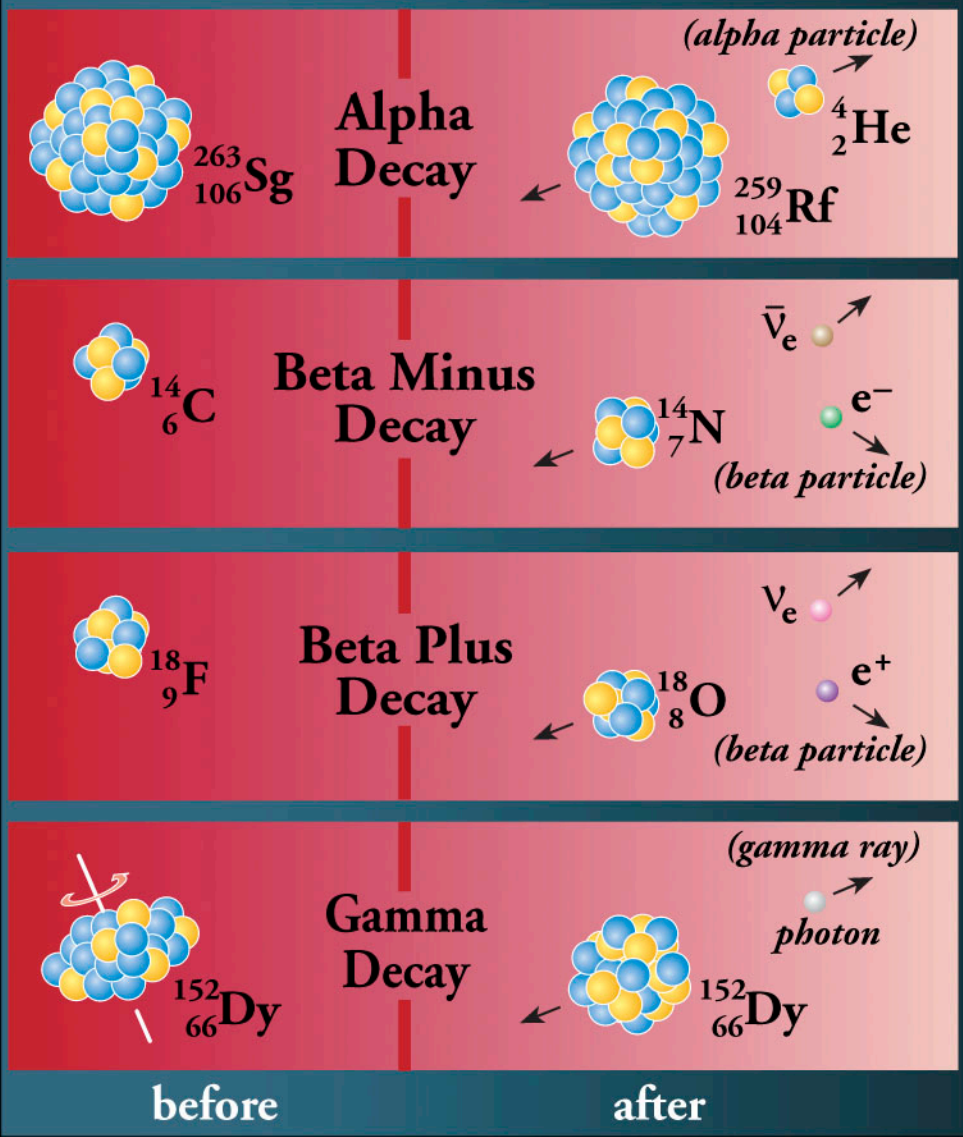
Radioactivity



*R*adioactive decay transforms a nucleus by emitting different particles. In **alpha** decay, the nucleus releases a $^{4}_{2}He$ nucleus –an alpha particle. In **beta** decay, the nucleus either emits an electron and antineutrino (or a positron and neutrino) or captures an atomic electron and emits a neutrino. A positron is the name for the antiparticle of the electron. Antimatter is composed of antiparticles. Both alpha and beta decays change the original nucleus into a nucleus of a different chemical element. In **gamma** decay, the nucleus lowers its internal energy by emitting a photon–a gamma ray. This decay does not modify the chemical properties of the atom.