



Electrons and protons
from solar wind

Atoms in atmosphere

Earth

Magnetic field

Collisions excite atoms,
which emit photons when
the atoms de-excite

Oxygen atoms produce
yellow-green aurora,
~60 miles above surface

Nitrogen atoms produce
blue-purple aurora,
~60 miles above surface

Rare all-red aurora are from
oxygen atoms ~ 200 miles
above the surface.