

Algebra-Based Physics-2: Electricity, Magnetism, and Modern Physics (PHYS135B-01): Unit 2

Jordan Hanson

March 15, 2022

Whittier College Department of Physics and Astronomy

Summary

Reading: Chapters 20 and 21

1. Current, Ohm's Law, resistors and conductors
2. DC circuits I
3. Nerve signals
4. DC circuits II

Current

Current

Notions of current:

- $I = \frac{\Delta Q}{\Delta t}$ - The derivative of charge
- The *movement* of electrons
- The *flow* of charge
- Number of Coulombs per second (1 Amp = C/s)

There is an interesting problem with the notion of current as movement of charges.

Speed of typical electronic signals: $\approx 10^8$ m/s

Typical speed of actual charges passing through a conductor under voltage: $\approx 10^{-4}$ m/s

Since there is a 12 order of magnitude range, it's probably a good idea to ponder...

Current

Are the electrons colliding/interacting to form electrical signals? Or just moving all together?

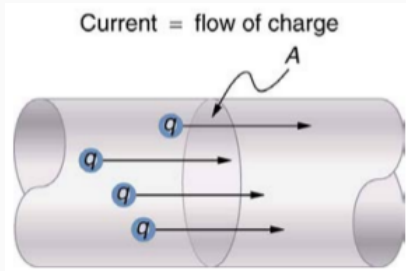


Figure 1: The *drift velocity* is the average velocity of an electron, and current is derived from this average velocity.

Current

So we see how electrical signals can move near the speed of light, but we measure the movements of electrons in circuits to be slow. Can we make a calculation to understand the speed of the electrons?

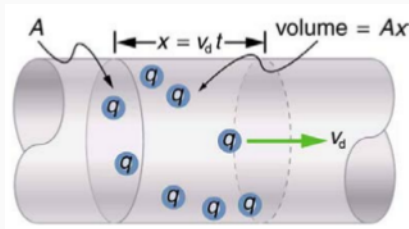


Figure 2: Consider the volume V of conductor with cross-sectional area A and length Δx , having n free electrons per unit volume.

Current

An **amp** is one *Coulomb* per second. The definition of current is

$$I = \frac{\Delta Q}{\Delta t} = \frac{qnA\Delta x}{\Delta t} = qnAv_d \quad (1)$$

Solving for drift velocity:

$$v_d = \frac{I}{qnA} \quad (2)$$

Suppose our conductor is a wire with radius r and $A = \pi r^2$.

Substituting,

$$v_d = \frac{I}{\pi qnr^2} \quad (3)$$

Remember that $q = 1.6 \times 10^{-19}$ C, and n is the number of free electrons *per atom per unit volume*. How do we get this number?

Number density: The total number of objects in a system is equal to the *number density* times the volume of the system.

$$N = nV \quad (4)$$

- N: Total number
- n: *number density*
- V: Volume

Example: *Number of Stars in the Milky Way*. How many stars are in our galaxy? Assume the galaxy is a disk of height h and radius r . We observe n stars per unit volume.

- $r = 50 \times 10^3$ *light-years*
- $h = 2 \times 10^3$ *light-years*
- $n = 10^{-2}$ *light-year*⁻³

1. Compute the volume in *light-years*³
2. Multiply the volume by the number density to obtain the total number.
3. Compare the result with others' results.

Current

How many **conduction** electrons are there in a cube of copper that is 1 micron ($1\ \mu\text{m} = 10^{-6}\ \text{m}$) on a side?

- Copper has a density of 8.8 grams per cubic centimeter.
- Copper has an atomic weight of 63.54 grams per mole. (*Do you remember what a mole is?*).
- There are $N_A = 6.02 \times 10^{23}$ atoms per mole.
- Only one electron per atom of copper is a conduction electron.

-
1. Divide the density by the atomic weight. What are the units?
 2. Multiply by N_A (Avogadro's number). What are the units?
 3. Convert the units from cm^{-3} to μm^{-3} .

Number density: Let's examine copper, a common wire material with one free electron per atom. Copper has a density of 8800 kg/m^3 , and 0.06354 kg/mol . There are 6.02×10^{23} atoms/mol. How many free electrons per m^3 of copper? (Remember that there is only one conduction electron per copper atom).

- A: 8.34×10^{26} free electrons per m^3
- B: 8.34×10^{27} free electrons per m^3
- C: 8.34×10^{28} free electrons per m^3
- D: 8.34×10^{29} free electrons per m^3

Consider a copper wire with radius $r = 2.053$ mm that is carrying 20.0 A of current. Using $q = 1.6 \times 10^{19}$, and $n = 8.34 \times 10^{28}$ electrons/m³, and $v_d = I/(\pi q n r^2)$, compute the drift velocity of charge in the wire. *This is a common situation in household wiring.*

- A: 10^{-1} m/s
- B: 10^{-2} m/s
- C: 10^{-3} m/s
- D: 10^{-4} m/s

Drift speed vs. signal speed. Given that the electrons move at 1mm/s, how is it that electric signals move at 10^8 m/s?

Electrical signals are more like a **wave on a string**:
<https://phet.colorado.edu/en/simulation/legacy/wave-on-a-string>

Ohm's Law

Ohm's Law

What happens when the electrons encounter objects that are not conductors? **They deposit energy and move forward.**

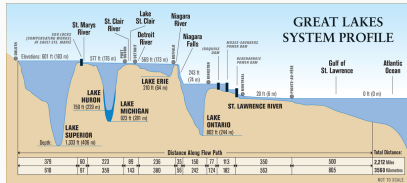


Figure 3: Current is comprised of electrons that deposit energy as they move to lower voltages.

Ohm's law: for a *resistance* R , the voltage V and the current i are related by:

$$V = iR \quad (5)$$

(Some examples before PhET).

PhET: DC Circuits and Ohm's Law

Go to the activity: <https://phet.colorado.edu/en/simulation/circuit-construction-kit-dc>

PhET: Create a DC circuit involving a battery, resistor (the brown striped object), a light bulb, and a switch.

1. Place the battery and connect to it a wire, and attach a resistor to that wire.
2. To the other end of the resistor, connect a switch and leave it open.
3. Connect a light bulb to the other end of the switch, and connect a wire from the light bulb to the battery.
4. The properties of each circuit element can be edited by clicking on the element.

Current

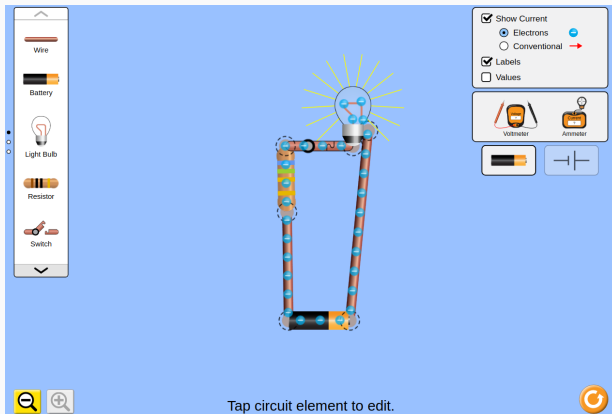


Figure 4: Your circuit should resemble this.

PhET: Make observations.

1. What happens to the drift velocity of the electrons as you raise and lower the resistance? Why do we call light bulbs and the brown striped objects “resistors?” Make a sketch of what you think the speed vs. resistance is.
2. How does the current change if you increase the voltage? Make a sketch of what you think the speed vs. voltage is.

PhET: The unit of resistance is the Ohm. We use the symbol Ω for Ohms, and $1\Omega = 1\text{V/A}$.

1. There are two devices available in the white toolbox on the right-hand side: the *voltmeter*, and the *ammeter*. Using these devices, measure the voltage drop across the resistor and the light bulb, and the current flowing through the circuit.
2. For fixed resistance, take 15 measurements of current as you vary the voltage. Plot voltage vs. current in Excel, and calculate the slope.
3. What is the number for the slope? How does it compare to the resistor value?

Ohm's Law: Let V be the voltage change across a resistor with resistance R , and let i be the current flowing through the resistor. Ohm's law states that

$$\boxed{V = iR} \quad (6)$$

for materials that fall into the category of *Ohmic*.

PhET: How do we deal with more complex circuits? There must be a way to “add” resistors.

1. Create a circuit that involves two resistors *in series*.
2. Calculate the *effective total resistance* by plotting an $i - V$ curve of the system. Measure i and V by changing the voltage and using the voltmeter and ammeter. What is a rule for obtaining the total resistance for a group of resistors in series?
3. Create a circuit that involves two resistors *in parallel*.
4. Calculate the *effective total resistance* by plotting an $i - V$ curve of the system. Measure i and V by changing the voltage and using the voltmeter and ammeter. What is a rule for obtaining the total resistance for a group of resistors in parallel?
5. For these exercises, it's helpful to use resistors of the same value.

As you may have discovered, *resistors in series* **add**:

$$R_{\text{tot}} = R_1 + R_2 + \dots \quad (7)$$

Resistors in parallel **add their reciprocals**:

$$\frac{1}{R_{\text{tot}}} = \frac{1}{R_1} + \frac{1}{R_2} + \dots \quad (8)$$

Resistance is not an *intrinsic property* of materials. Imagine a 0.1 m-long wire (which is a conductor) actually having a small resistance. What about that same wire, but 1 kilometer long?

- Electrons lose some fixed energy per unit length in a given material (*Joule heating*)
- Electrons lose more energy if the wire is thinner (*Joule heating*)

Resistivity ρ is defined in terms of resistance R , length L and cross-sectional area A as

$$R = \rho \left(\frac{L}{A} \right) \quad (9)$$

Current

Material	Resistivity ρ ($\Omega \cdot \text{m}$)
<i>Conductors</i>	
Silver	1.59×10^{-8}
Copper	1.72×10^{-8}
Gold	2.44×10^{-8}
Aluminum	2.65×10^{-8}
Tungsten	5.6×10^{-8}
Iron	9.71×10^{-8}
Platinum	10.6×10^{-8}
Steel	20×10^{-8}
Lead	22×10^{-8}
Manganin (Cu, Mn, Ni alloy)	44×10^{-8}
Constantan (Cu, Ni alloy)	49×10^{-8}
Mercury	96×10^{-8}
Nichrome (Ni, Fe, Cr alloy)	100×10^{-8}

Figure 5: Conductor resistivities are in units of $\Omega \cdot \text{m}$, and are small but non-zero.

<i>Semiconductors</i> ^[1]	
Carbon (pure)	3.5×10^5
Carbon	$(3.5 - 60) \times 10^5$
Germanium (pure)	600×10^{-3}
Germanium	$(1 - 600) \times 10^{-3}$
Silicon (pure)	2300
Silicon	0.1–2300
<i>Insulators</i>	
Amber	5×10^{14}
Glass	$10^9 - 10^{14}$
Lucite	$> 10^{13}$
Mica	$10^{11} - 10^{15}$
Quartz (fused)	75×10^{16}
Rubber (hard)	$10^{13} - 10^{16}$
Sulfur	10^{15}
Teflon	$> 10^{13}$
Wood	$10^8 - 10^{11}$

Figure 6: Semiconductor resistivities are in units of $\Omega \cdot \text{m}$, and are larger.

A copper wire carrying current to the top floor of a building, that has a cross-sectional area of 12 mm^2 and is 10 meters long. The resistivity of copper is $1.7 \times 10^{-8} \Omega \text{ m}$. What is the resistance of the wire?

- A: about $1 \text{ m}\Omega$
- B: about $10 \text{ m}\Omega$
- C: about $100 \text{ m}\Omega$
- D: about 1Ω

Consider the same system. If we attach a battery and use the wire to feed voltage to some circuit drawing 3.0 A of current, what is the voltage drop due to just the wire?

- A: about 30 mV
- B: about 300 mV
- C: about 3 V
- D: Current will not flow at all

What would the resistance be if the wire system was 10 times as long?

- A: about 30 mV
- B: about 300 mV
- C: about 3 V
- D: Current will not flow at all

So you can start to see that resistance matters even for conductors, if the current is traveling for long distances. Often manufacturers quote the Ohms per foot in wire data sheets.

Resistivity depends on temperature in the following way:

$$\rho = \rho_0 (1 + \alpha \Delta T) \quad (10)$$

For most conductors, α is small, on the order of $10^{-3} \text{ }^\circ\text{C}^{-1}$.

Material	Coefficient α ($1/^\circ\text{C}$) ^[2]
<i>Conductors</i>	
Silver	3.8×10^{-3}
Copper	3.9×10^{-3}
Gold	3.4×10^{-3}
Aluminum	3.9×10^{-3}
Tungsten	4.5×10^{-3}
Iron	5.0×10^{-3}
Platinum	3.93×10^{-3}
Lead	3.9×10^{-3}
Manganin (Cu, Mn, Ni alloy)	0.000×10^{-3}
Constantan (Cu, Ni alloy)	0.002×10^{-3}
Mercury	0.89×10^{-3}
Nichrome (Ni, Fe, Cr alloy)	0.4×10^{-3}
<i>Semiconductors</i>	
Carbon (pure)	-0.5×10^{-3}
Germanium (pure)	-50×10^{-3}
Silicon (pure)	-70×10^{-3}

Figure 7: Conductor resistivities depend on temperature.

Continuing with the same example of the long copper wire with $R = 10 \text{ m}\Omega$, if the temperature increases by 50.0 deg C , what is the new resistance? ($\alpha = 3.9 \times 10^{-3} \text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}^{-1}$).

- A: $8 \text{ m}\Omega$
- B: $12 \text{ m}\Omega$
- C: $18 \text{ m}\Omega$
- D: $22 \text{ m}\Omega$

Graphical Analysis of Simple Circuits

Graphical Analysis of Simple Circuits

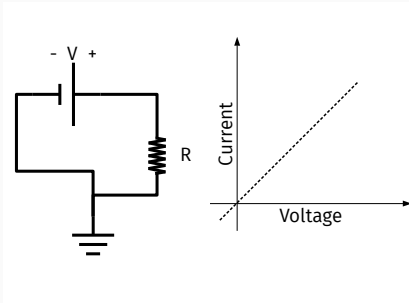


Figure 8: Circuits components are represented graphically by iV curves.

If the resistance R is increased, what will happen?

- A: The slope on the graph will increase
- B: The slope on the graph will decrease
- C: The slope will stay the same
- D: Cannot determine what will happen

Graphical Analysis of Simple Circuits

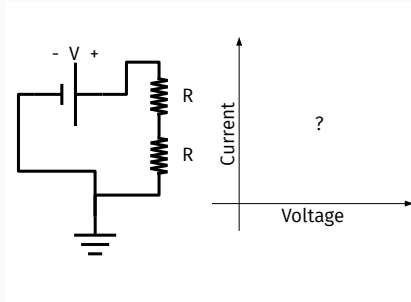


Figure 9: Circuits components are represented graphically by iV curves.

Should the slope now be greater than, less than, or equal to the that of Fig. 8?

- A: Greater than Fig. 8
- B: Less than Fig. 8
- C: Equal to Fig. 8
- D: Cannot determine.

Graphical Analysis of Simple Circuits

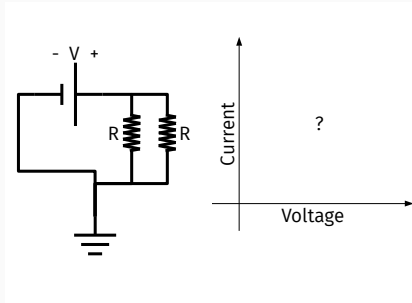


Figure 10: Circuits components are represented graphically by iV curves.

Should the slope now be greater than, less than, or equal to the that of Fig. 8?

- A: Greater than Fig. 8
- B: Less than Fig. 8
- C: Equal to Fig. 8
- D: Cannot determine.

Graphical Analysis of Simple Circuits

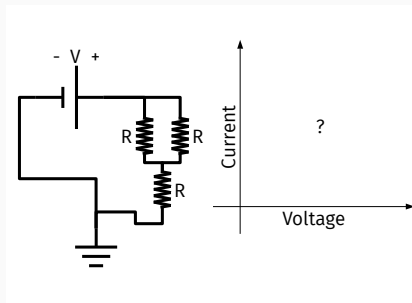


Figure 11: Circuits components are represented graphically by iV curves.

Should the slope now be greater than, less than, or equal to the that of Fig. 8?

- A: Greater than Fig. 8
- B: Less than Fig. 8
- C: Equal to Fig. 8
- D: Cannot determine.

Power

Current

Recall that **power** is consumed in resistors, since charges are losing energy and new charges are showing up at a certain rate. Consider the PE converted to work in a resistor:

$$\Delta PE = \Delta q \Delta V \quad (11)$$

$$\Delta W = \Delta q i R \quad (12)$$

$$\frac{\Delta W}{\Delta t} = \frac{\Delta q}{\Delta t} i R = i^2 R \quad (13)$$

$$\frac{\Delta W}{\Delta t} = i V \quad (14)$$

$$P = i V \quad (15)$$

The formula $P = iV$ shows that the wattage required by some device in a circuit will pull current according to the voltage of the battery.

How much current is required by a 50 W light bulb if the voltage supplying it is 120 V?

- A: 420 mA
- B: 120 mA
- C: 50 mA
- D: 50 V

Graphical Analysis of Simple Circuits

A *fuse* is a device that disconnects a circuit if the current rises above a pre-defined value. Some fuses have a wire that is rated to melt at a given current such that the circuit is no longer closed. Suppose a device rated to consume 50 W is connected to a 12 V battery, in series with a fuse that is rated to blow at 1 A. Does it blow?

- A: Yes
- B: No
- C: WAT

Suppose a device rated to consume 50 W is connected to a 12 V battery, and a second identical device is connected in parallel to it. In series with these devices and the battery is a fuse that is rated to blow at 5 A. Does it blow?

- A: Yes
- B: No
- C: WAT

Current

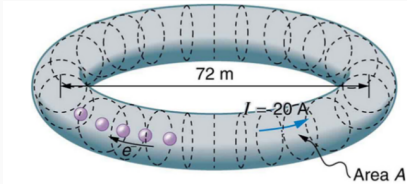


Figure 20.39 Electrons circulating in the storage ring called SPEAR constitute a 20.0-A current. Because they travel close to the speed of light, each electron completes many orbits in each second.

Figure 12: A component of the Stanford Linear Accelerator (SLAC) stores high-energy electrons.

SPEAR, a storage ring about 72.0 m in diameter at the Stanford Linear Accelerator (closed in 2009), has a 200.0-A circulating beam of electrons that are moving at nearly the speed of light. (See Figure 20.39.) How many electrons are in the beam?

- A: 10^{11}
- B: 10^{12}
- C: 10^{13}
- D: 10^{14}

Current

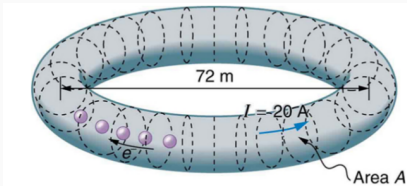


Figure 20.39 Electrons circulating in the storage ring called SPEAR constitute a 20.0-A current. Because they travel close to the speed of light, each electron completes many orbits in each second.

Figure 13: A component of the Stanford Linear Accelerator (SLAC) stores high-energy electrons.

Suppose each electron was dropped through a potential of 1 kV as it enters the ring. What is the energy of each electron?

- A: 100 eV
- B: 1 keV
- C: 1 MeV
- D: 1 Joule

Current

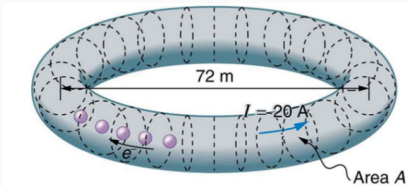


Figure 20.39 Electrons circulating in the storage ring called SPEAR constitute a 20.0-A current. Because they travel close to the speed of light, each electron completes many orbits in each second.

Figure 14: A component of the Stanford Linear Accelerator (SLAC) stores high-energy electrons.

What's the total energy of all the electrons? (Multiply the previous two answers).

- A: 10^{16} eV
- B: 10^{17} eV
- C: 10^{18} eV
- D: 10^{19} eV

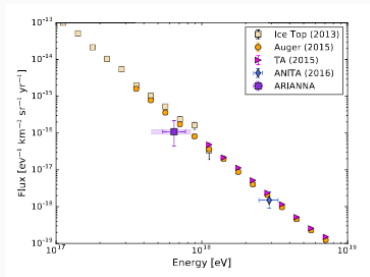


Figure 15: Cosmic ray protons' flux observed recently by the ARIANNA experiment.

How much energy is 10^{17} eV?
Recently, the ARIANNA experiment observed protons with so much energy (about $5 - 9 \times 10^{17}$ eV) the ensuing shock in the atmosphere created a radio pulse observed over a several kilometer range.

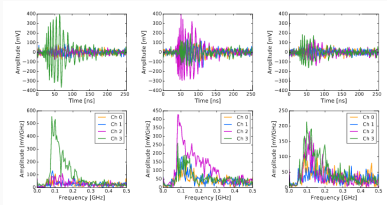


Figure 16: Cosmic ray protons' flux observed recently by the ARIANNA experiment.

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Current

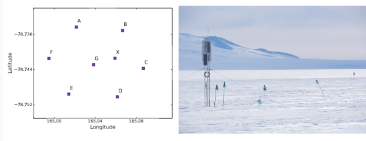


Figure 17: Cosmic ray protons' flux observed recently by the ARIANNA experiment.

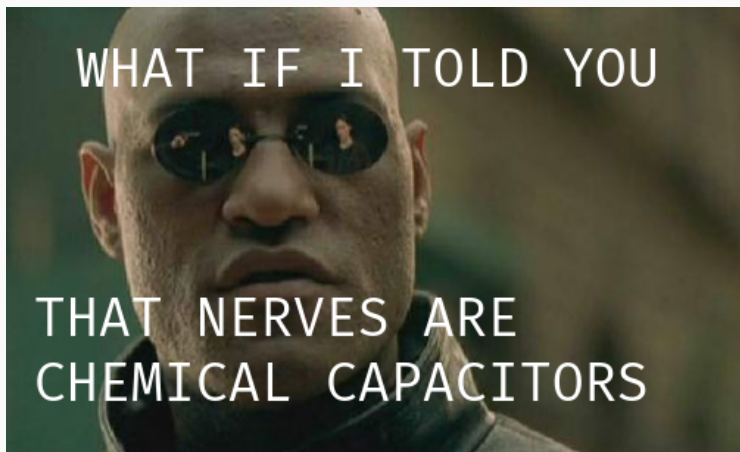
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Recently, the ARIANNA experiment observed protons with so much energy (about $5 - 9 \times 10^{17}$ eV) the ensuing shock in the atmosphere created a radio pulse observed over a several kilometer range.

Good paper topic: What is the purpose of the ARIANNA and ARA experiments in the Antarctic? What are they trying to measure?

Stay tuned for CON2 course in the Fall: The History and Current Status of Science in Antarctica

Nerve Signals



Nerve Signals

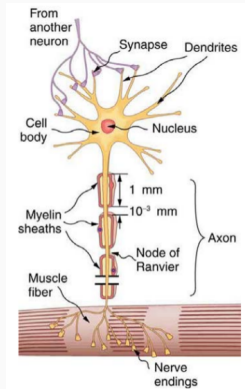


Figure 18: Structure of particular nerve cells known as *axons*, which have 1 mm long sections of *myelin* insulation, and 10^{-3} mm nodes. Nerve signals are measured to propagate at 100 m/s in some cases. No myelin means slower propagation.

Nerve Signals

Sensory fiber types					
Type	Erlanger-Gasser Classification	Diameter	Myelin	Conduction velocity	Associated sensory receptors
Ia	A α	13–20 μ m	Yes	80–120 m/s ^[4]	Responsible for proprioception
Ib	A α	13–20 μ m	Yes	80–120 m/s	Golgi tendon organ
II	A β	6–12 μ m	Yes	33–75 m/s	Secondary receptors of muscle spindle All cutaneous mechanoreceptors
III	A δ	1–5 μ m	Thin	3–30 m/s	Free nerve endings of touch and pressure Nociceptors of neospinothalamic tract Cold thermoreceptors
IV	C	0.2–1.5 μ m	No	0.5–2.0 m/s	Nociceptors of paleospinothalamic tract Warmth receptors

Figure 19: Lack of myelin allows cross-talk, but also slows down signals by a factor of 100.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nerve_conduction_velocity

Nerve Signals

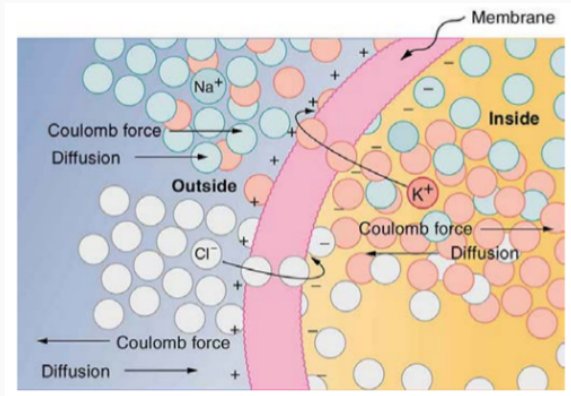


Figure 20: The sodium-potassium pump is responsible for creating an action potential that propagates along a nerve fiber. But how does this actually work?

Nerve Signals

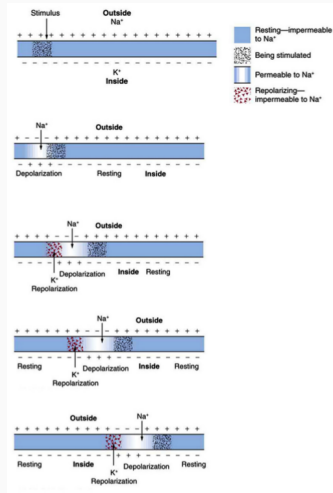


Figure 21: The depolarization-repolarization process is cascaded at a speed of ≈ 1 m/s.

Nerve Signals

We have a PhET simulation that demonstrates the mechanics of the pump.

<https://phet.colorado.edu/en/simulation/neuron>

1. Click *stimulate neuron* (the large yellow button) to cause a propagating pulse.
2. Click *potential chart* in the brown box at right to see the voltage versus time. This is called the *action potential*.

Write down the following observations in your notes:

1. What is the *peak-to-peak* voltage of the action potential?
2. What is the *pulse-width* of the action potential, measuring from depolarization to polarization?
3. Assuming the resistance R of the entire neuron surface is $100\text{ k}\Omega$, compute the power of the nerve signal in μW .
4. **Question:** If the cell membrane is 10 nm thick, and the voltage is 100 mV , what is the electric field across it?

Submit these answers as a table at the end of class.

Nerve Signals

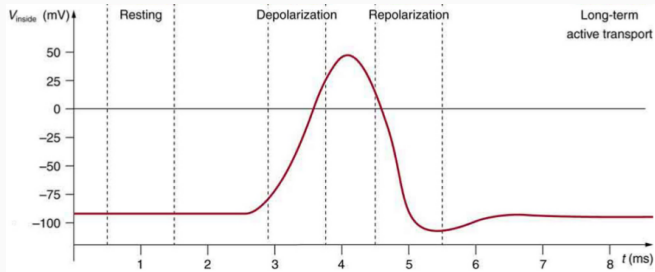


Figure 22: We understand now how our nerves create this action potential, but there is a problem: **it is not fast enough.**

Nerve Signals

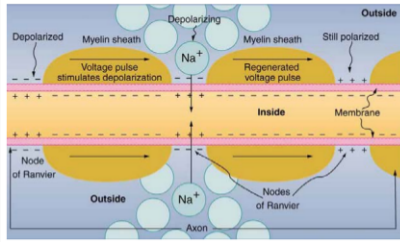


Figure 23: The *nodes of Ranvier* between *myelin sheaths* create a system which propagates the signal without losing speed.

Professor calculation: Let the speed of a signal in myelinated region be v_m , and the speed in the node v_n . Similarly, let the length of the myelinated area be Δl_m , and that of the node be Δl_n . For a total nerve length L that propagates a signal in time T , derive an expression for the speed of the signal, given N nodes.

Nerve Signals

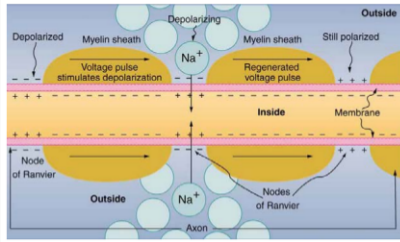


Figure 24: The *nodes of Ranvier* between *myelin sheaths* create a system which propagates the signal without losing speed.

$$L = N(\Delta l_m + \Delta l_n) \quad (16)$$

$$T = N(\Delta t_m + \Delta t_n) \quad (17)$$

$$v = \frac{L}{T} = \frac{\Delta l_m + \Delta l_n}{\Delta t_m + \Delta t_n} \quad (18)$$

Nerve Signals

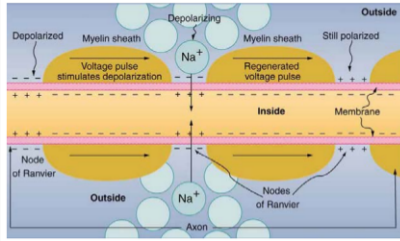


Figure 25: The nodes are small, the sheaths are large.

$$V = \frac{L}{T} = \frac{\Delta l_m + \Delta l_n}{\Delta t_m + \Delta t_n} \quad (19)$$

$$\epsilon = \frac{\Delta l_n}{\Delta l_m} \quad \kappa = \frac{V_m}{V_n} \quad (20)$$

$$V = V_m \left(\frac{1 + \epsilon}{1 + \kappa \epsilon} \right) \quad (21)$$

Nerve Signals

Now, we know that $\epsilon \approx 10^{-3}$ and $\kappa \approx 10^2$, so $\kappa\epsilon \approx 10^{-1}$. We can approximate the final expression as

$$v \approx v_m (1 - \kappa\epsilon + (\kappa\epsilon)^2) \quad (22)$$

Using $\kappa \approx 100$ and $\epsilon \approx 1/1000$, we get $v = 91\%v_m$.

- Our nerves have evolved to have the smallest nodes possible so that we get the highest nerve speed possible
- But we need the nodes to repolarize, otherwise the IR drop would dissipate the signal (think of electrical grid)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nerve_conduction_velocity

Suppose the distance from a boy's spinal chord to his finger tip is 0.5 m, and the nerve conduction velocity is 100 m/s. The boy touches a hot stove, sending a signal from his finger tip to his spinal chord, and the nervous system there sends a signal to jerk the hand away from the stove. The signal travels back to the finger tips. What is the total time elapsed? (In other words, what is the reaction time?)

- A: 0.1 ms
- B: 1 ms
- C: 10 ms
- D: 100 ms

What limits our reaction time? Nerve conduction velocity.

Conclusion

Reading: Chapters 20 and 21

1. Current, Ohm's Law, resistors and conductors
2. DC circuits I
3. Nerve signals
4. DC circuits II