Lecture 18

Source Free RL Circuits

Source Free RL

Consider the series connection of a resistor and an inductor, as shown in Fig. 7.11. Our goal is to determine the circuit response, which we will assume to be the current $i(t)$ through the inductor. We select the inductor current as the response in order to take advantage of the idea that the inductor current cannot change instantaneously. At $t = 0$, we assume that the inductor has an initial current I_0, or

$$i(0) = I_0 \tag{7.13}$$

with the corresponding energy stored in the inductor as

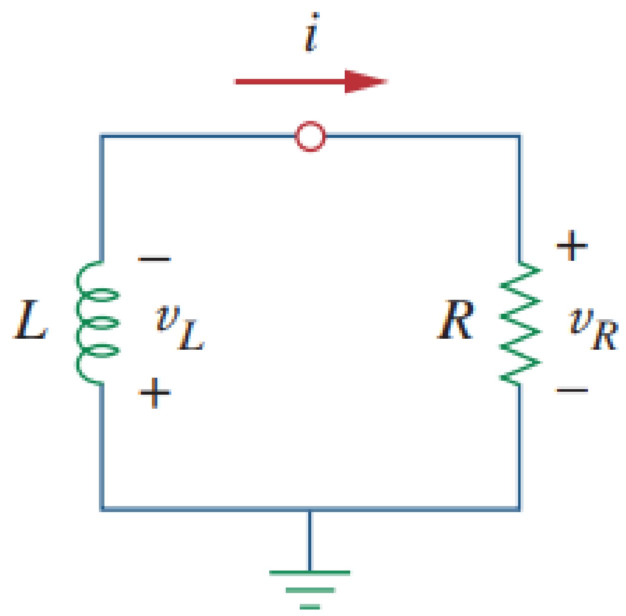
$$w(0) = \frac{1}{2} L I_0^2 \tag{7.14}$$

Applying KVL around the loop in Fig. 7.11,

$$v_L + v_R = 0 \tag{7.15}$$

But $v_L = L\,di/dt$ and $v_R = iR$. Thus,

$$L\frac{di}{dt} + Ri = 0$$



or

$$\frac{di}{dt} + \frac{R}{L}i = 0 \tag{7.16}$$

Rearranging terms and integrating gives

$$\int_{I_0}^{i(t)} \frac{di}{i} = -\int_0^t \frac{R}{L}\,dt$$

$$\ln i\Big|_{I_0}^{i(t)} = -\frac{Rt}{L}\Big|_0^t \quad \Rightarrow \quad \ln i(t) - \ln I_0 = -\frac{Rt}{L} + 0$$

or

$$\ln \frac{i(t)}{I_0} = -\frac{Rt}{L} \tag{7.17}$$

Taking the powers of e, we have

$$i(t) = I_0 e^{-Rt/L} \tag{7.18}$$

This shows that the natural response of the *RL* circuit is an exponential decay of the initial current. The current response is shown in Fig. 7.12. It is evident from Eq. (7.18) that the time constant for the *RL* circuit is

$$\boxed{\tau = \frac{L}{R}} \tag{7.19}$$

with τ again having the unit of seconds. Thus, Eq. (7.18) may be written as

$$\boxed{i(t) = I_0 e^{-t/\tau}} \tag{7.20}$$

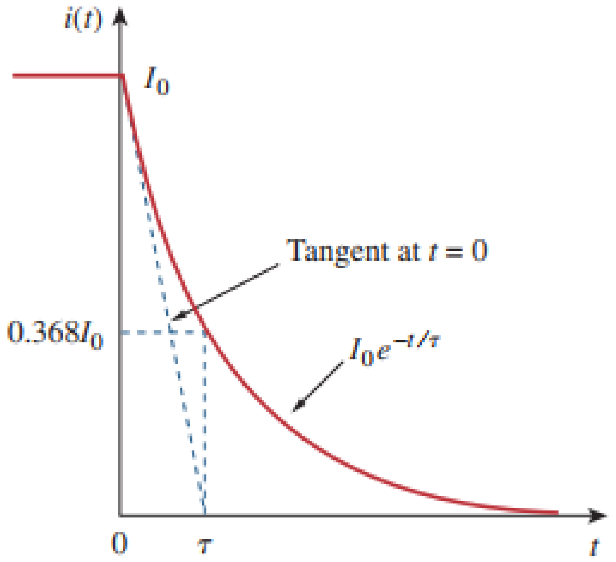


Figure 7.12
The current response of the *RL* circuit.

In summary:

The Key to Working with a Source-Free *RL* Circuit Is to Find:

1. The initial current $i(0) = I_0$ through the inductor.
2. The time constant τ of the circuit.

With the two items, we obtain the response as the inductor current $i_L(t) = i(t) = i(0)e^{-t/\tau}$. Once we determine the inductor current i_L, other variables (inductor voltage v_L, resistor voltage v_R, and resistor current i_R) can be obtained. Note that in general, R in Eq. (7.19) is the Thevenin resistance at the terminals of the inductor.

Example 7.4

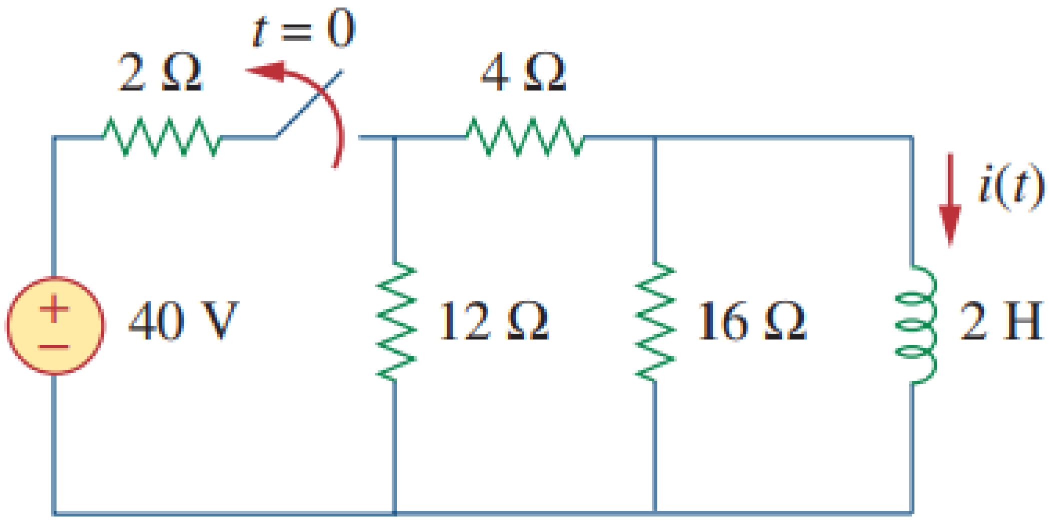
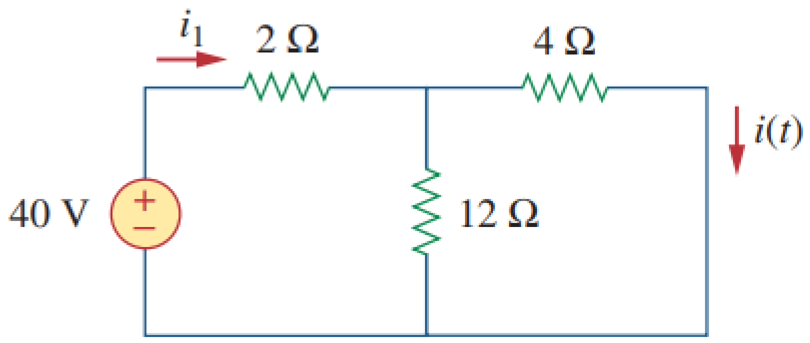


Figure 7.16
For Example 7.4.

The switch in the circuit of Fig. 7.16 has been closed for a long time. At $t = 0$, the switch is opened. Calculate $i(t)$ for $t > 0$.

Solution:

When $t < 0$, the switch is closed, and the inductor acts as a short circuit to dc. The 16-Ω resistor is short-circuited; the resulting circuit is shown in Fig. 7.17(a). To get i_1 in Fig. 7.17(a), we combine the 4-Ω and 12-Ω resistors in parallel to get



$$\frac{4 \times 12}{4 + 12} = 3\ \Omega$$

Hence,

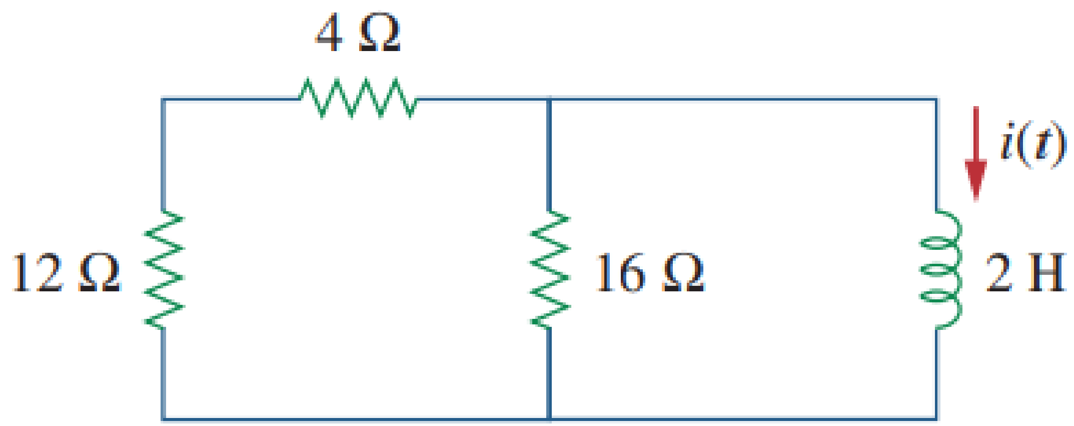
$$i_1 = \frac{40}{2 + 3} = 8\ \text{A}$$

We obtain $i(t)$ from i_1 in Fig. 7.17(a) using current division, by writing

$$i(t) = \frac{12}{12 + 4} i_1 = 6\ \text{A}, \qquad t < 0$$

Since the current through an inductor cannot change instantaneously,

$$i(0) = i(0^-) = 6\ \text{A}$$



When $t > 0$, the switch is open and the voltage source is disconnected. We now have the source-free *RL* circuit in Fig. 7.17(b). Combining the resistors, we have

$$R_{eq} = (12 + 4) \| 16 = 8\ \Omega$$

The time constant is

$$\tau = \frac{L}{R_{eq}} = \frac{2}{8} = \frac{1}{4}\ \text{s}$$

Thus,

$$i(t) = i(0)e^{-t/\tau} = 6e^{-4t}\ \text{A}$$

Practice Problem 7.4

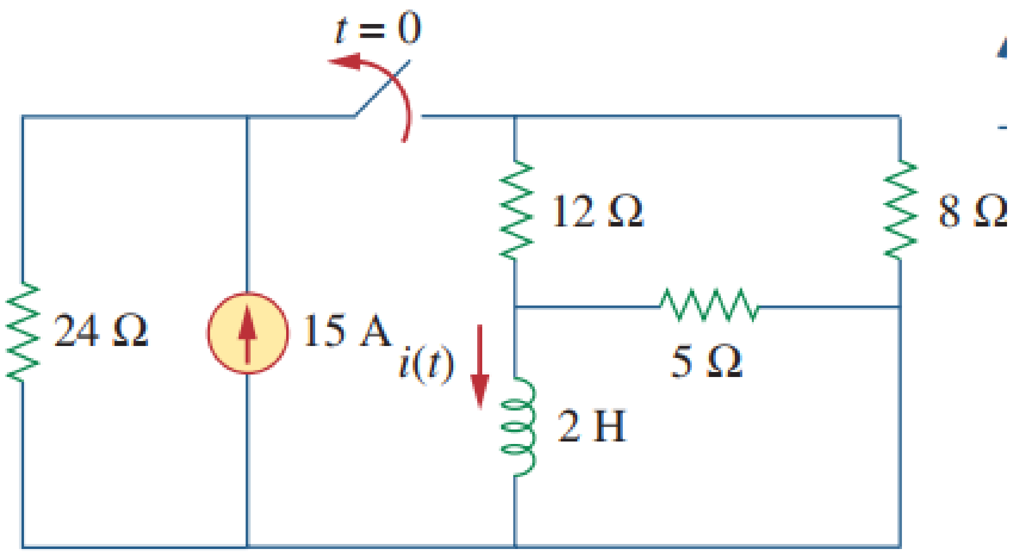
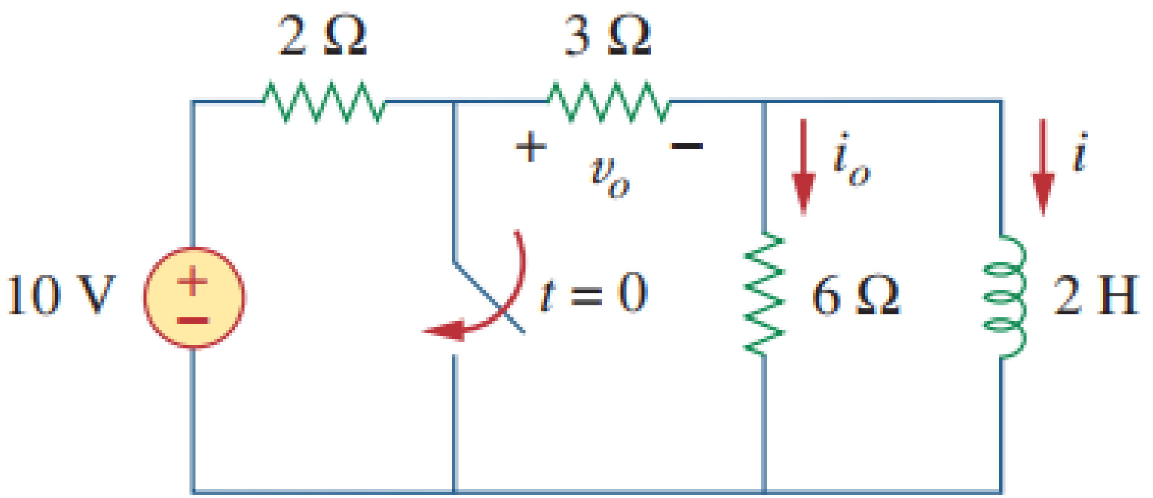


Figure 7.18
For Practice Prob. 7.4.

For the circuit in Fig. 7.18, find $i(t)$ for $t > 0$.

Answer: $5e^{-2t}$ A, $t > 0$.

Example 7.5



In the circuit shown in Fig. 7.19, find i_o, v_o, and i for all time, assuming that the switch was open for a long time.

Solution:

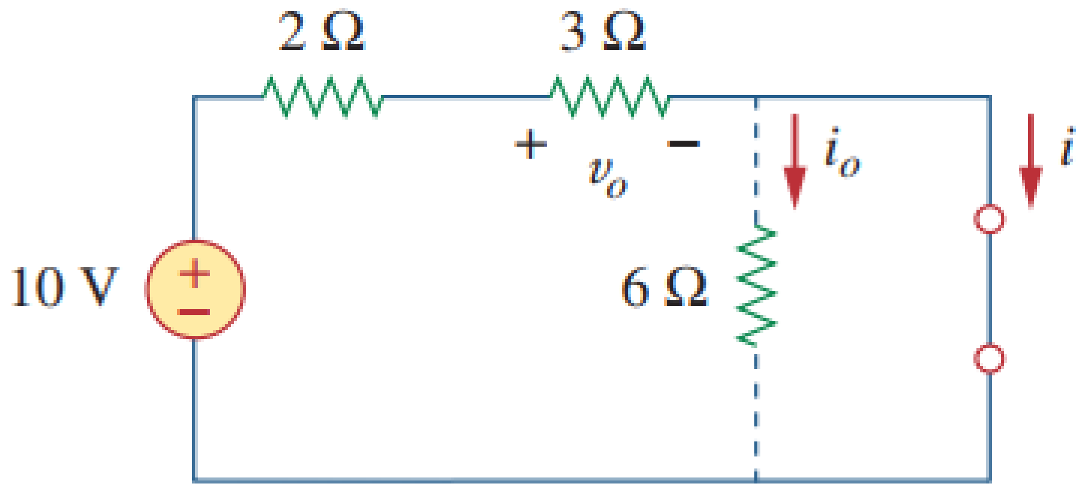
It is better to first find the inductor current i and then obtain other quantities from it.

For $t < 0$, the switch is open. Since the inductor acts like a short circuit to dc, the 6-Ω resistor is short-circuited, so that we have the circuit shown in Fig. 7.20(a). Hence, $i_o = 0$, and

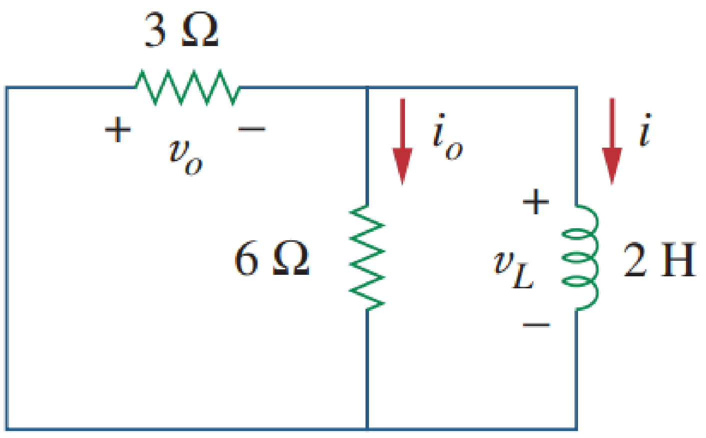
$$i(t) = \frac{10}{2 + 3} = 2 \text{ A}, \qquad t < 0$$

$$v_o(t) = 3i(t) = 6 \text{ V}, \qquad t < 0$$

Thus, $i(0) = 2$.



For $t > 0$, the switch is closed, so that the voltage source is short-circuited. We now have a source-free *RL* circuit as shown in Fig. 7.20(b). At the inductor terminals,



$$R_{Th} = 3 \parallel 6 = 2\ \Omega$$

so that the time constant is

$$\tau = \frac{L}{R_{Th}} = 1\text{ s}$$

Hence,

$$i(t) = i(0)e^{-t/\tau} = 2e^{-t}\text{ A}, \qquad t > 0$$

Since the inductor is in parallel with the 6-Ω and 3-Ω resistors,

$$v_o(t) = -v_L = -L\frac{di}{dt} = -2(-2e^{-t}) = 4e^{-t}\text{ V}, \qquad t > 0$$

and

$$i_o(t) = \frac{v_L}{6} = -\frac{2}{3}e^{-t}\text{ A}, \qquad t > 0$$

Thus, for all time,

$$i_o(t) = \begin{cases} 0\text{ A}, & t < 0 \\ -\dfrac{2}{3}e^{-t}\text{ A}, & t > 0 \end{cases}, \qquad v_o(t) = \begin{cases} 6\text{ V}, & t < 0 \\ 4e^{-t}\text{ V}, & t > 0 \end{cases}$$

$$i(t) = \begin{cases} 2\text{ A}, & t < 0 \\ 2e^{-t}\text{ A}, & t \geq 0 \end{cases}$$

Thanks