



10060 Physics (Polyteknisk grundlag)

The Second Law of Thermodynamics

Tuesday 23/9-2025 DTU



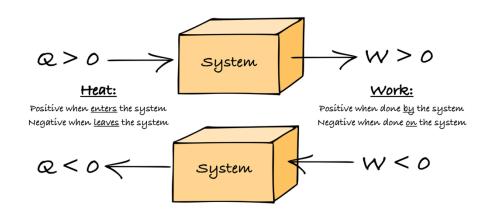
A word of caution

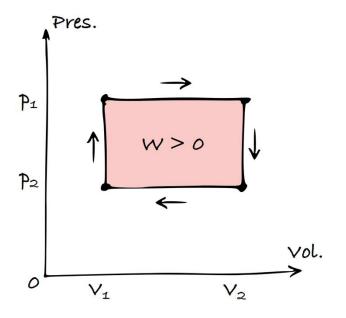
First law of Thermodynamics

$$\Delta E_{\text{tot}} = Q - W$$

... be mindful of the sign

... be careful with equating heat and work between different parts of the diagrams that look the same... they are usually different







Quizzes



Question 1

A gas is contained within a piston. Initially, the gas is at thermal equilibrium, with a pressure of 1 atm, volume of 2 L, and temperature of 300 K. If the gas is slowly compressed to a volume of 1 L while maintaining a constant temperature, which of the following best describes the work done and the heat transfer during this process?

- The system does work on the surroundings, and heat is absorbed by the system.
- The surroundings do work on the system, and heat is released by the system.
- The system does work on the surroundings, and heat is released by the system.
- The surroundings do work on the system, and heat is absorbed by the system.

Question 3

In a thermodynamic cycle an ideal gas undergoes two isothermal and two adiabatic processes. Starting from point A, the gas is compressed isothermally to point B, then compressed adiabatically to point C, expanded isothermally to point D, and finally expanded adiabatically back to point A. What is the net work done by the gas in this cycle?

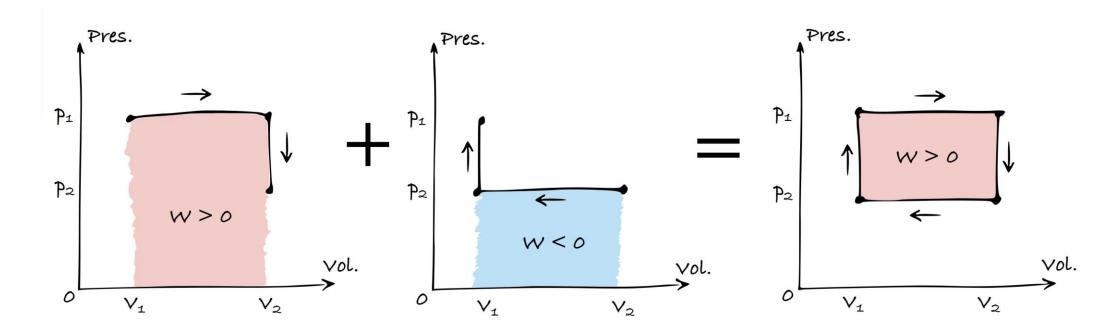
- The net work done is positive along with a net internal energy gain.
- The net work done is negative along with a net internal energy loss.
- The net work done is positive and so is the heat.
- The net work done is positive and the heat is negative.



Reminder: Cyclic Transformation

In a cyclic transformation we get back to the original point

$$\Delta E_{tot} = 0 \rightarrow Q = W$$





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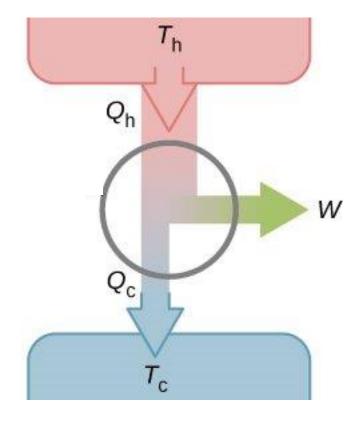
Statements of the 2nd law of thermodynamics

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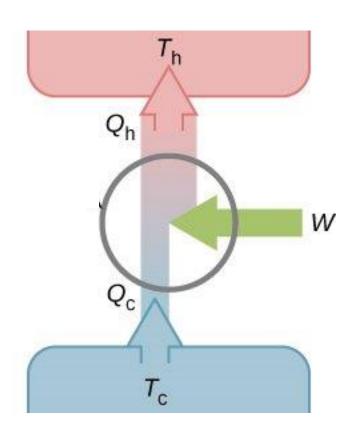
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What are these?



Heat Engine



Heat pump / refrigerator



Efficiency of an engine

Efficiency is a measure of what we get out in relation to what we put in

Heat Engine

$$e = \frac{W}{Q_h}$$

Refrigerator

$$K_R = \frac{Q_c}{W}$$

Heat pump

$$K_P = \frac{Q_h}{W}$$

... but in a closed loop:
$$W = Q_h - Q_c$$

$$e = 1 - \frac{Q_c}{Q_h}$$

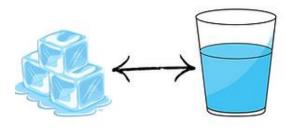
$$K_R = \frac{Q_c}{Q_h - Q_c}$$

$$K_P = \frac{Q_h}{Q_h - Q_c}$$

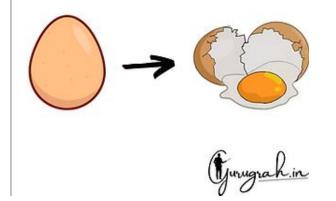


Reversible and Irreversible processes

Reversible



Irreversible



A **reversible process** is a process in which the system and environment can be restored to exactly the same initial stats they were in before the process occurred

An **irreversible process** is a process in which the system and its environment cannot be restored to their original states at the same time

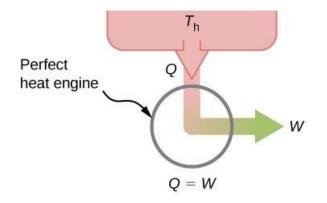
The hard part is often to restore the environment to its original state



First statement of 2nd law of thermodynamics

Kelvin's statement:

It is impossible to convert the heat from a single source into work without any other effect



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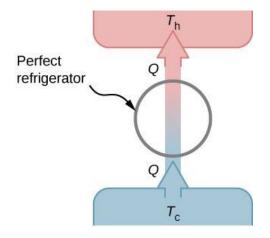
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Second statement of 2nd law of thermodynamics

Clausius' statement:

Heat never flows spontaneously from a colder object to a hotter object

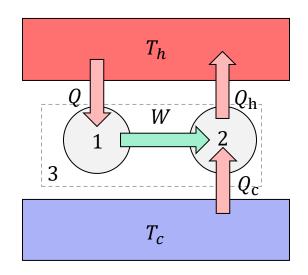




Equivalence of the two statements

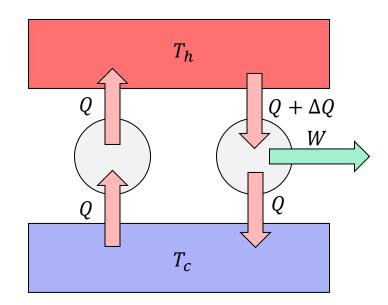
We do the proof by contraddiction:

Perfect heat engine exists



$$\begin{cases} Q = W & for 1 \\ Q_c - Q_h = W & for 2 \\ Q + Q_c = Q_h & for 3 \end{cases} \rightarrow \begin{cases} Q = Q_c - Q_h \\ Q = Q_h - Q_c \end{cases}$$
 Heat from cold to hot

Heat spontaneously goes from cold to hot



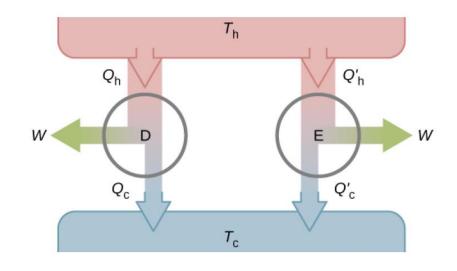
$$W = Q + \Delta Q - Q = \Delta Q \rightarrow W > 0$$

And no heat to cold reservoir

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All reversible engines have the same efficiency



Assume: $e_E > e_D$

$$\frac{W}{Q_h'} > \frac{W}{Q_h} \rightarrow Q_h > Q_h' \rightarrow Q_c > Q_c'$$

$$Q_c - Q'_c > 0$$
 and $Q'_h - Q_h < 0$

Heat from cold to hot

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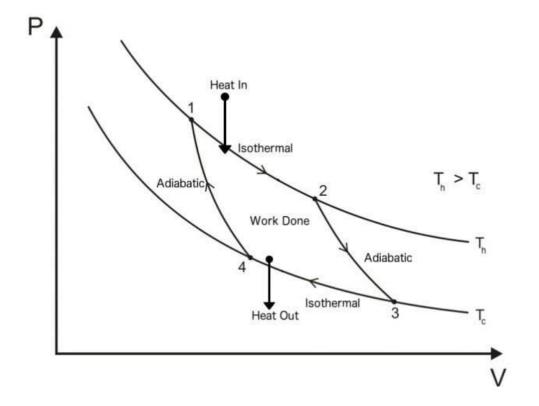
Engine cycles



The Carnot Heat Engine

N. Sadi Carnot (1796-1832)

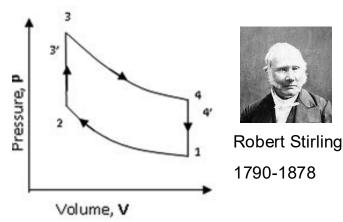
- The Carnot process is reversible (in principle)
- Rarely used, since it is not very practical



The Stirling Heat Engine

More practical than the basic Carnot machine

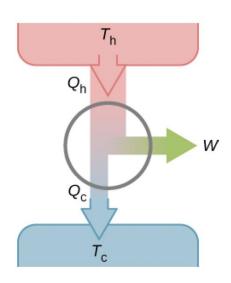




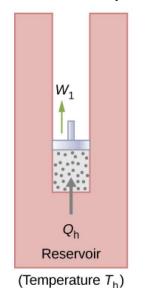


The Carnot Cycle

Heat engine

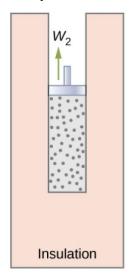


The separate phases

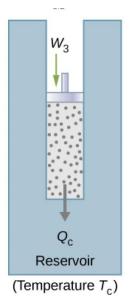


Step 1: Isothermal expansion

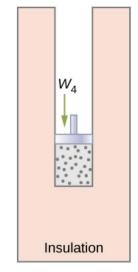
 $(M \rightarrow N)$



Step 2: Adiabatic expansion (N → O)

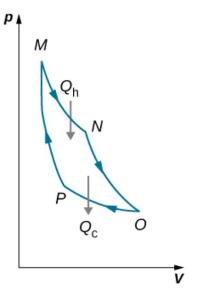


Step 3: Isothermal compression (O→P)



Step 4: Adiabatic compression (P-M)

PV diagram



Physics (PF)

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The efficiency of a Carnot Cycle using ideal gases

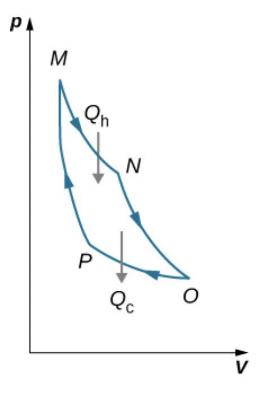
$$Q_h = W_{MN} = nRT_h ln \frac{V_N}{V_M}$$

$$T_h V_N^{\gamma - 1} = T_c V_O^{\gamma - 1} \rightarrow \frac{V_N^{\gamma - 1}}{V_O^{\gamma - 1}} = \frac{T_c}{T_h}$$

$$Q_c = W_{OP} = nRT_c ln \frac{V_O}{V_P}$$

4. Adiabatic compression:

$$T_c V_P^{\gamma - 1} = T_h V_M^{\gamma - 1} \rightarrow \frac{V_M^{\gamma - 1}}{V_P^{\gamma - 1}} = \frac{T_c}{T_h}$$



Efficiency:

$$e = 1 - \frac{Q_c}{Q_h} = 1 - \frac{T_c}{T_h} \frac{\ln(V_O/V_P)}{\ln(V_N/V_M)}$$
 since $\frac{V_O}{V_P} = \frac{V_N}{V_M}$

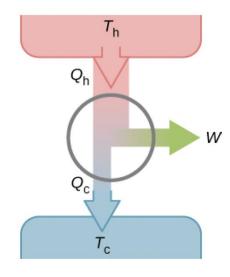
$$e = 1 - \frac{T_c}{T_h}$$



Example: Let's optimize an Engine

A heat engine runs between a hot reservoir at T_h =500 K and a cold reservoir at T_c =300K. It absorbs Q_h =100 kJ from the hot side each cycle.

- What is the theoretical Maximum efficiency?
- A real engine can reach 70% efficiency of a Carnot engine, what's the Work output?
- Does the engine get more efficient if I cool T_c down by 100K or T_h up by 100K?



Baseline (500 K / 300 K):

$$\eta_C = 1 - \frac{300}{500} = 0.40 \Rightarrow \eta_{\rm real} = 0.70 \times 0.40 = 0.28 \Rightarrow W = 0.28 \times 100 = 28 \text{ kJ}.$$

Option A: raise T_h to 600 K:

$$\eta_C = 1 - \frac{300}{600} = 0.50 \rightarrow \eta_{\text{real}} = 0.35 \rightarrow W = 35 \text{ kJ}.$$

Option B: lower T_c to 200 K:

$$\eta_C = 1 - \frac{200}{500} = 0.60 \rightarrow \eta_{\text{real}} = 0.42 \rightarrow W = 42 \text{ kJ}.$$



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Entropy



Definition of Entropy

Entropy is a thermodynamical state variable and is defined (for reversible processes) as:

$$\Delta S = \int_{A}^{B} \frac{dQ}{T}$$

Example: Melting ice

$$\Delta S = \frac{Q_f}{T_f} = \frac{mL_f}{T_f}$$

Example: Entropy Carnot Engine

$$\Delta S = \Delta S_1 + \Delta S_2 + \Delta S_3 + \Delta S_4 = \frac{Q_h}{T_h} - \frac{Q_c}{T_c} = 0$$

Entropy change in a reversible cycle is zero!



2nd law of thermodynamics in terms of entropy

For the entropy for a closed system and that of the universe it holds:

$$\Delta S \ge 0$$
,

The entropy of the universe is defined as:

$$\Delta S_{universe} = \Delta S_{system} + \Delta S_{environment}$$

Example: Melting ice in a constant T>0 reservoir:

$$\Delta S_{universe} = \Delta S_{ice} + \Delta S_{reservoir} > 0$$

$$\Delta S_{ice} = \frac{mL_f}{T_{ice}}$$

$$\Delta S_{reservoir} = -\frac{mL_f}{T_{res}}$$

$$\Delta S_{universe} = mL_f \left(\frac{1}{T_{ice}} - \frac{1}{T_{res}} \right)$$



The direction of increasing entropy is the direction of time



Hard to tell if played backwards

=> nearly reversible





Obvious which way time goes forward => irreversible

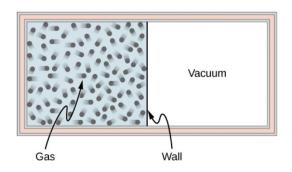
Checkout Veritasium video on Entropy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxL2HoqLbyA

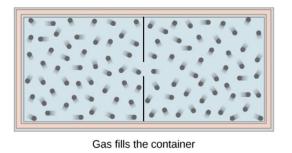


Entropy from a microscopic perspective

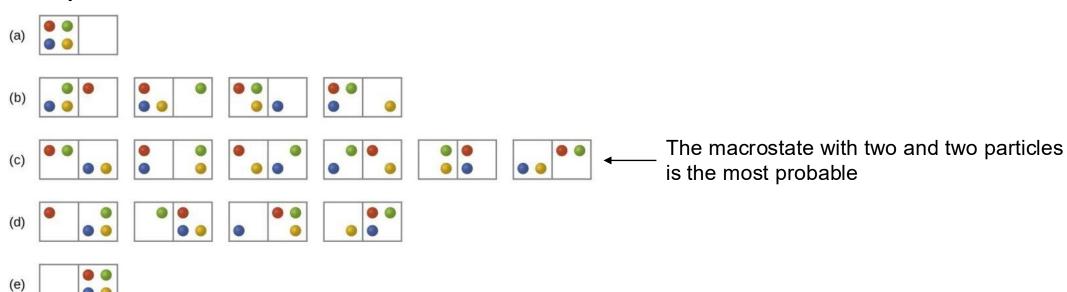
Entropy is a measure of disorder:

The more disorder the more entropy





Possible system microstates:





2nd law of thermodynamics in terms of entropy

For the entropy for a closed system and that of the universe it holds:

$$\Delta S \geq 0$$
,

3rd Law of Thermodynamics

The absolute zero temperature is not reachable - at least not with a finite number of cooling steps

$$\lim_{T\to 0} \Delta S = 0$$

... unfortunately you will need quantum mechanics to understand this statement