

# AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism

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# Chapter 1

## Electrostatics and Gauss' Law

### 1.1 Electrostatics

#### 1.1.1 Electric Charge

An electron is negatively charged.

Two particles of the same polarity repel each other while those of opposite polarity are attracted.

**Conductors** are materials in which electrons are able to move relatively freely. **Nonconductors/Insulators** are the opposite, limiting electron movement.

**Semiconductors** are materials that are between conductors and insulators in terms of conductivity.

**Superconductors** are perfect conductors.

Atoms are comprised of positively charged protons, negatively charged electrons, and neutral (though very slightly negatively charged) neutrons. In conductors, the outermost electrons are able to move relatively freely. These mobile electrons are called **conduction electrons**. **Induction** describes the phenomenon of neutral conductors being attracted to charged ones.

**Coulomb's law** describes the electrostatic force between two particles of charges  $q_1$  and  $q_2$  as

$$F = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{|q_1||q_2|}{r^2} \quad (\text{Coulomb's Law})$$

where  $\epsilon_0 \approx 8.85 \times 10^{-12} \text{ C}^2/\text{N}^2 \text{ m}^2$ , the **vacuum permittivity constant**. This is often rewritten as

$$F = k \frac{|q_1||q_2|}{r^2} \quad (\text{Coulomb's Law})$$

where  $k = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \approx 8.99 \times 10^9 \text{ N m}^2/\text{C}^2$  is the **electrostatic constant** or the **Coulomb constant**.

The electrostatic force is pointed either directly towards or away from the other particle. If multiple are acting on the same particle, the net force is the *vector* sum.

Particles that interact through the electrostatic force form a *third-law pair*.

One **shell theories** hypothesizes that a shell with uniform charge density acts like a single particle at its center from the perspective of a particle outside the shell while another claims that it cancels out, providing no net force to a particle within the shell.

Electric charge is **quantized**, meaning that it can only take on certain (*discrete*) values.

A particle's charge  $q$  can be written as  $ne$ , where  $n$  is a nonzero integer and  $e \approx 1.609 \times 10^{-19} \text{ C}$  is the elementary charge

$$q = ne$$

The proton, neutron, and electron, denoted p, n, and e (or e-) respectively, have the corresponding charges  $e$ ,  $0$ , and  $-e$ .

The net charge of an isolated system is always conserved.

### 1.1.2 Electric Fields

The **electric field**  $\vec{E}$  is the vector field of the electric charge on every point in a region surrounding a charged object. It is measured in N/C To measure it, a **positive** charge  $q_0$ , called a *test charge* is placed at a point. The electrostatic force  $F$  is then measured on the test charge. The electric field at this point is defined to be

$$\vec{E} = \frac{\vec{F}}{q_0}$$

The magnitude of electric field due to a point charge  $q$  at any point of distance  $r$  from said point charge is

$$E = \frac{F}{q_0} = k \frac{|q|}{r^2}$$

The direction vector  $\vec{d}$  of a dipole typically goes from the negative end to the positive.

The **dipole moment**  $\vec{p}$  is defined as

$$\vec{p} = q\vec{d}$$

The dipole moment always attempts to align with the direction of the field, making it simple to see the direction of rotation of the dipole. The torque  $\vec{\tau}$  on a dipole in an electric field is

$$\vec{\tau} = \vec{p} \times \vec{E}$$

**Linear charge density** is denoted as  $\lambda$  as is found as

$$dq = \lambda ds$$

for a curved rod of charge  $Q$  and length  $s$ . It is generally useful to use  $\theta$ , where

$$\theta = \frac{s}{r} \implies ds = r d\theta$$

A vector into the paper is denoted on one end by  $\otimes$  while one pointing out is denoted by  $\odot$ .

Work  $W$  is the integral of force with respect to displacement, making it

$$W = \int_C \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r}$$

The work done by a conservative force is denoted by  $W_c$ , a change in potential energy by  $\Delta U$ , and the gravitational force by  $F_g$ . It should be noted that gravity is a conservative force and that

$$W_c = -\Delta U$$

As such,

$$\Delta U_g = mg(\Delta h)$$

## 1.2 Gauss' Law

The **area vector**  $d\vec{A}$  for an area element on a surface is a vector with magnitude equal to area  $dA$  of the element that is perpendicular to the surface pointing outwards.

The **electric flux**  $d\Phi_E$  is given by

$$d\Phi_E = \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{A} \quad (\text{electric flux})$$

with units  $\text{N/C m}^2$ . The **total flux** through a surface is found by the surface integral

$$\Phi_E = \iint_S \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{A} \quad (\text{total flux})$$

Through a **closed surface** (as used in Gauss' law),

$$\Phi_E = \oiint_S \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{A} = \oiint_S E dA \cos \varphi \quad (\text{net flux})$$

where  $\varphi$  is the angle between the electric field and the surface.

For a uniform electric field,

$$\Phi_E = \oiint_S E dA \cos \varphi = E \cos \varphi \oiint_S dA = EA \cos \varphi$$

The relationship between the surface and the field can be described by flux as

$\Phi_E$	$< 0$	$0$	$> 0$
$\varphi$	$< 90^\circ$	$90^\circ$	$> 90^\circ$

**Gauss' law** relates the net flux  $\Phi_E$  of an electric field through a closed (Gaussian) surface to the net charge  $q_{\text{enc}}$  enclosed by the surface as

$$\varepsilon_0 \Phi_E = q_{\text{enc}} \quad (\text{Gauss' law})$$

If excess charge is placed on a conductor, the charge will move to the surface.

Everywhere inside a conductor,  $E_{\text{net}} = 0$ .

A **(uniform) surface charge density**  $\sigma$  is equal to

$$\sigma = \frac{q}{A} \quad (\text{uniform surface charge density})$$

The magnitude of the electric field outside of a conductor with uniform surface charge density  $\sigma$  is

$$E = \frac{\sigma}{\varepsilon_0} \quad (\text{conducting surface})$$

That outside of an insulator is

$$E = \frac{\sigma}{2\varepsilon_0} \quad (\text{insulator})$$

The magnitude of the electric field produced by a uniform spherical shell of radius  $R$  is

$$E = \begin{cases} k \frac{q}{r^2} & r \geq R \\ 0 & r < R \end{cases}$$

A **(uniform) volume charge density**  $\rho$  is equal to

$$\rho = \frac{q}{V} \quad (\text{uniform volume charge density})$$

Within a sphere of radius  $R$  with uniform volume charge density, the magnitude of the field is radial:

$$E = \left( k \frac{Q}{R^3} \right) r \quad (\text{uniform charge, field at } r \leq R)$$

# Chapter 2

## Conductors, Capacitors, and Dielectrics

### 2.1 Electric Potential

Electrostatic forces are **conservative**, so  $W_C = -\Delta U$ . It can then be seen that

$$\Delta U = - \int_C \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{s} = -q \int_C \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{s}$$

The change in **electric potential**  $V$  (measured in volts (V)) is found as

$$\Delta V = \frac{\Delta U}{q} = - \frac{q \int_C \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{s}}{q} = - \int_C \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{s}$$

If the initial potential is set to 0, then

$$V = - \int_C \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{s}$$

Adjacent points with the same electric potential form an **equipotential surface**, which can be imaginary or real.

The electric potential from a point charge can be found as

$$V_f - V_i = - \int_C \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{s} = - \int_r^\infty E dr = k \frac{q}{r}$$

Setting  $V_f$  to 0 (at  $\infty$ ),

$$V_i = V = k \frac{q}{r}$$

The potential due to a collection of  $n$  charged particles is simply the sum of the individual potentials:

$$V = \sum_{i=1}^n V_i = \sum_{i=1}^n k \frac{q_i}{r_i} \quad (n \text{ charged particles})$$

Note that direction is not considered.

As a convention, positively charged particles produce positive potentials while negative ones produce negative potentials.

The potential energy of a system of particles is the sum of the potential energies of every pair of

particles in the system. It is equal to the work required to assemble the system with particles that are initially at rest and infinitely far apart. For two particles of distance  $r$ ,

$$U = k \frac{q_1 q_2}{r} \quad (2\text{-particle system})$$

The  $x$  component of an electric field can be found from potential as

$$E_x = -\frac{dV_x}{dx}$$

For a continuous charge distribution over an extended object, the net potential can be found as

$$V = \int_C dV = k \int_C \frac{dq}{r}$$

A substitution can then be made using the appropriate charge density.

## 2.2 Capacitance

A capacitor is comprised of 2 isolated conductors with charges  $+q$  and  $-q$ . Its **capacitance**  $C$  is defined as

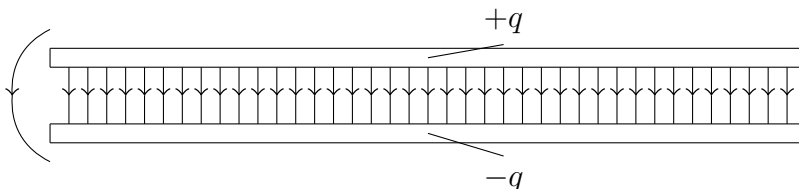
$$C = \frac{|q|}{V}$$

where  $V$  is the potential difference between the plates. It is measured in C/V or **Farads (F)**. By its definition, capacitance is always positive.

A capacitor's capacitance is a constant inherent to its physical attributes.

A parallel-plate capacitor is comprised of 2 parallel plates of area  $A$  separated by a distance  $d$ . The charges on the faces of the plates facing each other are of magnitude  $q$  and opposite signs.

The electric field due to a parallel-plate capacitor is uniform only between the plates.



A battery is denoted by



where the larger side is positive and the shorter negative.

An open switch is denoted by



A capacitor is denoted by



When a circuit with a battery, an open switch, and an uncharged capacitor is completed by closing the switch, conduction electrons shift, resulting in the capacitor plates being of opposite charges.

Gauss' law can be used to relate the electric field between a capacitor's plates to the charge  $q$  on either plate as

$$V = - \int_C \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{s} = - \int_-^+ E ds$$

It is assumed that the plates of the capacitor are large and close enough for fringing to be negligible, making  $\vec{E}$  constant between the plates. Using a Gaussian surface that encloses just the charge  $q$  on the positive plate,

$$\oiint \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{A} = EA = \frac{q_{\text{enc}}}{\varepsilon_0} = \frac{q}{\varepsilon_0}$$

so

$$E = \frac{q}{A\varepsilon_0} \quad \text{and} \quad q = EA\varepsilon_0$$

Where  $A$  is the plate's area. Therefore

$$V = \int_-^+ E ds = E \int_0^d ds = Ed$$

Substituting  $CV$  for  $q$  yields

$$C = \frac{q}{V} = \frac{EA\varepsilon_0}{Ed} = \frac{A\varepsilon_0}{d} \quad (\text{parallel-plate capacitor})$$

Consider a cylindrical capacitor of length  $L$  formed by 2 coaxial cylinders of radii  $a$  and  $b$ . Assume that  $L \gg b$  so that fringing may be neglected. Each plate has charge  $q$ , so

$$q = EA\varepsilon_0 = E\varepsilon_0(2\pi rL)$$

Using Gauss' law,

$$\oiint \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{A} = E(2\pi rL) = \frac{q_{\text{enc}}}{\varepsilon_0} = \frac{q}{\varepsilon_0}$$

so

$$E = \frac{1}{2\pi\varepsilon_0} \frac{q}{rL}$$

and

$$V = \frac{q}{2L\pi\varepsilon_0} \int_a^b \frac{dr}{r} = \frac{q}{2L\pi\varepsilon_0} \ln\left(\frac{b}{a}\right)$$

The capacitance is then

$$C = \frac{q}{V} = 2\pi\varepsilon_0 \frac{L}{\ln(b/a)} \quad (\text{cylindrical capacitor})$$

Capacitors connected in parallel can be replaced by a single capacitor with the same total charge  $q_{\text{eq}}$  and potential difference  $V$  as the original capacitors.

When a potential difference  $V$  is applied across several parallel capacitors, that potential difference  $V$  is applied to each capacitor. The total charge  $q_{\text{eq}}$  is the the sum of the charges of each individual capacitor.

$$q_{\text{eq}} = \sum q_i$$

The equivalent capacitance  $C_{\text{eq}}$  is then simply

$$C_{\text{eq}} = \sum C_i \quad (\text{capacitors in parallel})$$

Capacitors connected in series can be replaced by a single capacitor with the same total charge and potential difference.

When a potential difference  $V$  is applied across several series capacitors, the capacitors all have the same charge  $q$ . The sum of the potential differences across all capacitors is equal to the applied potential difference  $V$ .

$$V_{\text{eq}} = \sum q \left( \frac{1}{C_i} \right)$$

The reciprocal of the equivalent capacitance  $C_{\text{eq}}$  is then

$$\frac{1}{C_{\text{eq}}} = \sum \frac{1}{C_i} \quad (\text{capacitors in series})$$

The **electric potential energy**  $U_c$  of a charged capacitor is

$$U_c = \frac{q^2}{2C} = \frac{1}{2}CV^2 \quad (\text{potential energy})$$

This is equal to the work required to charge the capacitor. This energy can be viewed as being stored in the electric field between the plates.

Every electric field has an associated stored energy. In a vacuum, the **energy density**  $u$  in a field of magnitude  $E$  is

$$u = \frac{1}{2}\epsilon_0 E^2 \quad (\text{energy density})$$

A **dielectric** is an insulating material placed between the plates of a capacitor. This increases the structural integrity of the capacitor while increasing its capacitance.

The **dielectric constant**  $\kappa$  is a unitless constant that is the ratio of the final capacitance to the initial capacitance.

$$C = \kappa C_0$$



# Chapter 3

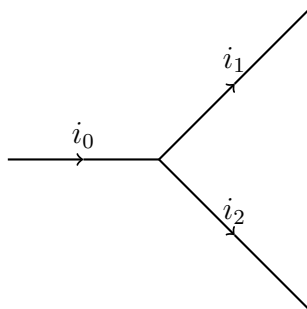
## Circuits

### 3.1 Current and Resistance

If charge  $dq$  passes through a hypothetical plane in time  $dt$ , the **current**  $i$  is defined as

$$i = \frac{dq}{dt} \quad (\text{definition of current})$$

It is measured in units of C/S (**Amperes A**). Consider the following junction:



As the charge is conserved,

$$i_1 + i_2 = i_0$$

The current  $i$  and the **current density**  $\vec{J}$  are related by

$$i = \iint_S \vec{J} \cdot d\vec{A}$$

where  $d\vec{A}$  is a vector that is orthogonal to a surface element of area (in the direction of the current density by convention) and the integral is taken over any surface that cuts across the conductor. The direction of  $\vec{J}$  is the same as that of the velocity the moving charges if they are positive and the opposite direction if they are negative.

Current density is measured in units of A/m<sup>2</sup>.

Charges move near the speed of light, ricocheting along the sides of the wire. The net movement along the wire is the **drift velocity**  $\vec{v}_d$ . Positive charge carriers drift at this speed in the direction of  $\vec{E}$ . By convention, the directions of the drift speed, current density, and current are drawn in the same direction.

The drift velocity is related to the current density as

$$\vec{J} = ne\vec{v}_d$$

where  $e$  is the charge of an electron and  $n$  is the number of charge carriers divided by the volume. The product  $ne$  is the **carrier charge density** in C/m<sup>3</sup>.

The volume of the cross section of a wire is the product of the length of the region  $\Delta x$  and the cross-sectional area  $A$ . The length considered is the product of the drift velocity and the change in time, so

$$V = A\Delta x = v_d A \Delta t$$

The total charge  $\Delta Q$  is the product of the number of charge carriers and their individual charge  $q$ . The number of charges is simply equal to the product of  $n$  and the volume, so

$$\Delta Q = q(nV) = nqv_d A \Delta t$$

When the charge carriers are electrons,

$$\Delta q = nev_d A \Delta t$$

Dividing both sides by  $\Delta t$ ,

$$i_{\text{avg}} = nev_d A$$