

# Notes for ECE 20001 - EE Fundamentals I

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## Course Introduction

This course covers fundamental concepts and applications for electrical and computer engineers as well as for engineers who need to gain a broad understanding of these disciplines. The course starts by the basic concepts of charge, current, and voltage as well as their expressions with regards to resistors and resistive circuits. Essential concepts, devices, theorems, and applications of direct-current (DC), 1st order, and alternating-current (AC) circuits are subsequently discussed. Besides electrical devices and circuits, basic electronic components including diodes and transistors as well as their primary applications are also discussed. For more information, see the syllabus.

## Equations

1.  $P = \frac{dW}{dt} = IV$
2.  $I = \frac{dq}{dt}$
3.  $V = \frac{W}{q}$
4.  $R = \frac{\rho L}{A}$
5. Ohm's Law:  $V = IR$
6. Coulomb's Law:  $\vec{F} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{q_1 q_2}{r^2} \hat{r}$

7. Kirchhoff's Voltage Law:

8. Conductance:  $G = \frac{1}{R}$

### Charge, current, voltage, and power

Before we begin a discussion of electrical engineering, we will want an understanding of some important concepts.

**Charge:** A fundamental property of matter. Charge is measured in units of Coulombs (C) and arises from aggregates of charged fundamental particles like electrons.

**Current:** The rate of flow of charge. Typically, we think of current as occurring in a circuit, a loop through which charge can flow. Current can be mathematically defined as  $I = \frac{dq(t)}{dt}$ , where  $q(t)$  is the charge at time  $t$ . Current therefore has units of Coulombs per second (C/s).

**Voltage:** The difference in electric potential energy between two points, per unit charge. Voltage thus has units of  $\frac{J}{C}$ , or Volts (V). Intuitively, a stronger voltage source (such as a battery) will result in a higher current on identical wires. Imagine a voltage source as a concentration of negative charges on one side and positive charges on the other. If we hook both ends up to a conducting wire and place an electron in the wire, it will be repelled from the negative side and attracted to the positive side. The electron has a high potential energy near the concentration of negative charge, and a low potential energy near the positive charges. The difference between these potentials is the voltage. This should make it clear that voltage must always be defined as across two points, each with its electric potential. A good note is that voltage can be negative (if the electric potential at the second point measured is higher) and it may not be constant with time.

**Power:** The rate of doing work, or changing energy. Mathematically,  $P = \frac{dW}{dt} = IV$  and has units of Watts (W). In a closed system, power is always balanced: whatever is put out by sources is consumed by loads. Thus, in a closed circuit,  $\sum P = 0$ . This is an important point, so allow me to illustrate it with an example. Say we have the below circuit:



We know  $\sum P_i = \sum V_i I_i = 0$ . Let's keep track of each  $P_i$  in a table, not forgetting passive sign convention: Summing the rows of this table, we have  $\sum P_i = 2I - 2 = 0$ , implying  $I = 1$ .

Symbol	Watts
$P_A$	-30
$P_B$	16
$P_C$	30
$P_D$	-16
$P_E$	2
$P_F$	-2I
$P_G$	-4

Table 1: Power absorbed

In the previous example, we had current flowing both into and out of the positive terminals of elements. We also had negative currents.

Let's define how to handle signage in circuits:

**Passive sign convention:** Defines current as going into positive voltage node of a component. The component is labeled a *load* or a *passive device*. We call it this because the component consumes power. If a current is negative, it is flowing in the opposite direction shown by the arrow.

It's useful to have an idea of the components of circuit schematics (visual representations of a circuit). Below is a list of the terms that will be used in this course:

- **Elements:** The term elements means "components and sources."
- **Symbols:** Elements are represented in schematics by symbols. Symbols for common 2-terminal elements are displayed to the right.
- **Lines:** Connections between elements are drawn as lines, which we often think of as "wires". On a schematic, these lines represent perfect conductors with zero resistance. Every component or source terminal touched by a line is at the same voltage.
- **Dots:** Connections between lines can be indicated by dots. Dots are an unambiguous indication that lines are connected. If the connection is obvious, you don't have to use a dot.

Check out the circuit schematic below and see how many components you can identify!



Figure 1: Passive sign convention



Figure 2: Common circuit symbols

*(In)dependent sources, connections, resistance and Ohm's Law*

Now, on to what circuits are doing. For interesting things to happen we need electrons flowing through those wires, and for that we need sources. There are two types: independent and dependent. Independent sources are voltage sources or current sources that maintain a constant value regardless of the rest of the circuit. They are not influenced by the circuit's current or voltage conditions. There are two main types of independent sources:

- **Independent voltage source:** Maintains a constant voltage across its terminals, regardless of the current flowing through it. It is typically represented by a symbol with a plus sign and a minus sign, indicating the polarity of the voltage. A battery maintaining a constant voltage of 9 V is an example of an independent voltage source.
- **Independent current source:** Maintains a constant current through its terminals, regardless of the voltage across it. It is usually represented by a symbol with an arrow indicating the direction of current flow. Consider a current source that provides a constant current of 2 amperes. This source will deliver a current of 2A through any component connected to it, regardless of the voltage across the component.

Contrasted with independent sources are dependent sources. Dependent sources are sources whose values are dependent on other variables within the circuit. These sources are used to model components whose behavior changes according to the conditions in the circuit. There are four types of dependent sources:

- **Voltage-Controlled Voltage Source (VCVS):** This type of dependent source generates a voltage that is proportional to the voltage across a separate part of the circuit.
- **Current-Controlled Current Source (CCCS):** This type of dependent source generates a current that is proportional to the current flowing through a different part of the circuit.
- **Voltage-Controlled Current Source (VCCS):** This type of dependent source generates a current that is proportional to the voltage across a different part of the circuit.
- **Current-Controlled Voltage Source (CCVS):** This type of dependent source generates a voltage that is proportional to the current flowing through a separate part of the circuit.



Figure 3: independent voltage source



Figure 4: Independent current source



Figure 5: Dependent voltage source



Figure 6: Dependent current source

In both the independent and dependent case, we assume the sources are ideal. There are two critical attributes of ideal sources. First, their value remains unchanged indefinitely. Second, they can deliver any amount of power needed by their loads. Turning off a voltage source is equivalent to replacing it with a short circuit (line). Turning off a current source is equivalent to replacing it with an open circuit (broken line). Also equivalent to an open circuit is a resistor with infinite resistance. Resistance is a measure of how hard it is to shove current through a resistor. The harder it is, the higher the resistance. It's given by  $R = \frac{\rho L}{A} = \frac{V}{I}$ , where  $\rho$  is the resistivity,  $L$  is the length of the resistor, and  $A$  is the cross-sectional area of the resistor. The reciprocal of resistance is conductance ( $G = \frac{1}{R}$ ). We can relate voltage, current and resistance with *Ohm's Law*.

**Ohm's Law:**  $V = IR$ . This law is fundamental to EE and will occur repeatedly throughout the course.

*Kirchhoff's Laws, resistor combinations, and voltage/current division*

**Kirchhoff's Current Law:** The sum of all currents going into a node is 0. Mathematically,  $\sum_k i_k = 0$ . We may intuit this by imagining electricity as water flowing into a pipe. Anything that flows in must flow out. Say you have a circuit such as fig. 7. By Kirchhoff's current



Figure 7: Kirchhoff's Current Law

law, we see that  $i_1 + i_2 - i_3 - i_4 = 0 \rightarrow i_1 + i_2 = i_3 + i_4$ . The neat thing is that this must be true for any node in a circuit. If you have a node with two known currents going in and one unknown coming out, Kirchhoff's current law tells us the unknown current is simply the sum of the known currents.

Contrasted with Kirchhoff's current law, we have Kirchhoff's voltage law.

**Kirchhoff's Voltage Law:** In a closed loop, the sum of all voltage

drops is zero. Mathematically,  $\sum_k v_k = 0$ . A useful way to visualize this is to think of voltage as potential energy. No matter where you go and how the voltage drops and rises, when you get back to where you began, the voltage must be the same there. You end up with the same gravitational potential if you return to the same spot, even if you run up and down a mountain. Imagine a closed loop such as fig. 8. Say the voltage across the battery is  $15V$  and each resistor is identical. Although we don't know for sure yet, we can guess that the current will be the same through each, and ergo by Ohm's Law ( $V = IR$ ) so will each voltage. Therefore,

$$15 + 3V = 0 \rightarrow V = -5$$

Now that we have a good idea of circuit components and how voltage/current behave, we can look at important configurations. These are the most useful:

**Series Combination:** In a series combination, the elements are connected with end to end in contact. We can use Kirchhoff's current law to show that the current at each point in the circuit is the same. Since current flows into a resistor it has no option but to flow out the same resistor. Say the resistances are  $R_1, R_2$ , and  $R_3$ . By Kirchhoff's voltage



Figure 8: Series Combination

law, we have

$$\begin{aligned} V &= IR_1 + IR_2 + IR_3 \\ &= I(R_1 + R_2 + R_3) \\ &= IR_{total} \\ &\rightarrow R_{total} = R_1 + R_2 + R_3 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore for resistors in series, the total resistance is equal to the sum of each individual resistance.

**Parallel Combination:** When two or more resistances are connected between the same two points, they are said to be connected in parallel. Here, voltage is equal across all elements. In fig. 9, the total current is split among  $n$  different resistors. That is,  $I = \sum_k^n i_k$ . With a bit of



Figure 9: Parallel Combination

manipulation and Ohm's Law, we have that

$$\begin{aligned}
 I &= \frac{V}{R_{total}} \\
 &= \sum_k^n i_k \\
 &= \sum_k^n V / R_k \\
 &\rightarrow \frac{1}{R_{total}} \\
 &= \sum_k^n \frac{1}{R_k}
 \end{aligned}$$

So for resistors in parallel, the reciprocal of the total resistance is the sum of the reciprocals of the individual resistances. Now would be an excellent point to introduce the idea of

### *Equivalent resistance*

**Equivalent resistance:** a simplification of a circuit with multiple resistors, where the resistance of the equivalent resistor maintains the same voltage and current relationship. We have already seen formulas for when the resistors are in parallel or series, and can use them to determine the equivalent resistance across two nodes. For instance, consider fig. 10.

We can see that the  $1\Omega$  and the  $10\Omega$  resistor are in series, so their equivalent resistance is simply  $1 + 10\Omega = 11\Omega$ . We can condense the circuit to fig 11.



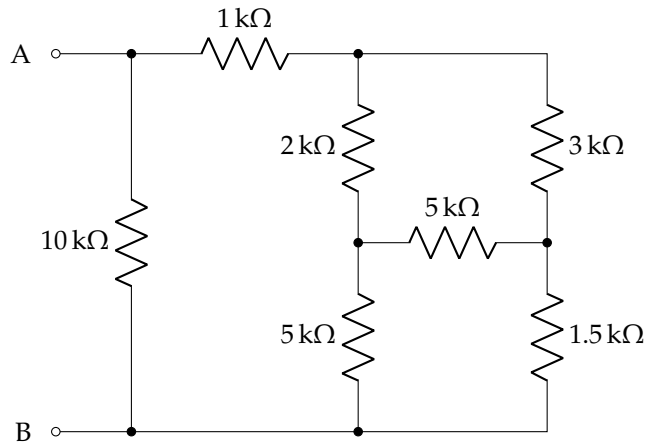


Figure 10: Finding equivalent resistance in circuit with resistors in series and parallel

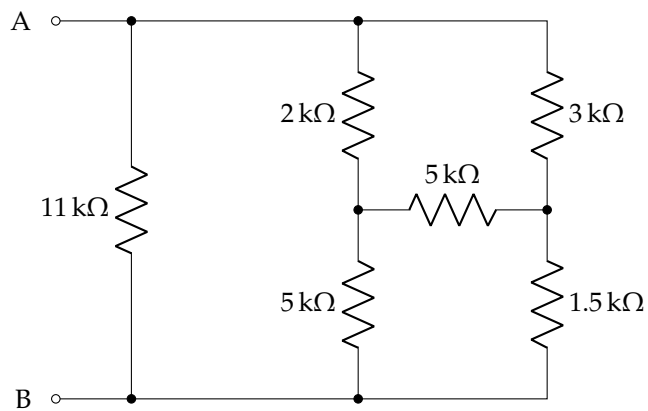


Figure 11: Finding equivalent resistance in circuit with resistors in series and parallel, step 2