

## CHAPTER 2

# Operational Amplifiers

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## IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL LEARN

1. The terminal characteristics of the ideal op amp.
2. How to analyze circuits containing op amps, resistors, and capacitors.
3. How to use op amps to design amplifiers having precise characteristics.
4. How to design more sophisticated op-amp circuits, including summing amplifiers, instrumentation amplifiers, integrators, and differentiators.
5. Important nonideal characteristics of op amps and how these limit the performance of basic op-amp circuits.

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## Introduction

Having learned basic amplifier concepts and terminology, we are now ready to undertake the study of a circuit building block of universal importance: the operational amplifier (op amp). Op amps have been in use for a long time, their initial applications being primarily in the areas of analog computation and sophisticated instrumentation. Early op amps were constructed from discrete components (vacuum tubes and then transistors, and resistors), and their cost was prohibitively high (tens of dollars). In the mid-1960s the first integrated-circuit (IC) op amp was produced. This unit (the  $\mu\text{A}$  709) was made up of a relatively large number of transistors and resistors all on the same silicon chip. Although its characteristics were poor (by today's standards) and its price was still quite high, its appearance signaled a new era in electronic circuit design. Electronics engineers started using op amps in large quantities, which caused their price to drop dramatically. They also demanded better-quality op amps. Semiconductor manufacturers responded quickly, and within the span of a few years, high-quality op amps became available at extremely low prices (tens of cents) from a large number of suppliers.

One of the reasons for the popularity of the op amp is its versatility. As we will shortly see, one can do almost anything with op amps! Equally important is the fact that the IC op amp has characteristics that closely approach the assumed ideal. This implies that it is quite easy to design circuits using the IC op amp. Also, op-amp circuits work at performance levels that are quite close to those predicted theoretically. It is for this reason that we are studying op amps at this early stage. It is expected that by the end of this chapter the reader should be able to successfully design nontrivial circuits using op amps.

As already implied, an IC op amp is made up of a large number (about 20) of transistors together with resistors, and (usually) one capacitor connected in a rather complex circuit. Since

we have not yet studied transistor circuits, the circuit inside the op amp will not be discussed in this chapter. Rather, we will treat the op amp as a circuit building block and study its terminal characteristics and its applications. This approach is quite satisfactory in many op-amp applications. Nevertheless, for the more difficult and demanding applications it is quite useful to know what is inside the op-amp package. This topic will be studied in Chapter 13. More advanced applications of op amps will appear in later chapters.

## 2.1 The Ideal Op Amp

### 2.1.1 The Op-Amp Terminals

From a signal point of view the op amp has three terminals: two input terminals and one output terminal. Figure 2.1 shows the symbol we shall use to represent the op amp. Terminals 1 and 2 are input terminals, and terminal 3 is the output terminal. As explained in Section 1.4, amplifiers require dc power to operate. Most IC op amps require two dc power supplies, as shown in Fig. 2.2. Two terminals, 4 and 5, are brought out of the op-amp package and connected to a positive voltage  $V_{CC}$  and a negative voltage  $-V_{EE}$ , respectively. In Fig. 2.2(b) we explicitly show the two dc power supplies as batteries with a common ground. It is interesting to note that the reference grounding point in op-amp circuits is just the common terminal of the two power supplies; that is, no terminal of the op-amp package is physically connected to ground. In what follows we will not, for simplicity, explicitly show the op-amp power supplies.

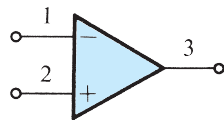


Figure 2.1 Circuit symbol for the op amp.

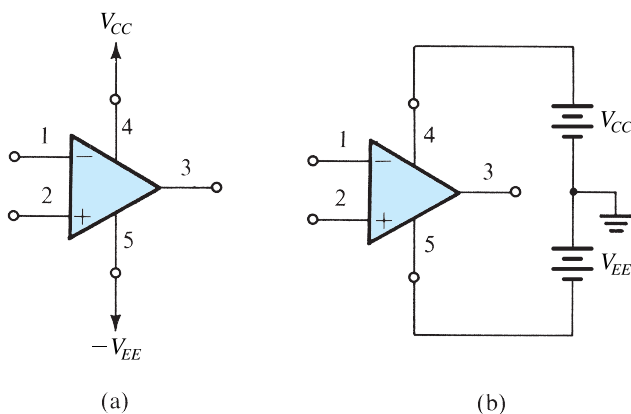


Figure 2.2 The op amp shown connected to dc power supplies.