Section Summary

20.1 Current

- Electric current I is the rate at which charge flows, given by

  $$I = \frac{\Delta Q}{\Delta t},$$

  where ΔQ is the amount of charge passing through an area in time Δt.
- The direction of conventional current is taken as the direction in which positive charge moves.
- The SI unit for current is the ampere (A), where 1 A = 1 C/s.
- Current is the flow of free charges, such as electrons and ions.
- Drift velocity v_d is the average speed at which these charges move.
- Current I is proportional to drift velocity v_d, as expressed in the relationship $I = nqAv_\mathrm{d}$. Here, I is the current through a wire of cross-sectional area A. The wire's material has a free-charge density n, and each carrier has charge q and a drift velocity v_d.
- Electrical signals travel at speeds about 10^{12} times greater than the drift velocity of free electrons.

20.2 Ohm's Law: Resistance and Simple Circuits

- A simple circuit *is* one in which there is a single voltage source and a single resistance.
- One statement of Ohm's law gives the relationship between current I, voltage V, and resistance R in a simple circuit to be $I = \frac{V}{R}$.
- Resistance has units of ohms (Ω), related to volts and amperes by $1\ \Omega = 1\ \text{V/A}$.
- There is a voltage or IR drop across a resistor, caused by the current flowing through it, given by $V = IR$.

20.3 Resistance and Resistivity

- The resistance R of a cylinder of length L and cross-sectional area A is $R = \frac{\rho L}{A}$, where ρ is the resistivity of the material.
- Values of ρ in Table 20.1 show that materials fall into three groups—*conductors, semiconductors, and insulators*.

- Temperature affects resistivity; for relatively small temperature changes ΔT, resistivity is $\rho = \rho_0(1 + \alpha\Delta T)$, where ρ_0 is the original resistivity and α is the temperature coefficient of resistivity.
- Table 20.2 gives values for α, the temperature coefficient of resistivity.
- The resistance R of an object also varies with temperature: $R = R_0(1 + \alpha\Delta T)$, where R_0 is the original resistance, and R is the resistance after the temperature change.

20.4 Electric Power and Energy

- Electric power P is the rate (in watts) that energy is supplied by a source or dissipated by a device.
- Three expressions for electrical power are

  $$P = \mathrm{IV},$$

  $$P = \frac{V^2}{R},$$

  and

  $$P = I^2R.$$

- The energy used by a device with a power P over a time t is $E = \mathrm{Pt}$.

20.5 Alternating Current versus Direct Current

- Direct current (DC) is the flow of electric current in only one direction. It refers to systems where the source voltage is constant.
- The voltage source of an alternating current (AC) system puts out $V = V_0 \sin 2\pi \mathrm{ft}$, where V is the voltage at time t, V_0 is the peak voltage, and f is the frequency in hertz.
- In a simple circuit, $I = \mathrm{V/R}$ and AC current is $I = I_0 \sin 2\pi \mathrm{ft}$, where I is the current at time t, and $I_0 = V_0/\mathrm{R}$ is the peak current.
- The average AC power is $P_{\text{ave}} = \frac{1}{2} I_0 V_0$.
- Average (rms) current I_{rms} and average (rms) voltage V_{rms} are $I_{\text{rms}} = \frac{I_0}{\sqrt{2}}$ and $V_{\text{rms}} = \frac{V_0}{\sqrt{2}}$, where rms stands for root mean square.
- Thus, $P_{\text{ave}} = I_{\text{rms}} V_{\text{rms}}$.
- Ohm's law for AC is $I_{\text{rms}} = \frac{V_{\text{rms}}}{R}$.

- Expressions for the average power of an AC circuit are $P_{\text{ave}} = I_{\text{rms}}V_{\text{rms}}$, $P_{\text{ave}} = \frac{V_{\text{rms}}^2}{R}$, and $P_{\text{ave}} = I_{\text{rms}}^2 R$, analogous to the expressions for DC circuits.

20.6 Electric Hazards and the Human Body

- The two types of electric hazards are thermal (excessive power) and shock (current through a person).
- Shock severity is determined by current, path, duration, and AC frequency.
- Table 20.3 lists shock hazards as a function of current.
- Figure 20.22 graphs the threshold current for two hazards as a function of frequency.

20.7 Nerve Conduction–Electrocardiograms

- Electric potentials in neurons and other cells are created by ionic concentration differences across semipermeable membranes.
- Stimuli change the permeability and create action potentials that propagate along neurons.
- Myelin sheaths speed this process and reduce the needed energy input.
- This process in the heart can be measured with an electrocardiogram (ECG).