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The Calculation of Heat Capacity Ratios of Nitrogen and Argon Using Adiabatic Expansion

Lab Partners: Peyton Strickland, Kelsi Sogge

# Introduction:

The heat capacity of a substance tells us how much energy must be put into a system to get a certain amount of change in the temperature.

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|  | Equation 1: The first law | (1) |

There are different attributes a system may have which yield large simplifications. Adiabatic means no heat transfer between the system and the surroundings (and using equation 1: ). Alternatively, a system may be isochoric, where the volume is held constant (and ).

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|  | Equation 2: the combined gas law | (2) |

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Equation 3: During adiabatic expansion this equation is true using the following definition for gamma | (3) |

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Equation 4: The definition of gamma and a derived equivalence using only measurable variables | (4) |

# Experimental Methods:

A 5-gallon glass jug was used as a vessel. This was eventually closed by a three-holed rubber stopper with outlet tubes A, B and C. Before beginning the experiment, the vessel was filled with either argon or nitrogen. The procedure for both was identical: the vessel was lowered upside down into a water bath with a tube allowing air in the vessel to be displaced by the water. The same tube was plugged into a regulator on the gas cylinder and the gas was allowed to displace the water in vessel until gas flowed freely out the surface of the water. The vessel was quickly raised out of the water bath and capped with the rubber stopper. Tube A was attached to a digital pressure gauge to determine the difference between ambient atmospheric pressure and the pressure in the vessel. Tube B was attached to the gas canister and tube C was clamped closed. Temperature T1 was recorded.

The vessel was pressurized to around 1.6 psi above atmospheric and allowed to return to room temperature. The pressure was checked again to ensure 1.6 psi after thermal contraction and to ensure there were no leaks in the system. The pressure P1 was recorded. The gas was allowed to adiabatically expand by quickly unclamping tube C and reclamping it. After thermal equilibrium the pressure P3 was measured. Two trials of nitrogen and two of Argon were completed. Between trials 2 and 3, the atmospheric pressure P2 was measured along with ambient room temperature T1 for later calculations.

# Results and Discussion:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | N2 trial 1 | N2 trial 2 | Ar trial 1 | Ar trial 2 |
| P1 (psi) | 1.66±0.01 | 1.64±0.01 | 1.63±0.01 | 1.71±0.01 |
| P3 (psi) | 0.45±0.01 | 0.43±0.01 | 0.41±0.01 | 0.58±0.01 |
| γ | 1.39± | 1.38± | 1.35± | 1.54± |

# Conclusions:

Safety:

There is no important safety information for nitrogen as it is already in large quantities in our atmosphere. Argon is also in abundant quantities in our atmosphere so there is no important safety information with the chemicals themselves. However, when working around high pressure gas cylinders it is always necessary to ensure they will not tip over. When using regulators, close the main valve when not in use and always open it slowly to begin.

# References:

Chemistry 451 Lab Report Grading Sheet

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Lab Partners:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Experiment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Introduction: 15 points

\_\_\_\_/3 Name, title, date, lab partners names, grading sheet are included and correct.

\_\_\_\_/2 Clear statement of the objective of the experiment is presented.

\_\_\_\_/10 most important ideas and equations (define all symbols!) for the lab are concisely summarized.

Methods: 10 points

\_\_\_\_/5 Instrumental apparatus is explained and diagramed as necessary.

\_\_\_\_/5 Experimental description allows another 451 student to reproduce your work.

Results and Discussion: 50 points

\_\_\_\_/15 All data is clearly presented in a table or graph that is referenced and described in the text.

\_\_\_\_/5 All data has units and experimental uncertainty clearly identified.

\_\_\_\_/10 Calculations and derived information are discussed briefly in narrative, and appendices referenced.

\_\_\_\_/10 Final results and all additional information requested in handout is presented clearly in narrative.

\_\_\_\_/5 Literature/ theoretical values are listed; appropriate comparisons are made, including error propagation.

\_\_\_\_/5 Major sources of error given (includes magnitude and direction that they would impact final result).

Conclusions: 10 points

\_\_\_\_/4 Quantitative summary of results (and uncertainty) reflects the objective statement from the introduction.

\_\_\_\_/4 Discussion of errors suggests ways to improve or fatal flaws (goes beyond what is in the discussion).

\_\_\_\_/2 Results are placed into the context of the broader scientific picture, with future applications noted.

Safety/References: 5 points

\_\_\_\_/3 Major safety issues are addressed, MSDS are cited.

\_\_\_\_/2 Citations for introduction, safety and literature or theoretical values are correct and complete.

General Writing: 10 points

\_\_\_\_/5 Scientific writing style is used, including proper tenses and voices.

\_\_\_\_/5 Organization, sentence structure, and flow make the report easy to follow and understand.

\_\_\_\_/100 Total Score