

Why is the spin of an electron $\frac{1}{2}$?

$$L = \pm \sqrt{\ell(\ell + 1)} \cdot \hbar$$

where

L is the quantised angular momentum

ℓ is the orbital quantum number ($= 0, 1, 2, \dots$)

$$\hbar = \frac{h}{2\pi}$$

$$\text{Let } m_s = \pm \sqrt{\ell(\ell + 1)}$$

Assume the smallest integer difference in angular momentum between the two states (demonstrated by the two points of accumulation in the Stern – Gerlach experiment) and thus let:

$$\begin{aligned} m_{s+} &= 1s \\ m_{s-} &= -1s \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \therefore \hbar \cdot ((m_{s+}) - (m_{s-})) &= 1\hbar \\ \hbar \cdot ((1s) - (-1s)) &= 1\hbar \\ \hbar \cdot (2s) &= 1\hbar \\ 2s &= 1 \\ s &= \frac{1}{2} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \therefore m_{s+} &= \frac{1}{2} \text{ and } m_{s-} = -\frac{1}{2} \\ \therefore L &= \pm \frac{1}{2} \hbar \blacksquare \end{aligned}$$