Lab 17: Emission Spectra

Purpose

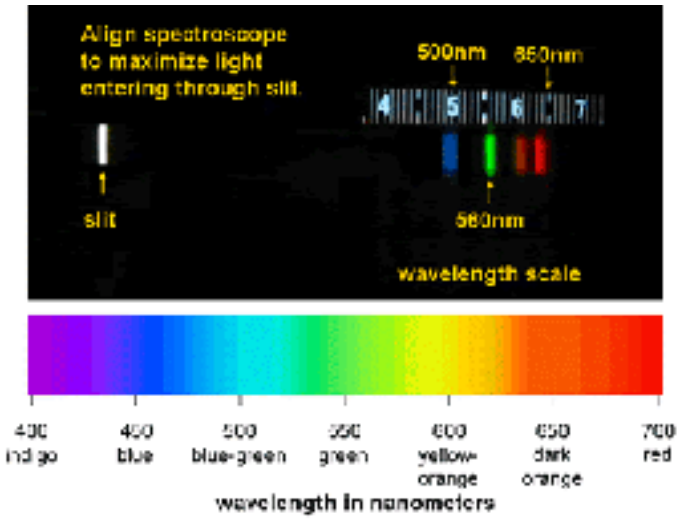
To observe the emission spectra of different gasses and to identify each gas based on its characteristic spectrum.

Introduction

The emission spectrum of a chemical element or molecule is the spectrum of frequencies of electromagnetic radiation emitted due to the electrons in the atoms transitioning from a high energy states to lower energy states. The energy of the emitted photons is equal to the energy difference between the two states. There are many possible electron transitions for each atom, and each transition has a specific energy difference. This collection of different transitions, leading to different radiated wavelengths, make up an emission spectrum. Each element's emission spectrum is unique. Therefore, spectroscopy can be used to identify the elements in matter of unknown composition. Similarly, the emission spectra of molecules can be used in chemical analysis of substances.

Procedure

1. Aim the slit of the spectroscope to the light coming from the emission tube. It works best if the slit is oriented parallel the length of the emission tube in order to maximize the light entering through the slit.
2. Observe the emission lines landing on the labeled scale. If you see emission lines outside the labeled scale ignore them, they are the secondary spectrum containing the same information.
3. Compare what you see with the provided known spectra from different elements and identify which elements are you looking at.



Analysis

Tube #1

1. Sketch the spectrum you see labeling the approximate wavelength and color of each line. You don't have to draw all of the lines, just enough so you can identify this element (the 3-5 brightest lines should be enough).

2. Which element is in this tube?

3. Make a sketch of the electron transitions associated with the 3 brightest lines you see. Label each transition with its approximate wavelength and color?

Tube #2

1. Sketch the spectrum you see labeling the approximate wavelength and color of each line. You don't have to draw all of the lines, just enough so you can identify this element (the 3-5 brightest lines should be enough).

2. Which element is in this tube?

3. Make a sketch of the electron transitions associated with the 3 brightest lines you see. Label each transition with its approximate wavelength and color?

Tube #3

1. Sketch the spectrum you see labeling the approximate wavelength and color of each line. You don't have to draw all of the lines, just enough so you can identify this element (the 3-5 brightest lines should be enough).

2. Which element is in this tube?

3. Make a sketch of the electron transitions associated with the 3 brightest lines you see. Label each transition with its approximate wavelength and color?

Tube #4

1. Sketch the spectrum you see labeling the approximate wavelength and color of each line. You don't have to draw all of the lines, just enough so you can identify this element (the 3-5 brightest lines should be enough).

2. Which element is in this tube?

3. Make a sketch of the electron transitions associated with the 3 brightest lines you see. Label each transition with its approximate wavelength and color?

Extra Credit: Look at the light from the fluorescent lamps in the classroom with the spectroscope. Can you tell which gas is inside fluorescent lamps? (Hint: Ignore the low frequency end of the spectrum, which is produced by the phosphors in the outskirts of the lamp)

Known visible spectra for different elements

Use the following list of known spectra to identify the elements in the different gas tubes.