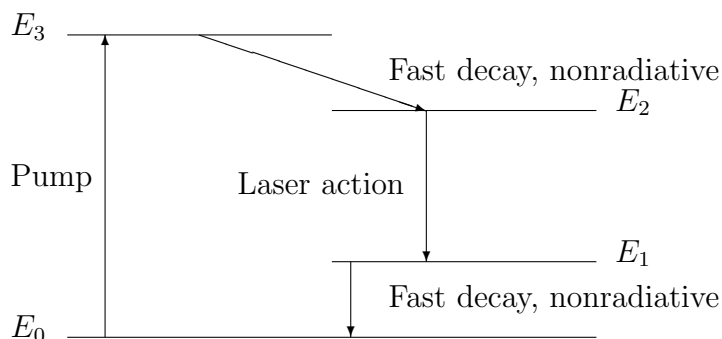


Problem 1.

Draw the energy level diagram for a 4-level laser and explain in words how it works.

Solution

An energy source excites the lasing material from the ground state, E_0 to the excited state, E_3 . The material then quickly relaxes to the E_2 state. Material in the E_1 state quickly decays to the E_0 state, where it can be excited $E_0 \xrightarrow{\text{Excitation}} E_3 \xrightarrow{\text{Fast decay}} E_2$. This forms the population inversion such that $N_{E_2} > N_{E_1}$. At this point, when a photon of energy $h\nu_{32}$ passes near the lasing material in state E_2 , it stimulates an emission of a second photon of the same energy ("stimulated emission"). This leaves the atom in state E_1 , where it non-radiatively relaxes to E_0 and can be excited again.

Problem 2.

Calculate the (a) peak output and (b) average power for a laser that produces 12 ps pulses at a repetition rate of 1000 kHz with an energy of 100 μJ /pulse.

Solution**Part (a)**

$$\begin{aligned} 100 \mu\text{J} &= \frac{100 \times 10^{-6} \text{ J/pulse}}{12 \times 10^{-12} \text{ s/pulse}} \\ &= 8 \text{ MW} \end{aligned}$$

Part (b)

$$100 \times 10^{-6} \text{ J/pulse} \times 1000 \times 10^3 \text{ s}^{-1} = 100 \text{ W}$$

Problem 3.

Briefly explain how a Q-switch works and the effect it has on the laser output.

Solution

A q-switched laser operates by first exciting the lasing medium (as with any other laser). Photons that are emitted during this process are kept out of the lasing medium, however, resulting in a low quality-factor ("q-factor"). This means that the excited atoms do not undergo stimulated emission, resulting in a larger population inversion than in continuous wave lasers. At some point, the mechanism separating the emitted photons from the lasing medium is disabled and the photons are allowed to enter the lasing medium—the q-factor is switched from low to high. This means that the larger population in the excited state can produce photons all at once, leading to a high-intensity pulse. Q-switch lasers therefore produce high-intensity pulses at comparatively low repetition rates.

Problem 4.

Explain how CW, pulsed, and Q-switched laser pulses differ from each other.

Solution**Part (a)**

CW

“Continuous Wave” lasers output a near-constant intensity beam. The output beam is continuous with respect to time, and the energy output is in the mW to W range.

Part (b)

Pulsed

Pulsed lasers emit all of their energy in the amount of time required for relaxation of the laser medium.

Part (c)

Q-switched

A q-switched laser

Problem 5.

Define the three χ terms which arise from the polarization in nonlinear optics and identify what frequency they oscillate at.

Solution

Nonlinear optical effects arise from especially intense electric fields. At low field intensities, the material is essentially unaffected by the beam electric field. At higher intensities/applied electric fields the material can be polarized and induce nonlinear effects:

$$P = \epsilon_0 (\chi^{(1)} E^{(1)} + \chi^{(2)} E^{(2)} + \chi^{(3)} E^{(3)} + \dots)$$

Part (a) $\chi^{(1)}$

- applies at low electric fields
- oscillates at incident frequency ω
- light is refracted normally

Part (b) $\chi^{(2)}$

- only significant at high irradiances
- doubles frequency ($\omega \rightarrow 2\omega$)
- same direction as incident laser, still monochromatic

Part (c) $\chi^{(3)}$

- triples frequency ($\omega \rightarrow 3\omega$)

Problem 6.

A Nd:YVO₄ laser has two output wavelengths in the IR wavelength region, 1064 nm and 1342 nm. We would like to use non-linear optics to create the harmonics of the 1342 nm line. Identify the following wavelengths:

- (a) Fundamental,
- (b) Second harmonic, and
- (c) Third harmonic.

Solution

Problem 7.

Describe how a CCD works.

Solution

Problem 8.

What is the difference between random and non-random noise and is each one fundamental or non-fundamental?

Solution

Problem 9.

Identify the following types of noise as either fundamental (F) or non-fundamental (NF):

- (a) Shot noise,
- (b) Pink noise,
- (c) Interference,
- (d) Dark current noise,
- (e) Readout noise, and
- (f) Impulse noise.

Solution

Problem 10.

Identify and define the 3 types of atomic spectroscopy.

Solution**Part (a)**

Absorption– incident light of intensity $I_0(\lambda)$ is sent through the sample and the output light is measured at intensity of $I'(\lambda)$. The ratio $\frac{I'}{I_0}$ gives the absorbance of the sample at each wavelength examined.

Part (b)

Emission– the sample is excited by some process, e.g. heating into a plasma. This excites the electrons orbiting the atoms, which then relax, emitting light characteristic of the atom. These emissions are measured.

Part (c)

Fluorescence– the sample absorbs light of one wavelength and emits at another wavelength.