

- 2 An α -particle (${}^4_2\text{He}$) is moving directly towards a stationary gold nucleus (${}^{197}_{79}\text{Au}$).

The α -particle and the gold nucleus may be considered to be solid spheres with the charge and mass concentrated at the centre of each sphere.

When the two spheres are just touching, the separation of their centres is $9.6 \times 10^{-15} \text{ m}$.

- (a) The α -particle and the gold nucleus may be assumed to be an isolated system. Calculate, for the α -particle just in contact with the gold nucleus,

- (i) its gravitational potential energy,

gravitational potential energy = J [3]

- (ii) its electric potential energy.

electric potential energy = J [3]

- (b) Using your answers in (a), suggest why, when making calculations based on an α -particle scattering experiment, gravitational effects are not considered.

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[1]

- (c) In the α -particle scattering experiment conducted in 1913, the maximum kinetic energy of the available α -particles was about 6 MeV. Suggest why, in this experiment, the radius of the target nucleus could not be determined.

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[2]