

WACL Electronics Course

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Understanding the electronics behind processes or **Sensors** used in the field can help to optimise time, reduce costs and find tailored solutions to problems within research. Whether you are repairing equipment, designing a system to automate data measurement or need help to explain why data differs from what's expected.

This course will take you through the basics, while linking it to examples important for chemistry and atmospheric research. By the end of the course, you should understand basic electronics theory and practice, a knowledge of terminology used, and should be able to build a basic system using a **Sensor** and **Control Loop**.

The course touches on other areas that are useful to be aware of when dealing with electronics, such as enclosures, environmental factors, sourcing parts and safety. We will start with the basics of electronics. There are multiple ways to represent this. We will start with the physics, using analogies where helpful.

0.1 Electronics Fundamentals

Electronics involves a flow of electrons, for a transfer of energy over time (i.e. power). We represent this through **Voltage** and **Current**, seen as key units in electronics. If represented as letters within a mail network, **Voltage** is the number of letters each mail person carries, where **Current** is the rate of new batch deliveries. A component or drop-off point along the network has **Resistance**, which is the number of letters they pick up from each mail person.

From a physics standpoint, electronics work through transferring electrical energy, which goes through a conversion process in components. A **Resistance** causes a heat conversion/heat loss. There is also **Capacitance** and **Inductance**, discussed later on, due to conversion to electric and magnetic potential.

Focusing just on **Resistance** and power, for now, we can represent this as several key physics equations, important for physics-based electronic theory and practice.

$$V = IR, P = IV, P = I^2R, P = E/T$$

It is possible to derive $P = I^2R$ by rearranging and putting $V = IR$ into $P = IV$. We can see this below:

$$V = IR \iff P = IV$$

$$P = I(IR)$$

$$P = I^2R$$

Voltage is represented with V, with the unit **Volt** **Current** is represented with I, with the unit **Ampere** (Amp). **Resistance** is represented with R, with the unit Ohm (with the Greek letter Ω). Power is represented with P, with the unit **Watt**. Time is represented with T in seconds.

Quiz

1. What does **Resistance** demonstrate?
 - a) The rate of flow of electrons.
 - b) The energy in each "packet" or electron.
 - c) Conversion of electrical to thermal energy/ heat.
2. Demonstrate how you would go from the equation $P = I^2R$ to $P = IV$.
3. A circuit has a 3V battery source, with 0.5A of **Current** flow. What is the **Resistance** seen in the circuit, and the overall power draw?
4. Use an analogy to explain **Current**, **Voltage**, and **Resistance**.

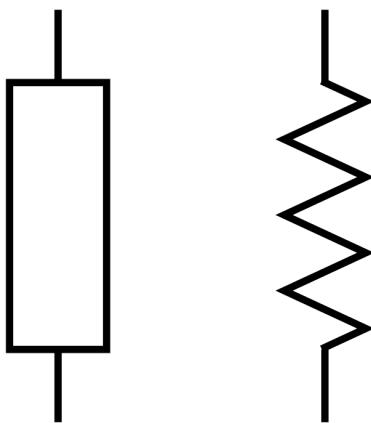
0.1.1 Resistors

What are Resistors?

Resistors are key components in electronics, only requiring an understanding of equations already discussed.

Resistors are components which are rated to have a specific **Resistance**. Therefore, depending on the circuit, losses due to them will vary (depending on **Current** and **Voltage**). Useful for when parts need a specific **Voltage** close to the input **Voltage**, or as a way of limiting **Current** flow.

This is an example of two main **Resistor** representations.



This is a basic circuit, with wires, a **Resistor** and a battery, to demonstrate $V=IR$. [Link](#)

In the specific example, we have a **Resistor** of 1 Ohms and a **Voltage** of 5V. Therefore, using $V = IR$, we can rearrange to find a **Current** of $I = 5/1 = 5A$. Then we can find a power of $P = IV = 5 * 5 = 25W$. The simulation shows each of these. Feel free to play around with it and alter values. Instructions for using the simulation program are found ([here](#)).

Example circuits etc

There aren't many example circuits using the above knowledge alone. One example would be a heater project. Given you know the available input **Voltage**, and the needed thermal load, you can calculate the required heating element **Resistance**.

There may be the case where a constant heat power output is required. A resistor is purely resistive, so all the electrical power it uses should be dissipated as heat. Lets say there is a supply of 240V (to simply represent mains voltage), and a 2000W supply of heat is required (of a similar magnitude to an oven). Therefore, using $V = IR$ and $P = IV$. Starting with $P = IV$, we can find a current of the below:

$$I = \frac{P}{V}, I = \frac{2000}{240}, I = \frac{25}{3}A$$

We can now use this in:

$$V = IR, R = \frac{V}{I}, R = \frac{240}{\frac{25}{3}}, R = 28.8\Omega$$

In reality, most heater systems will have a control loop, with a focus to achieve and then sustain a given

temperature, so there would be an element of sensing and turning the heater on and off, which we will get to later in the document.

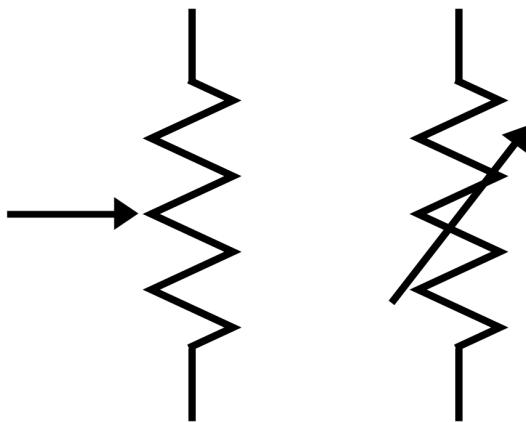
Quiz

1. True or false, power draw is always constant for a given **Resistor**, whatever circuit it is in?
2. True or false, **Resistors** are available in a wide range of **Resistance** values, but multiple can be used together to achieve more specific values?
3. True or false, **Resistors** convert electrical energy to thermal energy?

0.1.2 Potentiometers

A **Potentiometer** is a variable **Resistor** acting as a **Potential Divider**, using a dial to alter its output **Resistance**. There are many cases where this is helpful, like altering speaker volume, or where **Voltage** needs aren't clear or certain. They typically have 3 pins, for the input, ground and output. The input and output together act as a **Resistor**, with a value depending on how far the dial is turned.

Digital Potentiometers are an example of an integrated circuit, which are programmed to act as a set **Resistance**, using steps, meaning the same resolution isn't usually attainable.

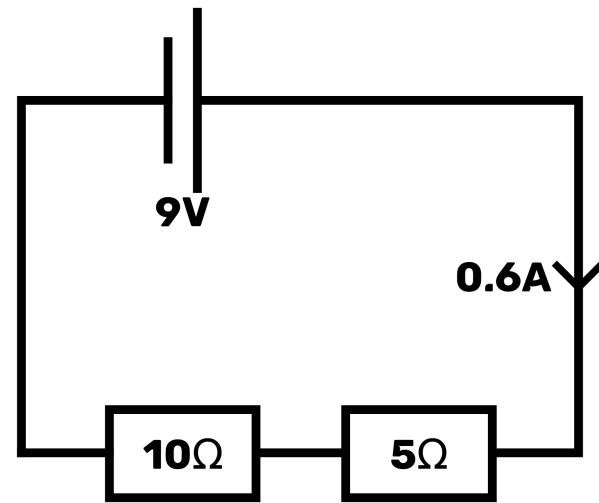
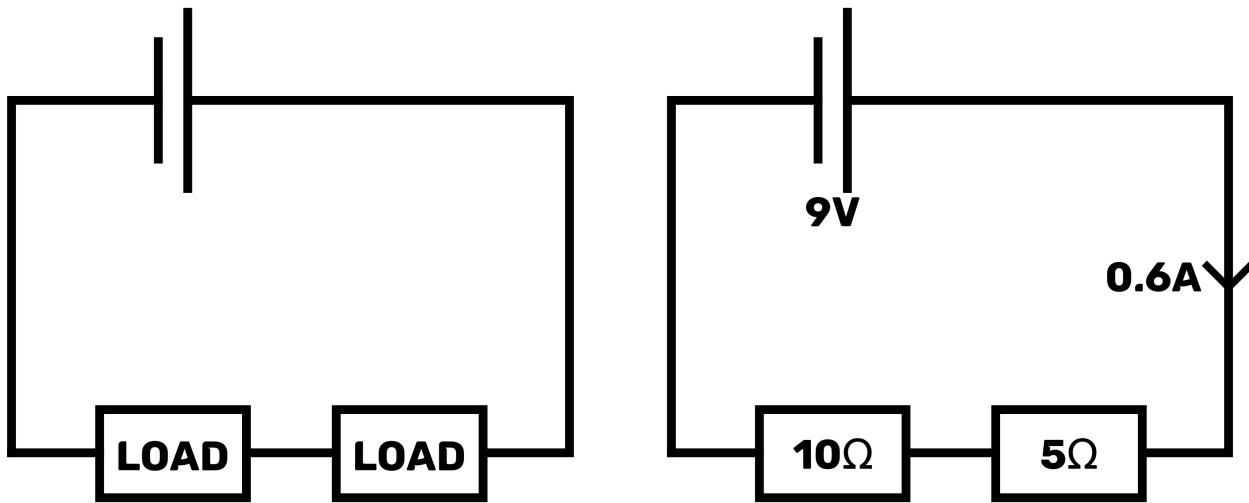


0.1.3 Series and Parallel

You can wire a circuit with **Parallel** and **Series** elements. A **Series** circuit has a single loop, with components connected one after another, sharing a single **Voltage**. A **Parallel** circuit can have more

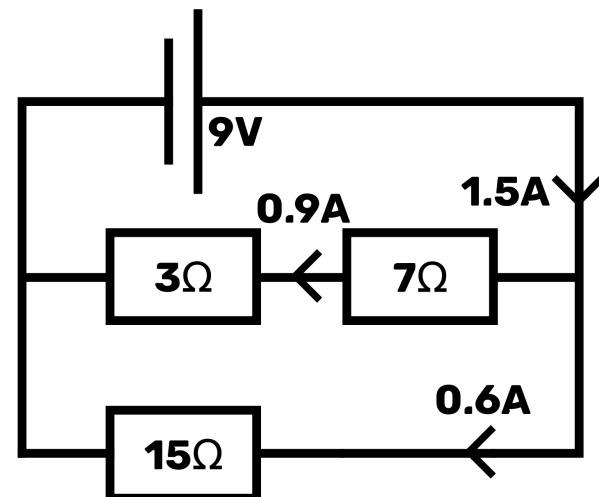
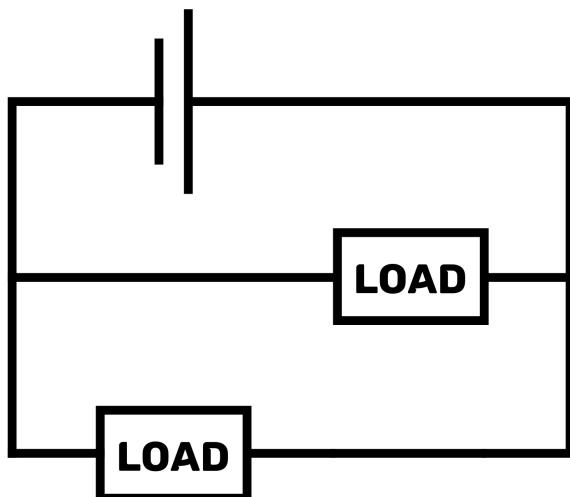
than one loop branching out. Each loop has a **Voltage** equivalent to the input, with the **Current** split between them, based on their **Resistance**.

Therefore, the **Voltage** in a **Series** loop will be distributed based on the **Voltage** ratios. For example, there is a 10Ω and 5Ω **Resistor**, with a 9V supply. There would be a **Voltage** drop of 6V through the 10Ω **Resistor** and a 3V drop through the 5Ω **Resistor**. With a total **Resistance** of 15Ω , we can calculate the **Current** to be $V = IR$, $I = \frac{V}{R}$, $I = \frac{9}{15} = 0.6A$.



A **Parallel** circuit has equal **Voltage** across each path, with the **Current** being split. Because of this, **Resistors in Parallel** have a total **Resistance** lower than the lowest **Resistance** path. We can calculate this using the below equation:

$$\frac{1}{R_{total}} = \frac{1}{R_1} + \frac{1}{R_2} + \frac{1}{R_3} + \dots$$



Therefore, an example with the following circuit with 2 **Resistors** of 3Ω and 7Ω , in **Parallel** with a single **Resistor** of 15Ω . You first add the **Series Resistors**, therefore an equivalent resistor R_1 is 10Ω and R_2 is 15Ω . Putting it into the equation gives us the below:

$$\frac{1}{R_{total}} = \frac{1}{10} + \frac{1}{15}$$

$$\frac{1}{R_{total}} = \frac{1}{6}$$

$$R_{total} = 6\Omega$$

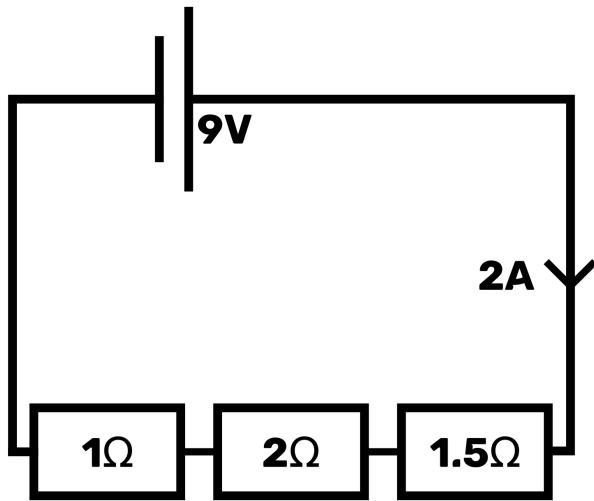
If we were to think again of the mail network analogy, a series circuit has the mailpeople take multiple stops on their journey, handing a certain amount of letters to each, depending on their need/**Resistance**. With a parallel circuit, some mailpeople will focus on different paths, so will still have the same total parcels for their path (the voltage stays the same for each path). The current decreases, since the mailpeople split to go down different routes.

Example circuits etc

A basic example would be a basic circuit to "divide" a **Voltage**. **Link**

Quiz

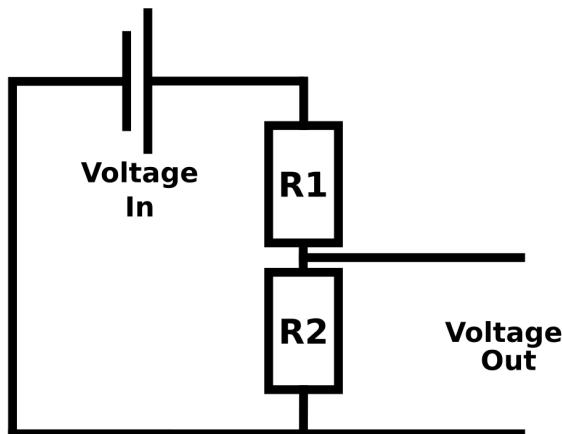
1. Which of the following statements are true?
 - a) **Current** is equal down each path from a junction.
 - b) **Current** splits at a path junction, based on each path's **Resistance**.
 - c) **Voltage** is equal down each path from a junction.
 - d) **Voltage** splits at a path junction, based on each path's **Resistance**.
2. What is the **Voltage** drop of each component? Also, calculate the power of the circuit.



3. What is the equivalent **Resistance** of a 20Ω , 100Ω and 42Ω component, all in **Parallel**?
4. True or false, the power draw through two 20Ω **Resistors** is higher than through a single 10 ohm Resistor ?

0.1.4 Potential Dividers

Potential Dividers use knowledge of both **Parallel** circuits and **Resistance**. As the name suggests, they help to divide **Voltage** potential based on the use of **Series Resistors**. As stated before, within a **Series** path, the **Voltage** will be divided between the components based on their **Resistance**.



Therefore, if there was an input **Voltage** of 5V, and R1 has a **Resistance** of 10Ω and R2 has a

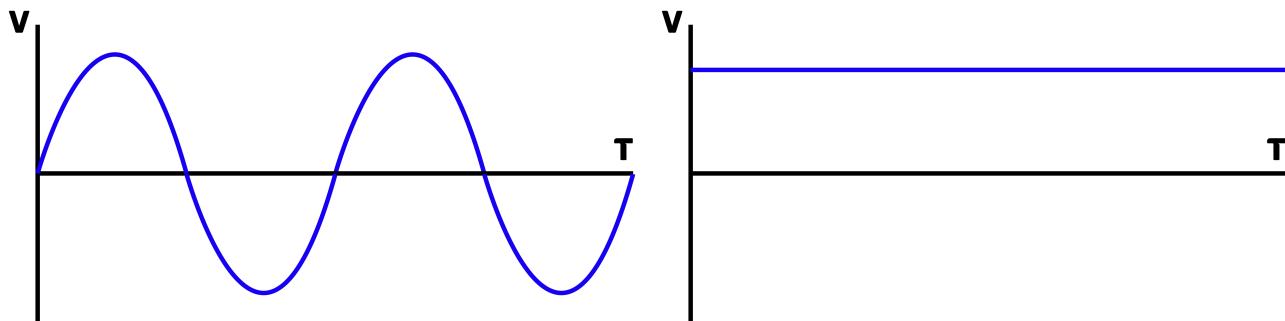
Resistance of 3Ω , then the **Voltage** seen through the **Potential Divider**'s output is the below:

$$V_{out} = \frac{(R_1 + R_2) - R_2}{R_1 + R_2} * V_{in} = \frac{10}{13} * 5 = \frac{50}{13}V$$

0.1.5 AC vs DC

AC stands for alternating **Current**, whereas **DC** stands for direct **Current**. This is shown on a graph with the direction of flow on one axis and magnitude of **Voltage** on the other. **DC** has a constant magnitude and direction of flow. This compares to a sinusoidal **Voltage** magnitude with **AC**, where the flow of **Current** varies in direction. **AC** is typically given as an **RMS Voltage** and a frequency. The frequency is the number of **Periods** that happen per second, typically given in Hz, where the **Voltage** is an average value, taking the root mean square (**RMS**) represents the **DC Voltage** that has the same power/ heating effect as the **AC** circuit. This is seen with power from the **Grid**, with **RMS Voltages** of 230V and frequency of 50Hz in the UK. Being in **AC** allows for high **Voltage** conversion through long distance cables using **Transformers**, to reduce thermal losses due to heat from high **Current**. This is particularly important, as using $P = I^2R$, we can see that power compared to current is a quadratic, so with a fixed cable resistance, the higher the current, the larger the increase of heat loss.





Digital electronics are within the **DC** realm, but many devices still require **AC**. It is the standard for energy generation and for how it is sent across the **Grid**. **AC** is widely used for **Motors**, and where large **Voltage** transformations are required, such as microwaves. **Semiconductor** electronics primarily work within **DC**.

The course will touch upon ways to convert between **AC-DC** and the benefits of each for different applications.

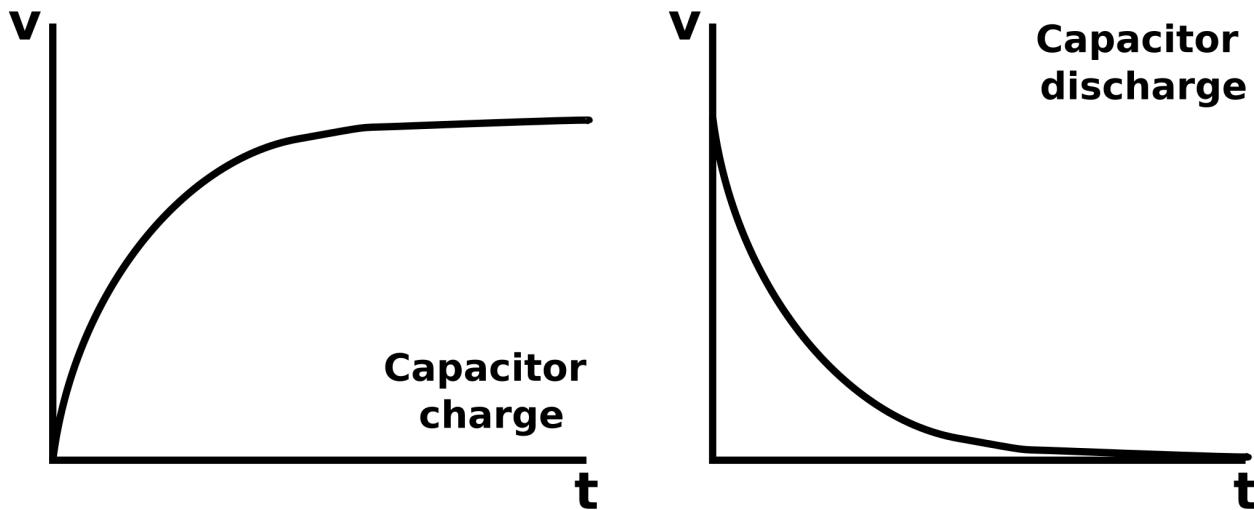
Quiz

1. What is the frequency of **AC** Electricity from the **Grid** in the UK?
2. What does **RMS** stand for?
3. Why is **AC** used within the **Grid**?

0.1.6 Capacitors

What are Capacitors?

Capacitors are another key component. They store energy as Electric Potential, with their **Voltage** increasing towards the input **Voltage**, as they charge. Therefore, the charge and discharge curve is nonlinear, more similar to a natural log curve.

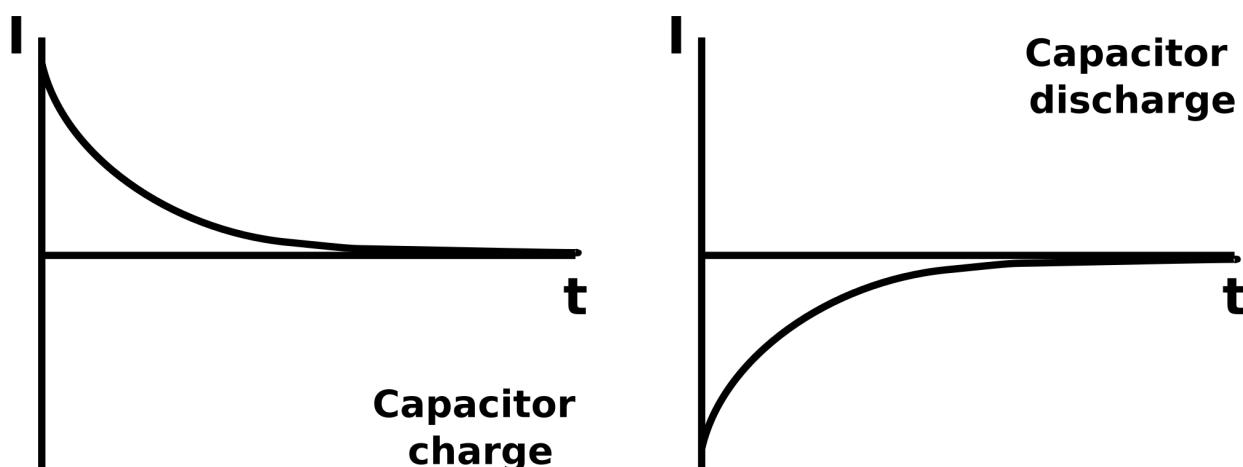


The unit for **Capacitance** is **Farad**, with typical values depending on **Capacitor** type, but usually in the uF units or below.

A range of physics based equations will be touched upon now.

Capacitors have a charge relating to their input **Voltage** with the following basic equation: $q = CV$. C is **Capacitance**, q is charge, and V is **Voltage**. There is also the formula for energy stored within a **Capacitor**, with the following equation: $E = 1/2 * C * V^2$, where E is energy in **Joules**.

A **Resistor** is usually placed in **Series** with a **Capacitor** to limit the **Capacitor** inlet **Current**. As it charges, the ratio between its **Voltage** and the supply **Voltage** decreases, along with the charge **Current**, in a curve of reverse direction to the **Voltage**.



One of the built in simulation circuits from Falstad is helpful for showcasing the charge and discharge characteristics of a **Capacitor**, by flicking a switch. [Link](#)

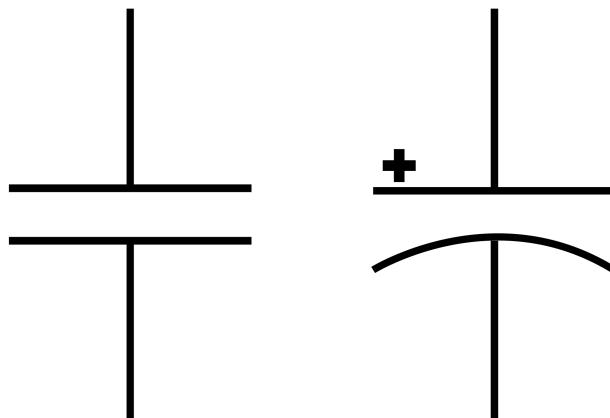
You should be aware of what happens with **Series** and **Parallel Capacitors**. The **Capacitance of Capacitors** add when in **Parallel**, where in **Series**, it is like **Resistors** in **Parallel**. You can think of it having inverse rules to the **Resistor**. Therefore, **Capacitors** are often used in **Parallel** but less so in **Series**, unless a higher **Voltage** is required than their individual rated value. Shown by the equations below:

Series Capacitors-

$$C_{total} = \frac{1}{\frac{1}{C_1} + \frac{1}{C_2} + \dots}$$

Parallel Capacitors-

$$C_{total} = C_1 + C_2 + \dots$$



Example circuits etc

Quiz

1. How do **Capacitors** store energy?

- a) In the magnetic field
- b) In the electric field
- c) As thermal energy

- d) They do not store energy
2. True or false, a **Resistor** is typically used in **Series** with a **Capacitor** to limit **Current** flow through the **Capacitor**.
3. True or false, 1 **Farad Capacitors** are commonly available.
4. Design a circuit for charging a **Capacitor** at a maximum **Current** of 1A, assuming a source **Voltage** of 3V.

0.1.7 Inductors

What are Inductors?

Inductors are another key passive energy storage component. These store energy within the magnetic field, and have a range of uses, often in power electronics.

The unit for **Inductance** (L) is **Henry**, with typical values depending on **Inductor** type, but usually in the uH or mH units or below.

A range of physics based equations are used to show **Inductance**.

There is the following basic equation: $L = \frac{\Phi(i)}{i}$. There is also the energy formula for calculating the energy stored within an **Inductor**, with the following basic equation: $E = 1/2 * L * I^2$.

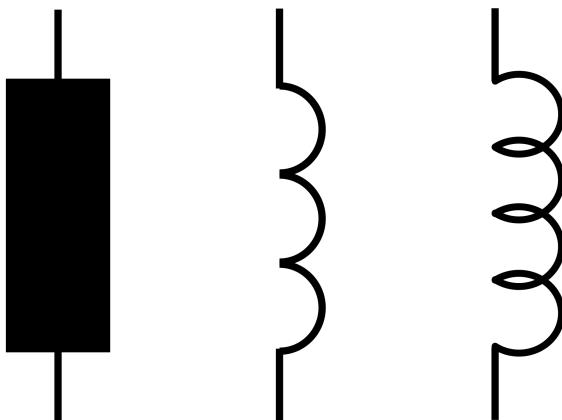
It is also useful to be aware of the rules for **Series** and **Parallel Inductors**. It is like the rules for **Resistors**, although this time being **Inductance**.

Series Inductors-

$$L_{total} = L_1 + L_2 + \dots$$

Parallel Inductors-

$$L_{total} = \frac{1}{\frac{1}{L_1} + \frac{1}{L_2}}$$



One of the built in simulation circuits from Falstad is helpful for showcasing the charge and discharge characteristics of an **Inductor**, by flicking a switch. [Link](#)

Example circuits etc

Quiz

1. What units is **Inductance** given in?

0.1.8 Diodes

Diodes are widely used in electronics. The basic principle of a **Diode** is a device/component which limits how **Current** can flow within a circuit, such as restricting **Current** flow to one direction. This makes them beneficial for a range of circuits, such as protection circuits, preventing unwanted reverse **Current** flow, which could damage other components or cause unwanted side effects. They are a simpler examples of a **Semiconductor**, where usually silicon is **Doped** with other atoms to cause a surplus or shortage of electrons, changing the polarity of elements of the material, affecting how **Current** flows through the **Diode**.

There are also Light Emitting **Diodes (LEDs)**, which work through similar principles, but emit light of a certain spectrum depending upon **LED** selection. There is a **Voltage** drop associated with this, but with considerably lower heat output, compared to filament bulbs, which heat filament until it glows.

Therefore

There is a common formula for calculating the **Resistor** needed for an **LED**, given you know its **Voltage** drop and the **Current** it runs at. This is the following:

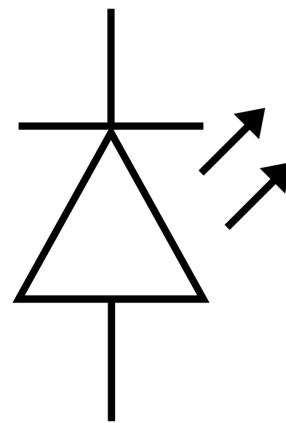
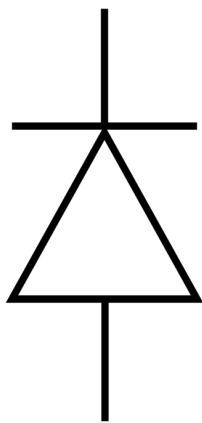
$$R = \frac{V_s - V_f}{I_f}$$

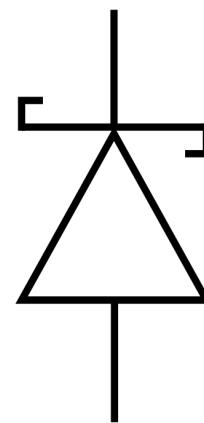
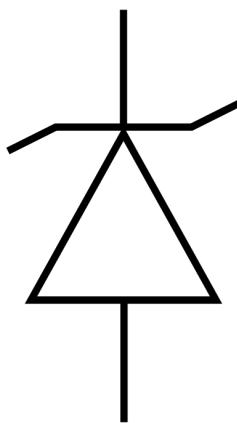
Where V_s is the supply **Voltage**, V_f is the forward **Voltage** (**Voltage** drop of the **LED**) and I_f is the forward **Current**.

Different colour **LEDs** work at different **Voltages**, so **Resistors** are commonly used to drop the input **Voltage** to a level suitable for the **LED**. The **LEDs** also help to limit **Current** through the **LED**. This **Voltage** usually is between 1.8-3.3v, and is because of how the **Semiconductor** is **Doped**, as different dopants will cause different **Wavelengths** of light to be emitted.

It is important to consider that **Diodes** have an inherent **Voltage** drop, so this needs to be considered, especially when using them with low-**Voltage** circuits, as a typical **Diode** can have **Voltage** drops between around 0.4-0.7v.

There are many subcategories of **Diodes**. The most common type mentioned above is known as a junction **Diode**. **Zener Diodes** allow reverse **Current** after a certain threshold **Voltage** is met. A **Schottky Diode** has low **Voltage** drop and fast switching. There are also **DIACs** and **TRIACs** for **AC**, allowing some **Current** flow in both directions.





Quiz

1. Name 4 examples of **Diodes**, and what they do?
2. True or false, **Diodes** always restrict **Current** flow to one direction?
3. You are building a low **Voltage** circuit, and need to limit **Current** flow to one direction, but with as low losses as possible. What **Diode** would you recommend?
4. True or false, **LEDs** can be found in a range of colours, each with differing **Voltage** drops?
5. Design a **LED** circuit, with an input **Voltage** of 3V and the **LED** has a **Voltage** drop of 1.8V running at its recommended **Current** of 25mA. What is the total power consumption of this circuit?

0.1.9 Transformers

What are Transformers?

Transformers use the fact that a **Current** carrying coil of wire will generate a magnetic field, which induces a **Current** in a coil to allow for **Voltage/ Current** conversion. Think of it as two **Inductors**, **Coupled** through a single **Core**. This is typically a **Ferritic Core** to provide a magnetic path to reduce losses. These are often laminated to limit eddy **Currents**, which are loops of **Current** within the **Core**, induced from the magnetic field. **Lamination** increases the **Core Resistance**, reducing the eddy **Current**.

A lot of **Transformer** design is out of the courses scope. We will assume that the **Transformer** is ideal, although in reality, there are losses, leading to efficiencies of upwards of 95%. This depends on how well suited a **Transformer** is for a design.

Due to **Current** only being induced under a changing magnetic field, **Transformers** only work with an **AC** input.

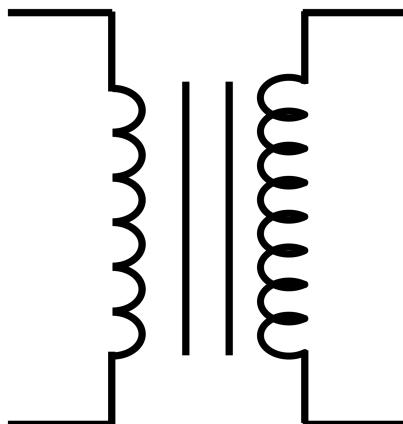
This is the basic set of equations for **Transformers**.

$$\frac{V_p}{V_s} = \frac{I_s}{I_p} = \frac{N_p}{N_s}$$

Where p represents the input/ primary coil and s represents the output/ secondary coil. V represents **Voltage**, I represents **Current** and N represents the number of turns/ coils.

There is an inverse relationship between **Voltage** and **Current** when there are different coil turns.

There are 1:1 **Transformers**, where no **Voltage** or **Current** conversion takes place, but it isolates the input from the output, so is a safety feature often used in products. These are known as isolation **Transformers**.



Quiz

1. Why are **Transformer** coils often laminated?
2. A **Transformer** with a 240V RMS input with a peak **Current** capability of 0.1A, with 100 turns

on its primary side, needs to supply a 12V **RMS** circuit. How many secondary turns are required, and what is the peak **Current** that could be supplied to the output circuit?

3. Why are isolation **Transformers** used?

0.1.10 Analogue vs Digital

It is important to be aware of differences between **Analogue** and **Digital**. **Analogue** refers to a wave, with the fundamental characteristics of **Wavelength**, frequency and magnitude. This value can vary considerably within a **Period**, which is particularly useful for some applications.

On the contrary, **Digital** is represented with either 1 or 0 (off or on). As already touched upon, the entire field of modern **Digital** electronics is based around **Semiconductors**, which form switches.

Signals can be sent through both methods, with a range of benefits and negatives. A lot of data can be shown in a single **Analogue** signal, although it can be difficult to accurately read. Whereas, **DC** deals with two distinct boundaries, so although many more "pulses" are required to output the same amount of data, it is more reliable and easier to use/ read within logic based processing/ **Boolean Algebra**, which is touched upon later on in the course.

Sensors are often read using **Analogue** methods, where there is an induced or dropped **Voltage** which can vary in magnitude. This would need to be converted to a **Digital** value for **Microcontroller** use. A combination of **Digital** 1/0 can be **Binary**, which means a **Voltage** value can be represented as a **Binary** combination of 1s and 0s. An ADC is an IC which does this conversion.

Quiz

1. For a wire communicating over a long distance, would you recommend that an **Analogue** or **Digital** signal be used?
2. Can equivalent numbers be represented with **Analogue** and **Digital**, along with some processing/ data conversion?

0.1.11 Mechanical switches

Switches are used as input devices, where depending on being open or closed, will allow power transmission or not, by opening or closing a circuit. These can be split into many types, such as typically open

switches unless pressed, typically closed switches unless pressed, or those which switch between open and closed when pressed, and switches which you can switch to close several sets of pins/ connections.

This section will quickly talk through a few different switches/ buttons, their names and uses.

There are different switches that fit into different classifications, which will briefly be discussed.

Single Pole Single Throw (SPST) switches are ones which connect or break a connection between two single wires/ points/ terminals.

Single Pole Double Throw has a single input but two outputs which can be switched between.

There is then also Double Pole Single Throw, which is a combination of two SPSTs and Double Pole Double Throw, a combination of two SPDTs.

Now onto the different types of switch. They can mainly be split into several types, being the below:

Push button- A typical button, some of which will stay closed/ pressed until pressed again, while others such as momentary push switches will only be closed as they are pressed.

Slide switches are flicked into set position, which can be two positions or multiple.

Toggle is a slight adaptation of slide switches, flicking a centred switch from one angle to another, otherwise working through similar means.

Rotary switches can twist to connect a pin with a range of other pins depending where it is twisted to.

You may have a range of switches, such as a few slide switches packaged together in **DIP** format.

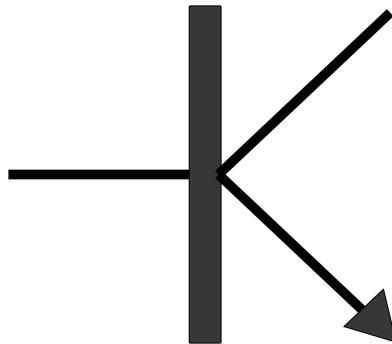
0.1.12 Digital switches/ Transistors

Switches are widely used within electronics and are what led to the field of **Digital** electronics. **Microcontrollers** may use millions of switches on a single silicon **Die**, where discrete switches are mainly used for power electronics.

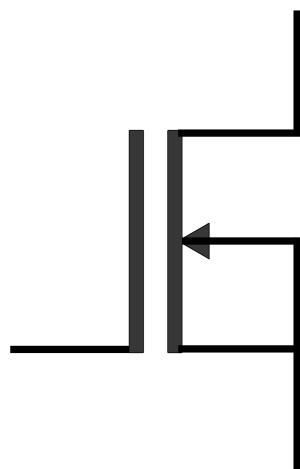
Switches are important to have control of a circuit. These are discussed in greater depth later, but they usually have an externally triggered **Gate**, which closes a circuit. Think of a switch as a tap that allows or restricts water flow. The vast majority of these are **Semiconductor** based, due to the low losses involved, although they are limited to **DC** function.

This document quickly talks over the main types in detail, so you can understand why each are used, and to help understand surrounding circuitry.

There are **Current** controlled switches and **Voltage** controlled. **BJTs** are an example of a **Current** controlled switch, where a flow between the **Gate** pin and the emitter allows for a higher **Current** to flow between the emitter to the collector. There is a **Voltage** drop, which can mean losses are fairly significant at lower **Voltages**. They are easy to use in a circuit after calculating values.



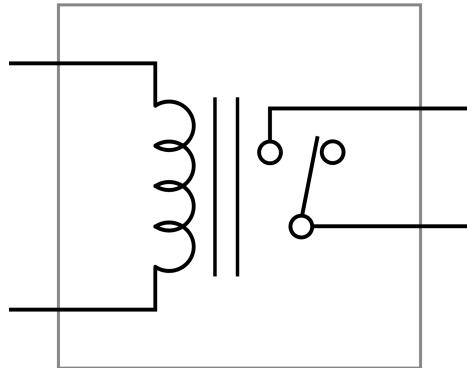
Then there are **Voltage** controlled switches, the main example of this being **MOSFETs**. **Current** can flow after the **Voltage** is higher than a threshold is reached in its **Gate**. They are more complex to use, since the **Gate** acts as a **Capacitor**, so has to be charged, so may not function well without a properly considered **Gate** charge circuit. Losses are related to the **MOSFET**'s internal **Resistance**, which can get very low, so they are typically fairly efficient.



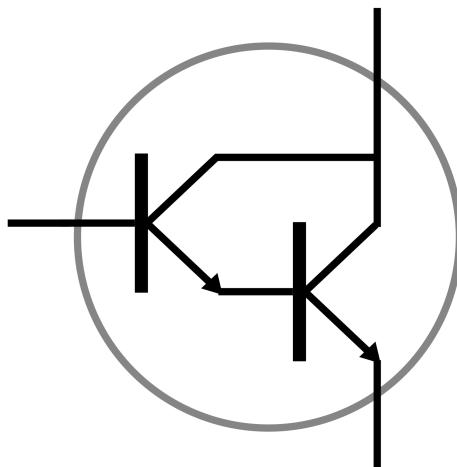
There are other switches, mainly for high power electronics, which don't require as much depth.

Relays are an alternate form of switch, which uses an **Electromagnet** to cause a switch to open or

close. Most switches work with **DC**, where relays are useful for **AC** applications. They are another form of switch that provides electrical isolation between parts, as it is an **Electromagnet** which pushes the switch closed.



Darlington **Transistors** are also commonly known as a **Darlington Pair**, made of a couple **BJT Transistors**, allowing higher levels of **Current** amplification/ high **Current** gain.



You can get arrays of **Transistors**, such as Darlington Arrays, which is a chip with multiple Darlington **Transistors** with common emitters. These are useful for high power or inductive loads being controlled by a **Microcontroller**.

Quiz

1. What type of **Digital** switch could you use for turning an **AC Motor** on and off?
2. If you needed a simple **Transistor** circuit to turn a high power **LED** on and off from a **Microcontroller**, what type of **Transistor** would you use and why?
3. What is the purpose of a **Transistor Gate**? Feel free to use an analogy to help you explain?

0.1.13 Sensors

What are Sensors?

Sensors are likely to be a key component or **Module** you use in your research, so understanding how they work and your options is important. Key aspects of **Sensor** theory are discussed here, with more in the further reading section.

This is split into several sections, covering some of the major **Sensors**, with more detail on **Sensors** likely to be used within chemistry related projects.

Sensors typically use **Resistance**, **Capacitance** or **Inductance** to take a vast range of measurements, often using a MicroElectroMechanical system (**MEMS**) to allow for this.

Temperature sensing can be done with a range of different methods, and is likely to be important. The most common **Sensors** are **Analogue** ones, where the components **Resistance** changes along with a temperature change, although there are **Digital Sensors** for this too. There are 4 major categories of temperature **Sensor**, which we will quickly touch upon each. There are **Thermocouples**, **RTDs**, **Thermistors** and specific **Digital ICs**.

Thermistors are common, and are divided into NTC and PTC, with NTC more common. NTCs have a decreasing **Resistance** compared to temperature, and will have a **Resistance** rating for 25°C typically along with a value for how much their **Resistance** changes per degree. Therefore, utilising a circuit to measure this **Resistance** allows for a relatively accurate temperature to be read. In comparison, PTCs have a positive temperature coefficient.

RTDs are similar in their operation to **Thermistors**, but are meant for a wide range of temperatures, upwards of around 600C. Many consist of a length of thin wire wrapped around a ceramic or glass **Core**.

A **Thermocouple** consists of two differing conductors which generate a temperature dependant **Voltage**. They have the highest temperature range of temperature **Sensors**, upwards of around 1800C.

Digital temperature ICs will measure a temperature and report the data through a specific **Protocol**, which is discussed further (here).

Humidity **Sensors** may be used along with temperature **Sensors**, in a single package. The output can be **Digital** or **Analogue**. A couple of common **Digital** examples include the DHT11, DHT22 and AM2320.

There are many **Sensors** for detecting compounds in the air, important for atmospheric research. Usually these are **Doped** so that a higher concentration of a certain gas, such as carbon dioxide, induces a **Voltage**. Because of the calibration involved and comparison with data, they are often complex ICs, which communicate via a **Protocol** such as **I2C** or **SPI** to a **Microcontroller**, discussed in the **Protocols** section. Although certain **Sensors** may leave the conversion to the user. More **Modules** are appearing in the market, helpful for taking more reliable measurements.

PhotoResistors use a similar method for light, where a **Resistance** is associated with pitch black, and separately for light. Therefore, an estimated light intensity will be attained, with a given **Voltage**. There are also **photoDiodes** and **photoResistors**, each with their own benefits, like higher response rate, or lower costs.

There is a range of movement based **Sensors**, which will quickly be touched upon. You are unlikely to need to use these much.

One of the main cheap and widely used range/ movement **Sensors** is an **Ultrasonic Sensor**, which has an **Ultrasonic** transmitter and receiver. This uses knowledge of the speed of sound, to measure the time it takes for sound to hit a surface and reflect, to then calculate a distance value.

There are also **LiDAR Sensors**, which are similar but known to have higher precision, which use a singular beam of light, and calculate its time of travel. These are also known as Time of Flight (ToF) **Sensors**.

The motion based **Sensors** discussed above are ones that are contactless, but there are also contact based **Sensors**, which a **Potentiometer** could be an example of, using its **Resistance** based on a linear or rotational movement as a measurement of movement.

Examples

At this point you have seen a good proportion of components, to have more complex examples. Coming

back to the heater suggestion mentioned earlier in the document, but this time there could be a control loop factored in. We will assume a the processing is all sorted by a **Microcontroller**. We can use the same resistor/ heating element of 2000W, but will use a **Transistor** to turn it on and off. For simplicity, and since a small voltage drop should not have a massive effect, a **BJT** could be selected here. The **BJT** could be triggered to turn off when the value from an **Analogue Thermistor** correlates to a higher temperature than what has been selected as the required temperature. It could be a potentiometer which is used as a temperature knob.

Quiz

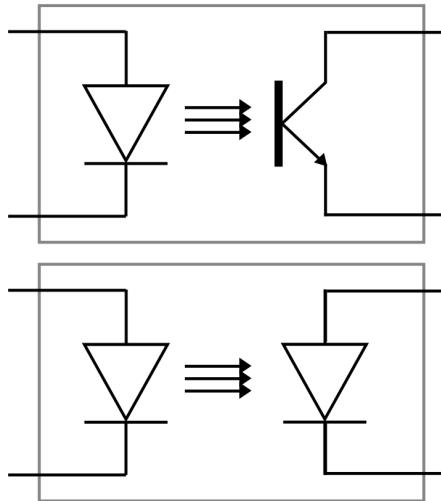
1. What is the difference between a NTC and a PTC **Thermistor**?
2. What type of temperature **Sensor** would you choose for a furnace, with temperatures as high as 900°C.
3. If you needed to precisely measure a distance, what would be a good **Sensor** choice?
4. Name a couple of **Protocols** that **Sensors** may communicate with?

0.1.14 Optoisolators

Optoisolators, otherwise known as optocouplers, are components that use light to transfer electrical signals between two isolated circuits. This is important if the two circuits need differing **Voltages**, or need isolating.

They use an **LED** and a photo**Sensor**/ photo**Transistor**, so it is light that transmits the signals, which keeps them electrically isolated. They are useful for measuring **AC** using **DC** electronics, so have uses within **AC-DC** power conversion/ supplies.

It may be worth reading the sections on photo-**Sensors**/ photo-**Transistors** within **Sensors**, as well as **Transistors** and **Diodes**, to fully understand this.

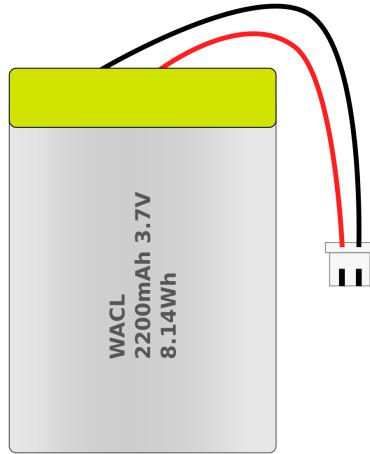
**Quiz**

1. Name an application where an **Optoisolator** would be helpful?
2. What components are within an **Optoisolator**?
3. Are **Optoisolators** suitable for transferring a lot of power?

0.1.15 Power Sources

It is important to consider what power source you should use for a given project.

Batteries come in many different types, some being rechargeable chemistries and others not. Many batteries use lithium, a very common material for rechargeable batteries, although it requires careful consideration and the use of a charge IC, to ensure that both its environmental and operating conditions are suitable. If not used wisely, it can be a dangerous chemistry with a range of risks stemming from mishandeling, shorts, over and undercharging and more.



There are a few more forgiving rechargeable battery chemistries, one of the main ones being NiMH, which has characteristics in a similar magnitude to lithium cells, although generally worse in both energy and power density. Energy density is the amount of energy it can store either per litre or kg, so will affect how long a product will last, where power density is the magnitude of power it can continuously supply, again either per litre or kg. Energy density is given in Wh, which is the number of **Watts** of energy it could supply for an hour.

NiCD and Lead Acid are two other battery chemistries which still get some use, but are decreasing in relevance due to them having worse characteristics in a range of aspects, and poor carbon footprint. Lead acid is still used for certain applications due to how easy it is to charge and discharge, and its low cost per Wh.

Common non-rechargeable battery chemistries include alkaline and zinc carbon. Alkaline tends to provide more energy, and tends to use lower pollutants, so should be the better choice than zinc carbon unless a very low budget is a key constraint. So other than costs, I would say use of rechargeable battery chemistries would be best in most cases.

Along with battery sources, considering wired methods are also useful. **USB** is one of the more common methods, with most **USB** methods transmitting 5V. **USB C** for example allows for devices to "negotiate" their **Voltage** draw, between 5-20V, with a 5V default. Micro **USB B**, which used to be a standard for portable devices in some cases can handle a max of 3A, where **USB C** can handle up to 5A, making it suitable to power many projects. The connector has a higher durability, and can be inserted either way. Other data transfer can be done through it as well, making it versatile.

DC Jacks are useful for power only, and can vary in dimensions and power output. It is fairly common

to get **DC Jack** based power supplies with 6V, 12V and 20V **Voltage** outputs, with a range of **Current** outputs.

Adjustable **DC** power supplies are helpful for testing stages, or if specific **Voltages** are needed, and will power a device with **Voltages** between around 0-30V and sometimes 0-60V or more. 5A and 10A are both fairly common for max **Current** output capabilities.

Supplementary power methods include the use of a **Motor** as a **Generator** or a solar panel, spoken about later. A low energy density battery alternative with quick charging capability is a **Supercapacitor**, suitable for very low power applications, potentially topped up with a solar panel.

Quiz

1. A temperature sensor for remote use needs to be made, where it takes a measurement once an hour, with someone manually retrieving data once a week. Name a power source which might be suitable?
2. Why are lead-acid batteries still used, and why are they not very good for a lot of cases now?
3. A device for lab use needs a specific voltage of 27.6V to run. What do you think a good choice would be to power it?
4. What is commonly known as quite a safe battery chemistry?
5. What is good about **USB C**?

0.1.16 Ideal vs Non-ideal Components

Until now, we have talked about components as if they are ideal. This means they have no losses other than expected. In reality, components have internal **Resistance**, **Capacitance** and **Inductance**. For low-speed circuit design, the internal **Resistance** is what you mainly need to be aware of. This includes the source, with certain batteries/ sources having a high internal **Resistance**, which means at higher **Current** draws, there can be a fairly significant **Voltage** drop before it even gets to the rest of the circuit. Any of these factors can have a significant effect upon a more high-speed circuit, with **Capacitance** and **Inductance** altering over different frequencies. In high speed circuit boards, there are a range of techniques used to limit the potential for unwanted **Capacitance** and **Inductance** to affect a circuit. Issues such as this could be what causes circuit problems, especially for breadboard designs.

Because of factors such as the above, component functions don't always happen instantaneously, such as there being a turn on/ off or switch on/ off time for a given component.

A battery/ power source would usually have an ESR value, which stands for equivalent **Series Resistance**. This is important to consider what losses, heat build up and **Voltage** drop could be seen at particular loads.

It is also beneficial to know the term **Impedance**, which is the effective resistance of an AC circuit, being a combination of both resistance and **Reactance**. As mentioned above, circuits will have a level of inductance and capacitance, which causes **Reactance** in an AC circuit.

Quiz

1. True or false, real world components can be thought of as non-ideal?
2. What characteristics do non-ideal components have, which may cause issues for certain circuits?
3. True or false, non-ideal components tend to be more of a problem for low-speed circuits.

0.2 Power conversion

Power conversion could be its own course, so this lightly touches upon conversion for a base understanding and why it is important. Within the further reading section, there is information on **Rectification**, combining theory above, so is worth checking for more of a challenge, or if **AC-DC** conversion knowledge is necessary.

The main types of power conversion are active and linear. Active utilises both **Capacitors** and **Inductors**, as well as switches for efficient conversion of **Voltage**, either to a higher or lower level, with efficiencies into the 90% possible. Whereas linear power conversion is cheaper, requires a lower number of components and is specifically for decreasing the **Voltage** at the output. It acts as a variable **Resistor**, to dissipate the unwanted **Voltage** as heat, so depending on the circuit's needs, can be particularly inefficient. Therefore, if efficiency is less important than costs, or the **Voltage** decrease is only very minimal, linear **Voltage** converters can be an okay option. Given how easy it is to find power conversion **Modules** (either known as step-up or step-down, whether **Voltage** is increased or decreased), these are usually better than custom designs, as usually only a **Potentiometer** needs altering to get necessary output **Voltage**, with minimal losses.

For a quick active power converter insight, a switch is turned on at set ratios to charge an **Inductor**, which then discharges to charge a **Capacitor** for a smoothed **Voltage** at the intended level. The ratio between the switch on and off times will affect the output **Voltage**.

The above mainly discussed **DC** to **DC** power conversion. To do **AC** to **AC**, a **Transformer** is commonly used. **AC** to **DC** may use a similar method to the above but using a **Transformer** rather than an **Inductor**, and the use of a **Rectifier** to convert the **AC** to **DC**.

Quiz

1. Name three other types of conversion if the example is **DC** to **DC**.
2. True or false, active power conversion is always more efficient than linear power conversion?
3. True or false, it is typically recommended to use a **Module** for active power conversion due to their design complexity?
4. What would the efficiency be of a linear power converter, converting an input of 5V down to 3.3V?
5. For a variable load circuit, which runs off 3V and has a 3.3V supply, would a linear regulator be a good option, and why?

0.3 Communication Protocols

0.3.1 Wired Communication Protocols

Communication **Protocols** are important to interface with different devices and equipment, so a base understanding of some of the major ones would be important.

Communication **Protocols** are a set of rules which devices follow to transfer information, allowing coherent data transfer at set speeds, depending on the use case.

It will first be useful to distinguish between **Serial** and **Parallel**, since these are widely referenced regarding communication **Protocols**.

Serial means that there is a single data line/ wire used for communication in a given direction, where **Parallel** means that there are several data lines or wires with data travelling through. Therefore, **Serial** is often an easier method to use or implement.

They can first be split into two main kinds, with inter system **Protocols** being those used to have communication between devices, where intra system communication **Protocols** are meant for between component communication.

Therefore, you may use a combination of the two, depending on the project.

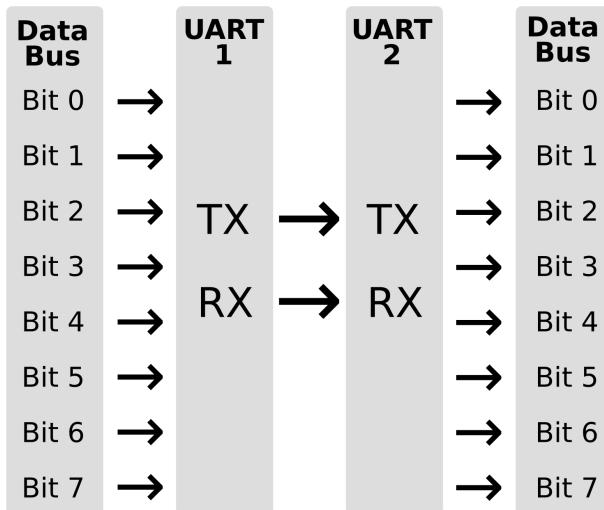
It is useful to know the term Port. Ports are points where communication can be done from, to a specific device.

USB and **UART** are the main examples of inter system **Protocols**, where **SPI**, **I2C** and **CAN** are some of the main intra system **Protocols**. Although some of the main **Protocols**, it is not a definitive list, with niche or proprietary **Protocols** being around. These may have specific benefits, or are proprietary to limit use of other companies' chips for a given application.

Master and Slave are still common terms within communication **Protocols**, that you need to be aware of, although there is a shift to alternate terms such as controller and responder, although not yet standardised. Other alternatives could include primary and secondary, leader and follower and source and sink, although the latter of which already is widely used within electronics. Because of the negative connotations of master and slave, this course uses the suggested terms of controller and responder.

USB is very widely used and is how many devices are connected to computers. It is high speed, and quite simple to implement, although requires the use of specific drivers and a powerful controller. **USB** 1 and 2 have 4 pins, one for power, one for ground and two for data, with data being sent **Serially** in each direction.

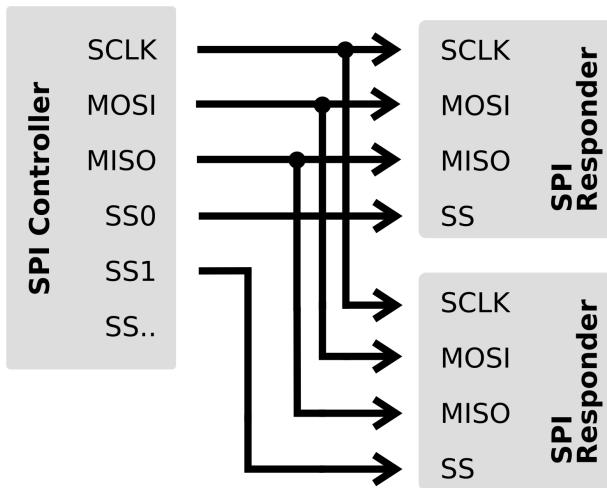
UART is physical circuitry for conversion between **Serial** and **Parallel** data, where two **UARTs** may communicate with each other, communicating in **Serial**, meaning that only two wires/ data lines are necessary for communication between two devices.



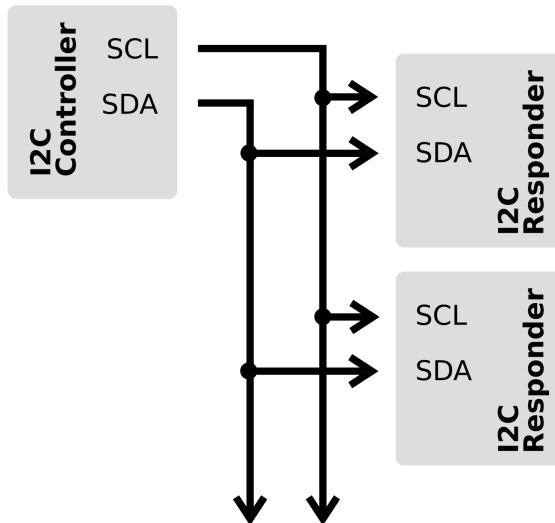
RS232 is another **Protocol** (Recommended standard 232), which is often used within telecommunications. In general, it is often used for connecting devices such as data acquisition or modems, the prior of which are likely to be particularly important. On creation, **RS232** allowed for "handshaking", a method for checking that data is transmitting correctly, although many devices no longer require the use of this. **RS232** can directly connect to the **SerialPort** of a computer.

ModBus is a **Protocol** which was created for communication for programmable logic controllers, often for industrial use. One reason for its wide usage is that it has no royalties and is open.

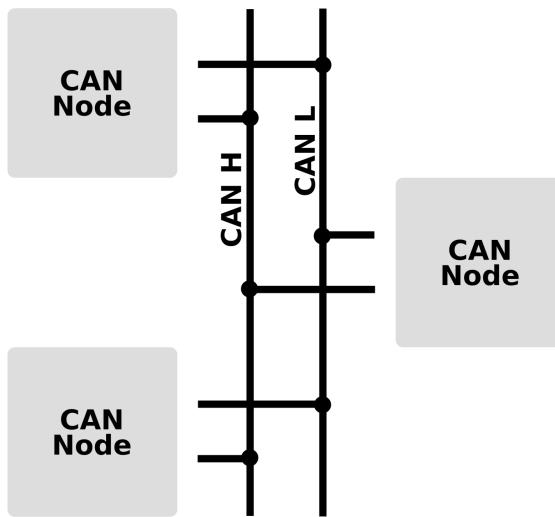
SPI is a commonly used **Protocol**, which has a single controller and multiple responders connected to it. **SPI** stands for **Serial** Peripheral Interface, with there being 4 main lines used, two pins for data transfer, a pin for selecting which responder the controller is communicating with and a line used as a clock. Therefore, for each responder that the controller wants to communicate with, a separate select pin is required. It is a relatively fast communication **Protocol**, but doesn't scale the best due to needing a new **GPIO** pin for each new device.



I²C is a similar **Protocol**, which is also **Synchronous**, like **SPI**, controlled with a clock from the controller. It only requires two wires for communication, the clock and the **Serial** data line. It can communicate with many devices/ responders with just two wires, but is limited in speed and has a combined transmitting and receiving data line.



CAN stands for Controlled Area Network, and is a **Protocol** meant for the transmission and receipt of data within a network of devices, especially for harsher environments. Due to this, it is mainly used in industrial and automotive environments, so may be used by certain research equipment. It is fast, secure and low cost, but is complex and automotive orientated.



Since not all devices have **Protocols** that are usable together, there are chips for conversion of **Protocols**, often seen as **Modules** which are often used to interface between a device and a computer. As previously mentioned, **USB** often requires drivers to be installed, so you should be aware that you may need to download a driver for interfacing with it.

This section will quickly go over **Modules/ chips** you may come across for communication with these different **Protocols**.

USB to UART Modules are very common, often having a **USB Port** on one side and 4 pins on the other. These may use a range of chips and are likely to use TTL level, which is **Transistor-Transistor** logic between the limits of 0 and VCC, which is often either 3.3V or 5V. A supplier will mention whether it works at **TTL Voltages**, or others such as RS-232, a standard meant for telecommunications.

Quiz

1. What is the difference between intra system **Protocols** and inter system **Protocols**?
2. Name two intra system **Protocols** and two inter system **Protocols**.
3. You have a system which uses a range of separate individual but connected industrial sensor units, name an appropriate **Protocol** that could be used?

0.3.2 Wireless Communication Protocols

Although we won't go into too much detail, it is helpful to be aware of some wireless communication **Protocols** and their benefits.

Wi-Fi- This is a family of wireless **Protocols** meant for local area networking, and is one of the most widely used.

Bluetooth- Bluetooth is a short range communication **Protocol**, meant for communication between a fixed and mobile device. It has been through several iterations, with Bluetooth 5.0 having distances upwards of 400m, but it is typically below 10m.

ZigBee- This is meant for creating local area networks of devices, with communication range between 10-100m.

LoRa- This is a long range radio **Protocol** meant for unlicenced radio bands, with ranges in the Km range being viable, depending on the landscape and antenna used.

GPRS- This is the **Protocol** which is the mobile standard for 2G and 3G mobile networks.

Quiz

1. What would be a suitable communication **Protocol** for a sensing unit 600m away, given an appropriate antenna is used?
2. Name an example **Protocol** meant for local area networking?

0.4 Integrated Circuits (ICs) and Microcontrollers

Along with the discrete components mentioned above, there are many integrated circuits, components with a circuit built in for specific functions. A complex example of this, which is widely used, is **Microcontrollers**.

Integrated circuits may do a wide range of things, such as amplification, timing and power conversion. These help to decrease the time, complexity, power consumption and often costs of a design by packaging all the discrete components necessary for its function. Usually a few passives or discrete components are required, which are referenced in the parts dtasht.

This section will quickly talk through some of the more important integrated circuits and their uses.

Amplifiers- A range of chips meant for the amplification of signals, usually analog signals.

Circuit Protection- A range of components meant to protect other aspects of the circuit, such as **Digital** fuses or **ESD** protection.

Timing- A range of chips to provide the timing of other chips.

Data Conversion- Chips used to convert one type of communication **Protocol** to another, or for analog-to-**Digital** conversion.

Display/ **LED** Drivers- Chips meant for the driving of displays or **LEDs**.

Interface ICs- Chips meant for communication over different **Protocols**, or to interface with different parts/ devices.

Communication ICs- A range of ICs and **Modules** for wireless communication, such as Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, LoRa, ZigBee.

Logic ICs- Chips that work through low level boolean logic, for building logic based circuits.

Memory- Necessary for storing data.

Power Management- A range of chips for power management, whether this is active or linear power conversion, battery management, power monitoring or other driving chips.

Sensors- A range of chips for interfacing with analog sensing elements or combining both into a single package.

Quiz

1. What is an integrated circuit?
2. Are integrated circuits always better than using discrete components?
3. Name two advantages of using an integrated circuit?

0.4.1 Microcontrollers

Microcontrollers are low power processing units, with built in memory, that can be programmed to do a range of functions. These may typically be put together as a single complete unit, such as an

Arduino board. An Arduino is a board with a **Microcontroller**, passives and discrete components to interface with basic electronics components.

There are a range of **Protocols** by which **Microcontrollers** may communicate by. They also may contain a range of integrated circuits, to help interface it with different components, such as with an **Analogue Sensor**. ADCs are frequently used (often internal to a **Microcontroller** but are also available as an IC). An ADC is an **Analogue to Digital** converter, which will represent an **Analogue** value as a bit value, depending on its resolution. This allows a **Voltage** reading to be associated with a **Digital** value, for use within the program.

The pins of a **Microcontroller** that enable data transfer are known as **GPIO** (General Purpose Input Output) pins. This term is widely used, but sometimes may just be written as IO pins. These have limitations, such as what **Protocols** they can be used for, along with electrical limitations like max **Voltage Tolerance**, or **Current** output.

These have a built in processor, which operates at a set clock speed, as well as **RAM** , **ROM** and sometimes **Flash** memory. A processor is what computes instructions, based on what is in memory. These operate at a set rate given in Hz, with some instructions possibly taking multiple cycles. They are commonly in the MHz region. **RAM** is fast access memory, to store data which is needed by the program, such as variables. Then memory such as **Flash** is slower access, used for storage of whole programs, which elements of which can be moved into **RAM** when it needs to run.

Quiz

1. True or false, a **Microcontroller** doesn't always have **RAM** ?
2. True or false, a **Microcontrollers** output pin could be used to directly power a filament bulb?

0.4.2 Amplifiers

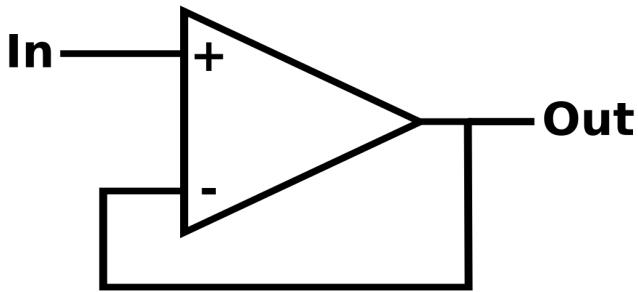
Amplifiers are there to increase the amplitude of an **Analogue** signal, often useful for use alongside **Analogue Sensors**, to take it to a **Voltage** range readable by a **Microcontroller**. A common component for amplification is an , which, when wired differently, can amplify a **Voltage** difference, or amplify a signal by a specific amount. This can be negative or positive amplification.

An understanding of how amplifiers work internally is beyond the course scope, although understanding

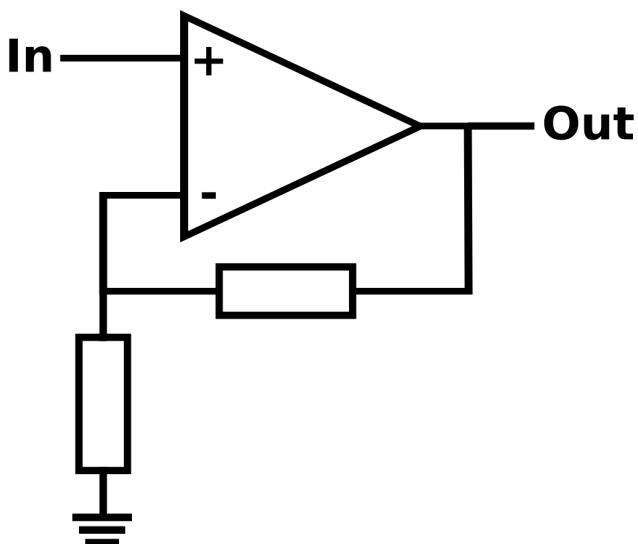
of their uses is helpful. We will touch upon the types mentioned above in some further detail. Each of the below uses an **Ics** as the principal component.

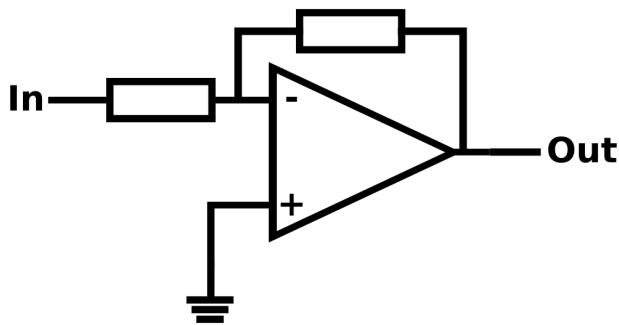
The primary focus will be on the use of **Ics** to create amplification circuits.

Although, not an amplifier, it is important to separate two circuit elements. This is known as a **Voltage follower**, which isolates the **Resistances** at either end of the part, particularly important where you may try to read a **Resistance** value from a **Sensor**.

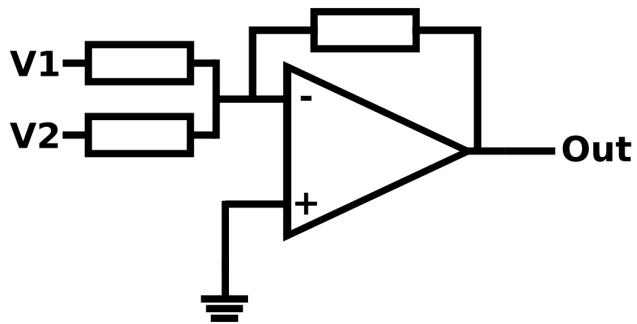


There are non-inverting and inverting amplifiers, which the first of which amplifies a **Voltage** in its **Current** direction/ magnitude, and the latter amplifies a **Voltage** in the negative/ opposite direction or magnitude.

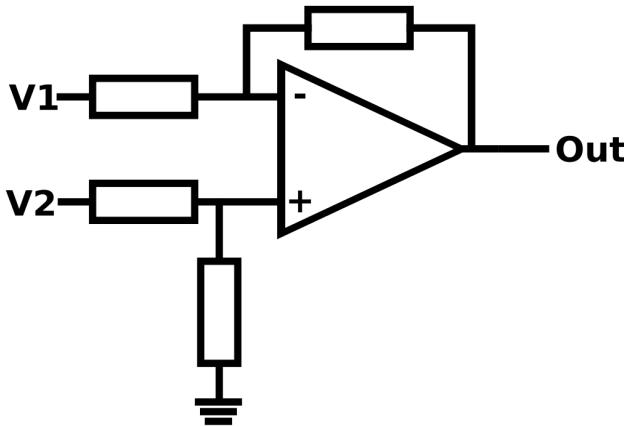




There are summing amplifiers which can add two **Voltages** together.



Differential amplifiers output the difference between two **Voltage** inputs, with a certain level of amplification.



Quiz

1. True or false, s can be used in a range of configurations to act as different amplifiers?
2. True or false, amplifiers are suitable for providing power for high power components?

0.5 Boolean Logic

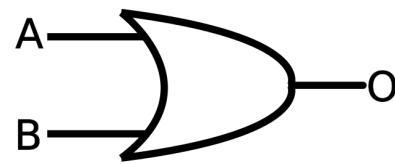
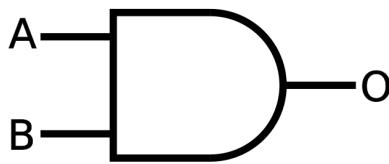
Boolean Algebra is a branch of mathematical algebra, where variables are true or false, and it is centred around three main operators "And", "Or" and "Not", and several sub-operators.

For this section, the practical elements use DDSIM, another online simulator, developed by a lecturer at the University. Although similar functionality can be done through Falstad circuit simulator, DDSIM is more streamlined and intuitive for **Digital**/ boolean electronics. Feel free to see which you prefer for which task, as they are not completely different. <https://www-users.york.ac.uk/~dajp1/Tmp/ddsim.html> (There is also DASIM, for **Analogue** electronics, similar to Falstad, where it can be easier to draw up circuits, it isn't quite as easy to visualise, <https://www-users.york.ac.uk/~dajp1/Tmp/dasim.html>).

First, we will describe what the different operations mean. Regard it as a comparison of usually two inputs, either true or false, on or off, a **Voltage** present or not, or 1 or 0. We will use true and false, being the main terminology in **Boolean Algebra**. First, "And", is where both inputs are true, the output will be true, with any other combination having a false output. Then there is "Or", which states if either or both input is true, then the output is true. The last key type is "Not", which has a single

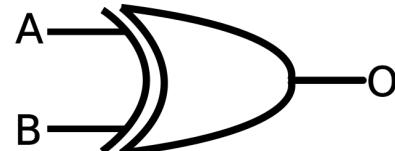
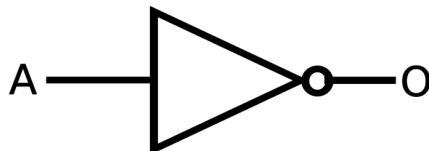
input, where the input is the reverse of the output, true-false, false-true. Within electronics/ circuitry, **Gates** are used to allow this logic, so you have And **Gates**, Or **Gates** and Not **Gates**. There are several more complex examples, such as NAnd and NOR, which are a combination of an And followed by a Not and an Or followed by a Not. Another more complex example is an Exclusive Or (XOR), which has an output which is only true if only one input is true. A combination of **Transistors** can make these **Gates**, with a combination of NAnd **Gates** creating any **Gate**. This has become the normal, since NAnd **Gates** are simple to produce from **Transistors**.

In the examples, we have used A and B as the inputs and O as output.



A	B	O
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	1	0
1	1	1

A	B	O
0	0	0
1	0	1
0	1	1
1	1	1



A	O
0	1
1	0

A	B	O
0	0	0
1	0	1
0	1	1
1	1	0

Boolean logic has led to modern computing, as it is a combination of logical operations done with **Gates**. There are fairly standard circuits you can try to make, to ensure you fully understand boolean logic.

A famous theorem within Boolean logic is De Morgan's Theorem/ Law, which shows how AND logic

can be represented through OR. We will use the below to represent this-

A & B are our inputs or "sets".

\bar{A} is the compliment of A, equivalent to A through a Not **Gate**.

\cap is the intersection, otherwise known as an **AND Gate**.

\cup is union, otherwise known as an **OR Gate**.

With the terminology explained, De Morgan's Law can be shown as the below:

$$\overline{A \cup B} = \bar{A} \cap \bar{B}$$

$$\overline{A \cap B} = \bar{A} \cup \bar{B}$$

This also helps to explain why **NAND Gates** are typically used within circuitry to represent other **Gates**.

If this is an area that particularly interests you, I would recommend looking at the site, **Nandgame**, which takes you step by step from placing **Gates** to building a basic **Gate** computer.

Quiz

1. What is De Morgan's law, and why is it important?
2. What discrete components allow us to make logic gates?
3. Name three gates and what they do.
4. Draw a logic table for the XOR gate.

0.6 Electronics equipment

There are a range of equipment that aids working with electronics, some may seem initially overwhelming. Understanding what they do, why and if they are needed, is important!

0.6.1 Multimeters

A very common piece of equipment is a **Multimeter**. These are used to measure **Current**, **Voltage**, and **Resistance**. When measuring **Current**, the **Multimeter** needs connecting in **Series** with what

is being measured. In contrast, to measure **Voltage** or **Resistance**, you place the probes in **Series** with the component or circuit segment needing measuring.

There are analog and **Digital Multimeter**s, the latter more common, and what this course focuses upon.

We will talk through the main **Multimeter** functions now.

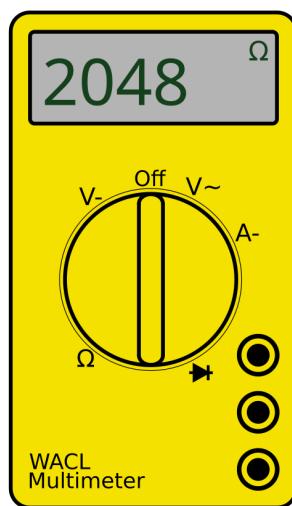
You can measure **Resistance**, **Current**, **Voltage** and continuity on most, with some measuring hFE (**Current gain**) of **BJT Transistors**. Some may also measure **Capacitance**.

Depending on the **Multimeter**, some will split each of the sections into specific scales, representing the max value it can show. This is so the resolution shown is close to the measurement magnitude. If, when trying to measure a value, nothing seems to be read, you may need to alter this scale.

The continuity tester is used to check whether two points within a circuit are connected, or whether **Current** can flow between them, so is helpful for checking **Soldering**.

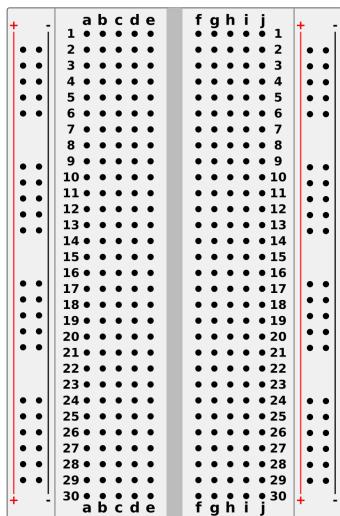
For most functions, connecting the cables to the V/Ω/mA section would be suitable as well as COM/ground, unless it is a high **Current** circuit, if so there is the third connection usually for **Currents** at a maximum of 5A or sometimes 10A.

A more complex piece of equipment for complex diagnosis is an **Multimeter**. These are used for measuring **Voltage** and **Current**, compared against time, in graphical format. The software sometimes used within this course Falstad, uses scopes which are a representation of what you would view through an **Multimeter** probing a specific component or circuit element. They are particularly helpful for troubleshooting signals or **Inductors** or **Capacitors**.



0.6.2 Breadboards

For electronics prototyping, breadboards are seen to be important, as they allow you to connect **DIP** components quickly for prototyping. They have many rows of 5 pins which are interconnected, so you can create an array of complex circuits with them, to test out ideas. Remember that they may not produce the most stable circuits, and would not be recommended for the field due to loose connections.



Internally, it is just rows of interlinked metal, which connect/ bridge pins together. As seen, there are two sets of 30 rows of 5 pins, with each pin on rows connecting. Two connecting parts should be on the same row. There are also power rails, which allow for 2 different **Voltages**, and two sets of ground pins. These are convenient to access, but not the only suitable pins for providing power. Breadboards are specifically meant for **DIP** components, with the gap in the centre allowing for **DIP** chips to be placed, separating each of their pins. Components can be connected with male to male **Jump** wires. As mentioned, it is worth only attaching power when you are sure that everything is firmly connected, with no potential for shorts. There are limits to the suitability of a breadboard circuit, which are meant for lower power and lower speed circuitry.

Examples

Here are a range of example circuits to help you understand how a breadboard circuit should be wired, with increasing complexity.

The first example is an **LED** with a **Resistor**, a button, and a battery.

Challenges

1. Connect a circuit with a blue 5mm led, 2 AA batteries, a 50Ω **Resistor** and a momentary push button.
2. Connect a circuit with 2 AA batteries, with a blue **LED**, **Resistor** and button, in **Parallel** with a red **LED**, **Resistor** and button. You will need to calculate the **Resistor** required.

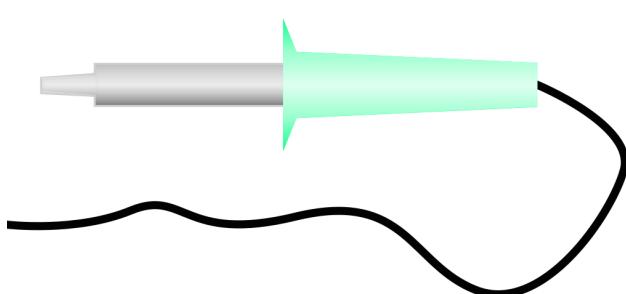
Here are a range of challenges, to build up your confidence. You may need to read other sections of this course if you are struggling.

The next stage from here is a proto-board design, using vero or strip board, design of a custom circuit board, or using existing **Modules** suitable for the design. The cost of custom printed circuit boards has decreased considerably in the past few years, through sites such as **JLCPCB**. This has made custom **PCB** design a more viable option for field use. In the further reading section, there is detail on **PCB** design and related resources, but it is not a key course focus.

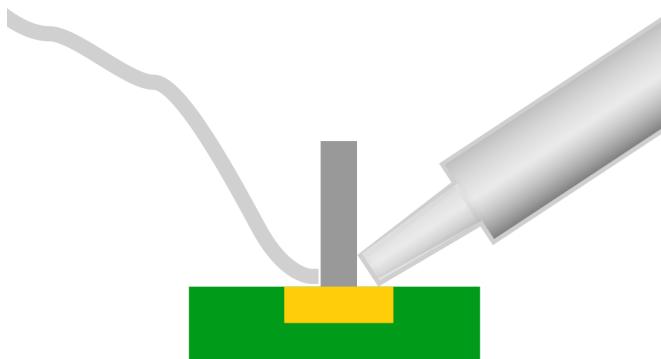
0.6.3 Soldering

Being able to solder is an important skill to have. Usually, someone would first make a circuit using **DIP** components before attempting more challenging **SMD** components.

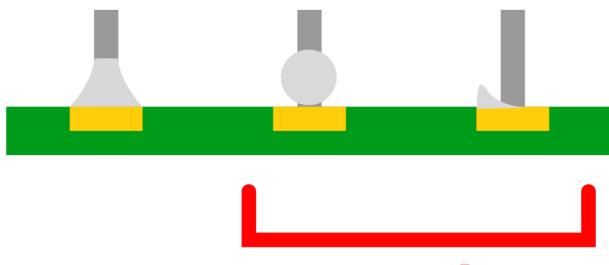
Soldering is the process of creating a metal joint between a component and a circuit board, to allow for a considerably improved electrical, mechanical and thermal connection. Solder is typically in wire form, but can also be in paste form, and it is a metal with a low melting point, allowing for a quick connection to be made with a reduced risk of damaging components.



The most basic form of **Soldering** uses a **Soldering** iron and solder wire. It is recommended to use a holder, to hold the parts in place, to free up hands for **Soldering**. The **Soldering** iron should be placed, so it heats the metal of the component and the interface metal, with solder wire placed at the other side so the solder can bridge them, making a clean connection. A clean connection should have a clean flow between the parts, rather than a ball of solder or poor joint.



Good



Bad

Sometimes too much solder may be added, which can be difficult to remove. A solder sucker can help, where you remelt the area with excess solder and quickly press the solder sucker just above, which uses suction to remove excess solder. Solder wick is another option, which I prefer, as you place it between the excess solder and your **Soldering** iron, where it "wicks" up the additional solder. This tends to be copper, with high heat transfer, so keep hands further from the iron.

Soldering temperature is important. It is worth looking at the melting point of the solder you are using, with lead-free solder typically having a slightly higher melting temperature of around 217C,

depending on composition.

Although lead-free solder is known to be slightly more difficult to use, being better for the environment and for your health for me makes it the better option. I haven't found too high a difficulty jump, especially if good quality equipment is used. Also it would be more beneficial learning what's used in commercial/public products, and shouldn't be phased out.

0.7 Electronics safety

Safety is a key consideration when doing anything with electronics. If you are unsure, it is always best to ask rather than to assume.

As discussed, **Current** is related to **Voltage** and **Resistance** through $V = IR$. The body has a **Resistance** which can vary depending on length etc, but is relatively high (this can decrease significantly from water/ high Humidity). Therefore, as **Voltage** increases, so will **Current** if the **Resistance** stays the same. You should always take sufficient precautions when using electronics, but especially when dealing with higher **Voltages**, where it can be fatal. The in-person practical elements use low **Voltages**, which are much safer. It is important to know when you don't have the knowledge or resources for a given piece of electronics and when it may be the better option to have someone else repair it. You should also consider that sometimes the best option is to replace something rather than repair it, such as when it may be dangerous, could end up costing you more if it isn't reliable, or takes a considerable amount of time to fix.

Component ratings are often not initially considered but are very important. Knowledge of ratings ensure that a selected part can take the expected power loss without damage. Therefore, it is important when selecting a **Resistor** to calculate its estimated power drop, and select a **Resistor** with a power rating clearly above the max predicted power losses. It is important to add a safety buffer, as circuits in reality are not ideal, so may react slightly differently than expected, such as a component having a **Resistance** value that differs from its value. **Tolerance** is the percentage at which a value can differ. This is usually under 20% (it can be considerably smaller). If you are unsure, it is better though to add a safety buffer, double the calculated value is fairly common, as it helps to account for how the **Tolerances** of other components affect that one.

It is important to consider that all components have losses, including wire, so this needs to be considered, with a wire or connector of suitable ratings selected. With this waste heat, also comes a **Voltage** drop,

which may also be a factor, as if high enough, can cause issues with the circuit itself.

For wires, you have different wire **Gauges**, and sometimes different materials. Typically wires are copper, but sometimes are aluminium, with a **Resistance** around 64% higher than copper, so looking at wire **Gauge** alone isn't enough. In general, there are standardised values for what **Current** flow is suitable through a given **Gauge** of wire. Again, it is helpful to keep the chosen wire a fair bit above the power rating you require, considering that only just meeting those ratings will lead to considerable losses in the wire. And if there are cost constraints, it is important to consider that a thinner wire, which is initially cheaper, may end up costing more due to electrical losses.

There are a range of connectors, and depending on the application, will have their own ratings. Mechanically connected, such as screw terminals, are likely to have a **Resistance** higher than directly soldered, but can give more flexibility to make alterations.

You should be careful when handling components, as built up static can cause damage. Grounding yourself, such as touching a metal surface, can help to reduce this static potential. Anti-static wrist straps are something that can be sourced cheaply to limit the potential of causing damage.

Soldering may be something that is required for a project. Health risks are associated with all forms of **Soldering**, so you should always solder in a well-ventilated area with suitable equipment. If possible, although slightly harder to work with, it would be recommended to use lead-free solder, reducing health risks and allowing for safer use in the field. **Flux** is used in solder, to help it flow, but its evaporation produces a vapour which can be harmful if inhaled. Many **Soldering** iron setups have extraction next to the iron, to minimise this chance of inhaling it.

Before connecting wires, particularly at higher **Voltage** levels, running your hand along a cable to check for potential damage is important, replacing a cable if this is the case. It is also good practice to ensure both sides of equipment being connected are turned off before and during wiring, to prevent potential sparks, damage or electric shock.

Certain components can still be dangerous regardless of whether they are powered. **Capacitors** are an example, which still hold power after a circuit has been turned off, for a **Period** of time. Therefore, ensure not to touch or short one in a circuit. It is good practice to have bleeder/ discharge **Resistors** connected at either end of high **Voltage Capacitors** so that when not powered, over time they will discharge. This will add some inefficiencies to a system, but improves safety.

As previously mentioned, it is important to ensure components aren't shorted, which can cause damage

quickly as the source will pump as much **Current** as it can into the part, causing fast heat up. Storage of components, such as batteries in a proper case, is important to ensure that they cannot get shorted. Checking soldered circuits to ensure nothing is bridged, such as using a combination of a microscope/magnifier, and using a **Multimeter**'s continuity checker, as mentioned previously, is a worthwhile exercise.

0.8 Important considerations

0.8.1 Component footprints

Components can be found in many footprints, which needs consideration in design or repair. Imperial measurement is commonly used for surface mount **Resistors**, **Capacitors** and **Inductors**, with values in mils, representing a 1000th of an inch. In many cases surface mount components are used in commercial products, so may be required in product repair. Understanding their size, and your ability to solder them is important. You may be able to access a **Soldering** oven, which can help make this process easier, considering that as solder melts, it can somewhat help to pull a component into place, if it is marginally off-centred.

Components are only rated for a certain amount of heat, so care should be taken to limit thermal damage. If a component with multiple pads is being done, leaving time between **Soldering** pins helps to prevent heat build up.

0.8.2 Supply Chain issues

Since the Pandemic, there has been many supply shortages and stock issues. This has been worsened by some companies/institutions beginning to purchase components in excess to ensure they had what they needed. Being aware of this is key in electronics design, especially when a certain project may need replicating in the future.

You should consider stock at the beginning of a design project, and ordering parts early if you know they are needed, rather than waiting for design completion, as by that point it could be out of stock. The main issue is with specialised ICs and **Microcontrollers**, less so with passives/discrete components, which can likely be ordered once you know specific requirements. A similar mindset should be followed for **Modules** though, as they often have parts with low stock.

The parts shortages started in 2020 are some of the worst that have been seen, mainly affecting silicon

components. There was a combination of factors which kick-started it. These included increase in demand for electronics, pandemic related shipping delays, natural disasters/ fires, vast increases in the price of silicon and trade disputes. The market naturally goes through **Periods** of higher and lower supplies, with early 2020 meaning to be a **Period** of lower supply, further worsening things. The situation has slowly been improving.

Tips could include to use discrete or widely available parts over specific or niche ones where necessary, or **Modules** where there are similar alternatives available.

Digi-Key has a small lead time trends page. It is useful to be aware of lead times for a given part, and how they might vary. [Link](#)

TTI also has a similar tool, with viewable graphs too. [Link](#)

0.8.3 Environmental considerations

There are two sides to environmental considerations. First, ensuring a product is suitable to the environment it is placed in, and second ensuring the design of the project has a limited carbon footprint or use of scarce, conflict, or toxic materials.

You should aim to use all RoHS certified components, luckily being most modern components. RoHS restricts the use of harmful materials such as lead within electronics. Solder is not always RoHS certified, as lead-based solder is still commonly used, especially with prototypes. Lead-based solder tends to be a mix of tin and lead, whereas lead-free substitutes the lead for some of the following: copper, silver, nickel and zinc, among others.

One way to somewhat reduce the carbon footprint could be choosing a smaller footprint, although for silicon products, this would only make a minor difference since it is likely that the silicon wafer fabrication is a large proportion of the overall carbon footprint.

There are limited steps in reducing carbon footprint within sourcing. Buying local will have an impact, but it's likely that they sourced the parts from long distances, anyway. Therefore, it is worth focusing on the longevity and reusability of parts. If designing a circuit board, using pin headers for **Modules** to slot into means that the **Modules** can be reused, or replaced if there are faults, rather than the whole unit.

There is a range of aspects regarding placement, such as whether waterproofing or cooling is needed. You should consider that rated temperature values are usually in ambient temperatures of around 25°C,

so an enclosed part with poor thermal path, close to its rating, could fail over time. You may consider whether active or passive cooling is needed, such as a copper or aluminium heatsink, along with a fan if actively cooled. If a fan is used, the circuit enclosure should have air intake and outtake. Some component footprints may have heatsinks specifically built for them. Thermal design/ thermal relief can be factored into **PCB** design too if needs be.

There are online calculators for figuring aspects such as thermal design, that are more time effective than learning thermo and fluid dynamics.

0.8.4 CAD and Material Design

You often require an enclosure for use of electronics in the field. Therefore, understanding different types of processes for their design would be useful.

Some of the main techniques for prototyping include 3D printing, laser cutting, and CNC milling, techniques widely used for quick prototyping of an enclosure.

3D printing mainly uses plastics, depending on the application. The most common is PLA (Polylactic Acid), a plastic derived from plants such as Corn. It is biodegradable and compared to most other plastics, has lower contamination risk. A problem is its low glass transition temperature (60°C), which means at lower temperatures it warps, so may not be suitable in direct sunlight for sustained **Periods**.

Lasercutting is suitable for some types of enclosure design. Depending on laser type and power, a range of different materials, from plastics like acrylic to wood can be cut. It is a good approach when quick and less complex parts are needed.

CAD Milling is a subtractive process where material is removed rather than added. Therefore, it is a wasteful process but allows a strong piece to be produced in a wide range of materials, including metals. Depending on the machine, there are limits to possible geometries.

There is a range of project enclosures meant for electronics projects, which can be sourced relatively cheaply, so are also worth considering to save time. These are typically seen in materials such as metals like steel or plastics like ABS. Some of these are IP rated, so can withstand different levels of water.

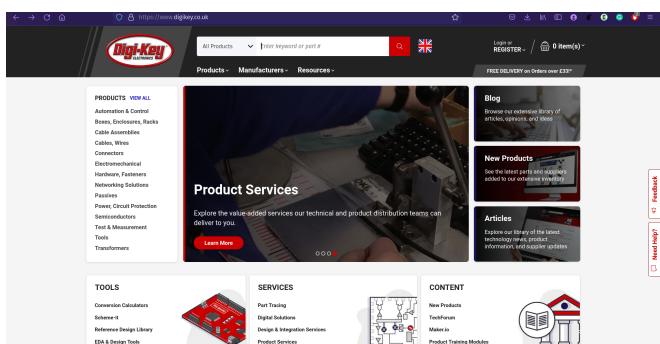
0.8.5 How to find a part

This is an important skill, especially in a changing market with parts sourcing causing many problems. You should first understand what you need, to then figure whats available. It is useful to remember

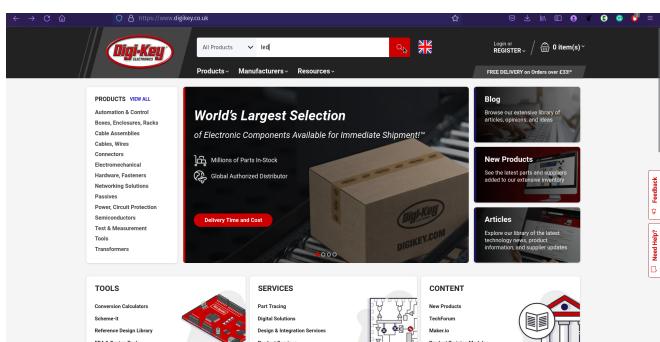
that a part with your specific requirements may not be available, so consider bounds a part could work between, or whether circuit alterations are required to find parts. Remember, multiple parts can be used in **Series** or **Parallel** to get the equivalent value, ensuring other factors are considered.

I will quickly talk through the processes needed for part selection. This is done in detail for a particular part, and in less detail with other parts, as different components have different characteristics which are important. For this I will use DigiKey, as it a major components supplier, although it may not always be the cheapest, it is known to have one of the better "search engines". Therefore, once you have found the parts you could use, you can then check other suppliers or comparison tools such as Octopart.

I will give an example part, being a **Resistor**. Let's say I am designing a basic **LED** circuit, where when a button is pressed, the light turns on. It needs to use a 3.6V LIR2032 (a small rechargeable coin cell), and it needs to be a red **LED**. I have been told it should have a **Current** consumption of 25mA, with a 1610 footprint. I have been told it needs to be in the colour white. I have been told it should be 1206 size (considering that this represents a size of around 0.12*0.06 inches or 3*1.4mm). Therefore, the first step you can do is open up the DigiKey homepage- [Link](#)



There are many categories with subcategories within the products section, on the left-hand side. This is useful when we know what category is needed, but takes some time to learn, particularly when different sites categorise things differently. Therefore, you can instead use the search bar at the top centre, type **LED**, and press the search button.



It usually shows top results, each with a link and image, as well as listing the number of suitable parts.

As seen, there is a white **LED** subsection, which is ideal.

The left screenshot shows the main search results for 'led' with two main categories: 'LED Indication - Discrete' and 'LED Lighting - White'. The right screenshot shows a more refined search for 'white led' with categories like 'LED Indication - Discrete', 'LED Drivers - Infrared, UV, Visible', and 'LED Lighting - White'.

This opens a page with a lot of information, so it may initially be overwhelming. At the top, there are scrollable filters to see what's available specifically for our requirements. Below, there are checkboxes for specific but often important search criteria, with the parts shown below this.

This screenshot shows the detailed search filters for 'LED Lighting - White'. It includes sections for Manufacturer, Series, Packaging, Product Status, Color, CCT (K), Flux @ 85°C, Current - Test, and various environmental and media options. A total of 29,810 results are shown.

On the top right of the criteria, I would recommend setting the filters to stacked, to see all filters at once, to go through each methodically.

This screenshot shows the same search filters as above, but with the 'Stacked' filter option selected. This allows all filters to be visible simultaneously, making it easier to manage them.

Many of these you will not need or may not understand, which is okay. You just need to scope out the specific characteristics which are important. Since some chips may have multiple **LEDs** on one **Die**, firstly, it would be beneficial to find "**Voltage- Forward**", and select between the lowest number until 3.6V as a maximum, you can hold click to select a range, or click on the lowest boundary, and then scroll to find the highest suitable boundary and shift-click on it.

Then the next suitable section looks to be maximum **Current**, since we will likely use a **Resistor** to limit **Current** anyway, the maximum could be higher than 25mA, since running a component at its max rated power can decrease its longevity. Therefore, we could select between the minimum value and 40mA.

We can then use "Package/Case", to look for the 1206 package size. You can then pick Apply Now. With the components shortages, it may be useful to select "In Stock", and also select RoHS compliant for environmental reasons.

We can now see the available options. You should see available stock, and cost in different quantities, along with other data, such as the CCT value for the colour, depending on the shade of white needed.

Showing 1 - 6 of 6 Pricing Quantity													
Company	MI Part #	Quantity Available	Price	Series	Package	Product Status	Date	COT (K)	Flag @ 90°C Current Year	Flag @ 25°C Current Year	Current Tax	Previous Tax	Change Tax
	158301230	1,024	£0.26000	WL-SWTP	Tape & Reel (TR) Active White, Warm	300K	-	7m (Typ)	20mA	3V			
	158301240	2,880	£0.26000	WL-SWTP	Tape & Reel (TR) Active White, Neutral	400K	-	7.3m (Typ)	20mA	3V			
	158301250	4,156	£0.26000	WL-SWTP	Tape & Reel (TR) Active White, Cool	500K	-	8m (Typ)	20mA	3V			
	158301260	8,240	£0.26000	WL-SWTP	Tape & Reel (TR) Active White, Cool	600K	-	8m (Typ)	20mA	3V			
	158301277	15,455	£0.26000	WL-SWTP	Tape & Reel (TR) Active White, Warm	270K	-	7m (Typ)	20mA	3V			
LUMINUS PC-STCP-SESG-1	158301280	0	£0.26000	DURSER E3	Tape & Reel (TR) Obsolete White, Cool	570K	-	-	20mA	3.05V			

Although the stock number may seem a lot, for industrial customers producing many products, this might be a tiny amount, so selecting a part with plenty in stock if you feel you may need more in the future is important. I have now selected the final part.

To know what **Resistor** we may need to select, we should check the dtasht. For an **LED**, you can find the forward **Voltage** vs forward **Current** graph. We can see at 25mA, the forward **Voltage** is around 3.25V. Therefore, we need to drop a **Voltage** of 0.35V in a **Resistor**. The ratio between the forward **Voltage** and **Resistor Voltage** is 9.285714286. Given that the **Resistance** of the **LED** will be $R = V/I = 3.25/0.025 = 130\text{Ohms}$. With this ratio, we need a **Resistor** of around 14Ω s. Sometimes an exact **Resistance** value isn't available, so an alternate value may be required. You should ensure that it is as close as possible and if there isn't something close enough, you can use the **Parallel Resistor** formula/ use multiple **Resistors in Series**.

As we have talked about needing a **Resistor** above, we can try to find one. Rather than having predetermined specifics, we can use the data derived from the **LED** requirements. There will be around 25mA through the **Resistor**, meaning power of around 0.00875W. As previously mentioned, it can be worth doubling this value to be clear of its max ratings, so we are looking for a **Resistor** of at least 0.0175W ratings. Here, I am going to say that we don't mind what size it is, but want a cheap option. We want a **Resistance** as close 14Ω as possible, in this case a **Tolerance** of a maximum of 1% (Often 5% is used, for non precision applications). We have been told it must be a surface mount part. Luckily, in this case, **Resistance**, **Tolerance** and Power are next to each other.

We want to ensure its available and that it is at least 0603 for hand **Soldering**. A part is selected with plenty in stock, with all the ratings we would like, while being a cheaper part.

QTY	UNIT PRICE	EXT PRICE
1	£0.000000	£0.00
10	£0.001000	£1.00
100	£0.001670	£1.67
1,000	£0.007520	£7.52
2,000	£0.006500	£16.32

You should remember that sites such as DigiKey are not always the cheapest, with this **Resistor** costing £0.08. Although this sounds cheap, when hundreds of parts are required, this quickly adds up. Sites such as LCSC have parts such as **Resistors** for considerably cheaper, but has a worse search engine and filters, along with typically slower delivery times. You need to factor shipping costs into the overall costs, as well as import charges.

Now, a button suitable for the task should be found. It needs to take a **Current** of at least 25mA, and a **Voltage** of at least 3V. In this case, we are budget-constrained to under £0.20, so a tactile switch would be the best option. A switch has been found, rated for 50mA, (again using a times two safety buffer), to account for plenty of unexpected deviance.

QTY	UNIT PRICE	EXT PRICE
1	£0.000000	£0.00
10	£0.073000	£0.73
100	£0.099000	£1.74
250	£0.095300	£24.58
500	£0.094460	£27.23

We have now selected several parts, using just the criteria required. There are many other filters that can be selected. As already mentioned, DigiKey has plenty of components on offer, and a good search

function, but is certainly not the cheapest option. It can be used to get a better idea of what you are searching for, to then search elsewhere, such as Octopart using a specific part number.

This section quickly discusses some of the key factors and variables you should consider for a range of parts.

You should consider that power and **Current** ratings sometimes regards the peak power seen but sometimes the average. **Voltage** ratings usually relate to peak **Voltages**.

Resistors- Resistors are basic components, but still have many filters, with key ones touched upon now. **Resistance** is obviously key. **Tolerance** is the max percentage deviance with the **Resistance**, so lower is better. Power is its max power rating usually at ambient temperatures. The temperature coefficient is how much its **Resistance** can change due to a temperature change. Package or footprint is regarding its size and the specific footprint as mentioned in the dtasht.

Capacitors- Capacitors have a few similar characteristics such as **Tolerance** etc. Factors include ESR similar to **Impedance**, which is the internal **Resistance** at a given frequency, **Voltage** rating which is the max **Voltage** it can be charged to, ripple **Current** is the **Current** it can withstand at a given frequency and polarity, as some **Capacitors** are restricted to a single direction for **Current** flow.

Inductors- These have a few of the same criteria already mentioned, a key criteria being its **Current** rating, which is the maximum **Current** the **Inductor** wire can take (constantly/ on average) and saturation **Current**, which is where the magnetic field is no longer proportional to **Current**.

0.8.6 Reading dtashts

Sometimes going off filters or parameters of parts search engines isn't enough, particularly for integrated circuits where extra passive or active components are required for their operation. Therefore, this section quickly goes through looking through dtashts, with some specific part examples.

Like the section above, you should remember that there will be a lot of information in dtashts, a lot of which you might not understand, with the likelihood being you don't need to understand the vast majority of it. There is a skill though to be able to pick through all this, to find out what you do need to know.

0.8.7 Finding Arduino Libraries

Arduino IDE is a widely used development platform, particularly for DIY projects. This makes it considerably easier to find libraries for a specific chip or **Module**.

Often, going onto the page for a **Module** should give details on its usage, as well as how to install libraries.

The Arduino IDE has a built in libraries search tool, which should have many of the more common ICs/ **Modules**.

0.8.8 Circuit Design Process

Now that you have seen many components, this section discusses some techniques, tips, and processes involved in circuit design.

It is important to first consider what your requirements are. What function does the circuit need to have, what environment should it be suitable for, what budget should it adhere to, what interaction does a user need to have with it, how easy will it be to make, can parts actually be sourced for it, and what restrictions are there regarding input power, how much processing power is required, how easy should it be to program, are there any niche libraries needed for it. These factors will be split and discussed individually in some detail. Remember that it is hard to get a "perfect" circuit. There are many variables and factors at play. It is a balancing act of figuring out which factors are most important for the project.

As a first tip, I would recommend writing answers to the above questions, and then writing "nice to haves" for that factor, and what is needed for a "minimal viable product".

First, figuring out what function is required, will dictate what type of components are needed. It is worth seeing if there are existing circuits which do what you need or similar. An example could be checking for open-source designs which could be adapted for your specific use case.

Regarding what environment it needs to be suitable for, there are multiple factors. These include areas such as does the enclosure need to be waterproof? Does there need to be a heatsink or fan due to high expected temperatures? Does it need all **SMD** components to be low profile? Does a specialist circuit board need producing to adhere to certain standards? What fail-safes need to be integrated into the design?

Considering the budget, it is worth leaving a large safety buffer, as there needs to be extra in case there

are issues in the first design. You need to factor in that multiple parts may need purchasing if there is a minimum order quantity. You should also consider whether the budget would be restrictive for what needs to be done. It is important to figure out whether saving money or saving time is more important, such as whether using **Modules** or custom designs would be better. There should be some wiggle room in the budget, to account for unseen factors.

You need to figure out what interface it needs for someone to use it. This could include considering whether it needs to transmit data through a wired or wireless **Protocol**? Does it store data on an SD card or inbuilt storage that needs connecting to a computer? Does it have a small display and buttons for setting it up, or is a computer or external device required?

Depending on its complexity, you need to consider whether an external service should solder the board, whether you do it by hand or whether a heat station should be used. This may make you focus on a specific design, such as using **DIP** components or focusing on **SMD** components.

A more important question than usual is, can components actually be sourced? There are tips elsewhere in this course on the matter, being a key parameter. Sometimes more novel approaches may need to be taken, if the typical route is not viable with parts shortages. Having a quick feel on stock levels for necessary parts is a worthwhile exercise before getting too far into a design.

It is important to be aware of how power needs may restrict the design, whether it is for mobile uses, with a restriction on how much power components can use, while ensuring that high-efficiency parts are selected, or whether there is only a specific **Voltage** input, so deciding what power conversion circuitry is required and viable.

Selecting what **Microcontroller** to use is important. Certain platforms, such as those compatible with the Arduino IDE can help to speed up design. This is due to a wide availability of libraries and easier-to-use code. Within different platforms, there are **Microcontrollers** of varying performance, so understanding your needs regarding this is important. This could relate to whether an 8 bit, 16 bit or 32 bit **Microcontroller** is required, the latter of which should work for most end cases.

0.9 Further reading

This section provides reading into advanced topics. Although you may not make a circuit with the below, understanding them may be beneficial. The below ideas may help you to solidify your understanding of the key theory mentioned above.

0.9.1 Rectification

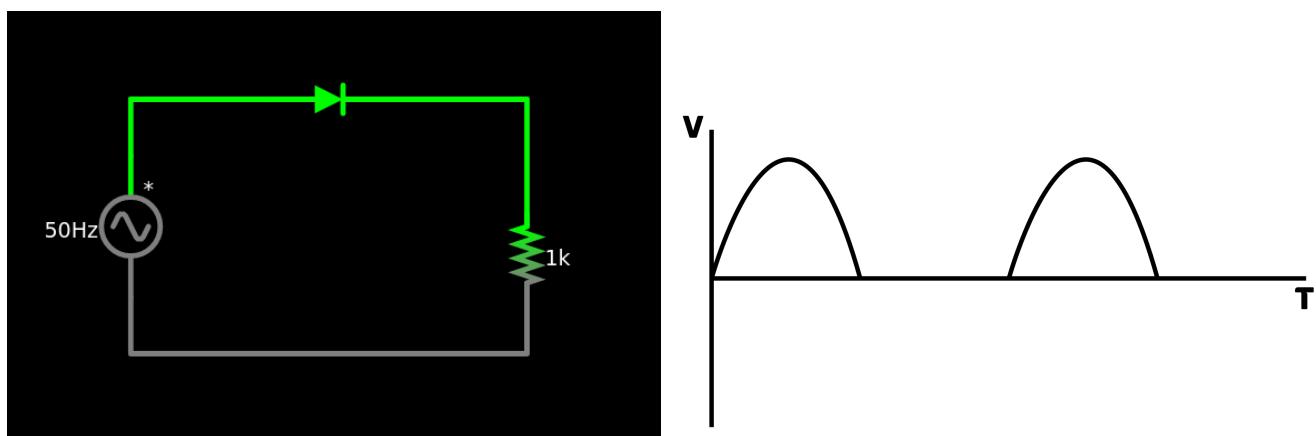
What is Rectification?

Rectification is the process of converting **AC** to **DC**, commonly used in power supplies, such as a phone or laptop charger. This is because **Digital** electronics require **DC** to function. Although diagnosis of **AC** circuits should not be done without the necessary training, understanding of how **AC** circuits function is important for safety and to better understand the use of components.

This circuit uses components which have already been discussed earlier in this document, so for further explanation, refer back to the appropriate sections.

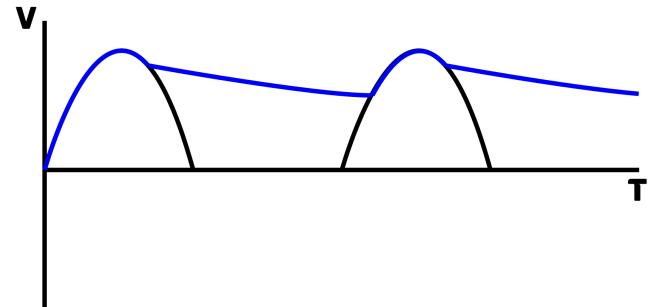
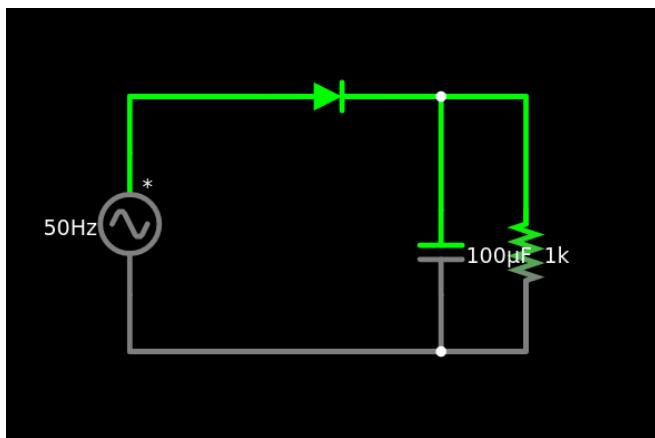
For this **AC-DC** conversion, the alternating **Current** needs to be converted to flow in just one direction. Therefore, a key component in this process is a **Diode**.

The most basic form of **Rectifier** is a half-bridge (otherwise known as half-wave). This uses a single **Diode in Series** with the load, to limit **Current** flow to one direction. Therefore, the output wave is the positive side of the sinusoidal wave, with the average output **Voltage** around half of the **RMS Voltage**, although in a form unsuitable for most **DC** circuits.

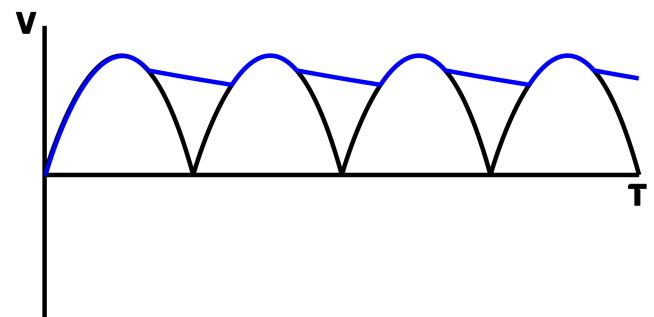
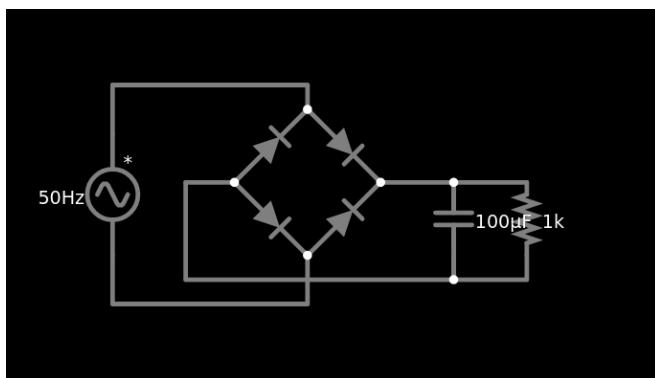
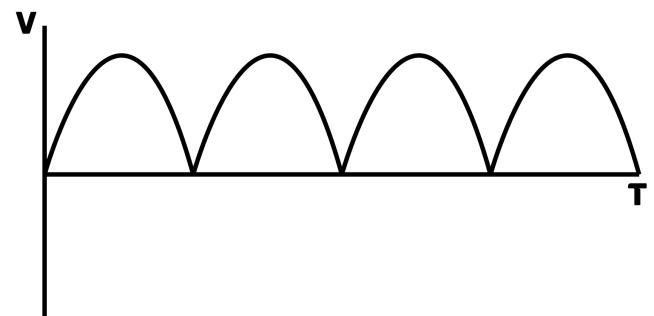
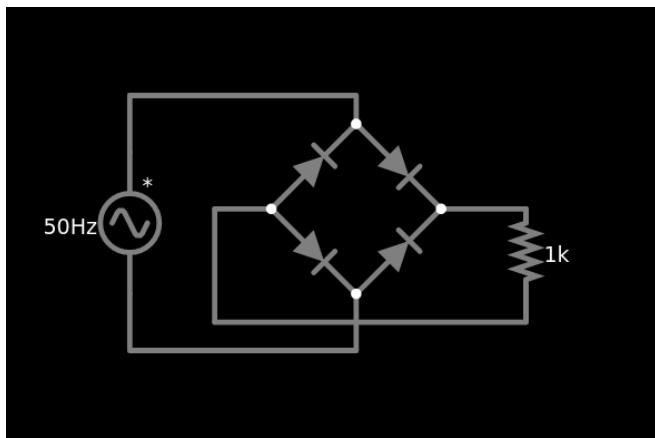


A half-bridge circuit can be improved through use of filtering, with the addition of a **Capacitor** to smooth the output **Voltage**. This **Capacitor** is added in **Parallel**, where it is charged by the input, which it then outputs when the **Voltage** drops below its own **Voltage**. This enables an output **Voltage** closer to a smooth **DC Voltage**. As previously mentioned, even if perfectly smoothed, the max **Voltage**

that could be attained is half the **RMS Voltage**.



A full-bridge **Rectifier** is a further improvement. These use four **Diodes**, meaning that whichever way the **Current** flows at the input, it will be fixed at the output. Therefore, there will be a sinusoidal **Voltage** magnitude, but only in the positive axis. This can again be smoothed with a **Capacitor**, and if efficiently smoothed, will have an output close to **RMS**.



Example circuits, applications and considerations

This section will quickly look at applications of the above mentioned circuits.

Rectification circuits are widely used, especially for **AC-DC** power supplies, as an initial stage to convert **AC** to **DC**. Therefore, their main use is within mains connected power supplies. Another example is a dynamo torch, where the **AC** power from the **Generator** needs rectified to power an **LED**.

It is likely that in most cases a full-bridge **Rectifier** would be used rather than a half-bridge **Rectifier**, unless initial costs were a major consideration.

Because of variance in the manufacturing process, even within a single product, it is commonly considered best practice to use a full-bridge **Diode** package, where there are four equal **Diodes** within one part.

Rectifiers are generally used as part of a more complex power system, usually as an earlier stage.

Simulations

Below are several simulations to have an experiment with to help your understanding of **Rectification**.

Half-Bridge **Rectifier** at 230V RMS, 50Hz- [Link](#)

Half-Bridge **Rectifier** at 230V RMS, 50hz with capacitive smoothing- [Link](#)

Full-bridge **Rectifier** at 230V RMS, 50Hz without smoothing- [Link](#)

Full-bridge **Rectifier** at 230V RMS, 50Hz with capacitive smoothing- [Link](#)

Quiz

1. What is the main benefit of a full-bridge **Rectifier** over a half-bridge **Rectifier**.

- a) It is cheaper to build.
- b) It allows for full utilisation of the input **Voltage**.

c) It uses fewer components.

2. Why are smoothing **Capacitors** useful? (There may be more than one right answer)

a) They allow for a more constant output **Voltage**.

b) They increase average power output.

c) They reduce output ripple.

3. True or False, it is known to be better to use several **Diodes** individually rather than packaged together as a full bridge **Rectifier** package.

4. True or False, **Rectifiers** can be used to also convert **DC** to **AC**.

Challenge- Using Falstad or hand drawn, design a full-bridge **Rectifier** with **Voltage** variance/ ripple lower than 10%, working with an **AC Voltage** of a peak value of 326V, at 50Hz.

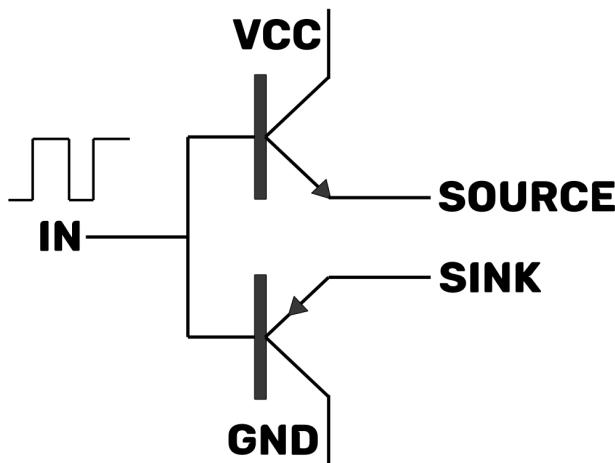
0.9.2 Gate Driving

What is Gate Driving?

Gate driving is necessary for using **MOSFETs** in high-speed circuits. As mentioned earlier, **MOSFET Gates** have an inherent **Capacitance** which requires charging in order for the **Gate** to “open”. Therefore, for fast switching, it may require large amounts of **Current**, which a **Microcontroller** usually can’t supply. Therefore, there are integrated circuits with common methods to allow for these to be charged safely. A common simpler method is called a totem pole **Gate** driver. This uses two **BJT Transistors**, one used to charge and the other to discharge the **Gate**. **BJTs** are used because of their simplicity and ability to amplify the input **Current** using an external source. Even then, it is important to use a **Resistor** to limit the **Gates** charge **Current**.

This section references a range of components and knowledge from the main sections of the course, to help consolidate past theory.

Here is a circuit of it in action, feel free to play around with it- [Link](#)



The method shown above isn’t the only viable option, but is one which is widely used and one of the simpler methods to understand.

0.9.3 555 Timers

555 timers are adaptable ICs, for a range of timing techniques, that may not require a whole **Microcontroller**. Although understanding the internal structure of a 555 timer is outside the course scope, understanding how and why they are used could be beneficial. Depending on how it is connected to, it

can output waveforms of different frequencies, or as a timer.

0.9.4 Motors and Generators

Motors and **Generators** use a set of physics principles in their operation. **Motors** convert electrical energy to kinetic (typically rotational), where **Generators** do the reverse.

They operate due to the **Motor** effect which is the following. A **Current** carrying conductor will induce a magnetic force, which will interact with other magnetic forces. If the conductor is free to move, it will. Therefore **Motors** are designed using both **Electromagnets** and permanent magnets with interacting magnetic fields to cause rotational movement.

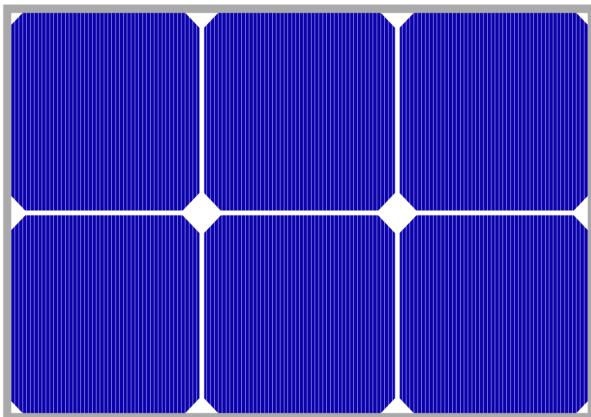
The reverse is also true, when a conductor moves through a magnetic field, a **Current** is induced. A large proportion of electricity is generated using a **Generator**, where usually steam from either a combustion process of oil, gas or coal, or from nuclear fission, causes the evaporation of steam, the movement of which causes a **Generator** to turn, thus generating electricity.

0.9.5 Renewable Electricity

Renewable Electricity is of increasing importance, as we look to reduce our carbon footprint. This section quickly looks into different methods, and how they work.

It is important to consider that all renewable energy sources have a carbon footprint, and this can vary significantly from manufacturer to manufacturer. As shown [here](#), how sustainable a manufacturer is can vary considerably, so it would be better to select panels from a manufacturer at the top of a list such as this.

Solar panels are **Diodes**, working like a **Generator** (with the photovoltaic effect), where solar radiation induces a **Current** and therefore electrical energy. These are produced using semiconducting material, such as **Doped** silicon.



Most other renewable methods involve a **Motor** acting as a **Generator**. Whether it is wind power through wind turbines, where blades are connected to a **Motor** to generate wind power, or hydroelectric, where flow of **Current** against the sea or through a dam **SPI**ns rotors. Hydroelectric, especially using dams has a mixed record, because of its fairly significant impact upon the environment and nature. Geothermal uses heat from within the ground to heat up steam, to push rotors of a **Generator**.

0.9.6 PCB Design Basics

Although this isn't in depth **PCB** design, it is a few useful to know tips.

The cost of custom **PCB** production has reduced considerably due to the increase in prototype **PCB** services. **JLCPCB** was one of the first low cost options. The reason their model is viable is that they use excess board space, left from larger customers, so most costs are due to the set-up, rather than the material costs. It also means that it is reducing waste, and possibly carbon footprint.

A couple of free **PCB** design tools include EasyEDA and KiCAD. If you prefer open-source software, KiCAD is a good option, otherwise, EasyEDA is pretty easy to get started on, is free for even its advanced features, and has links to LCSC and **JLCPCB** to get you going quicker. Lots of time can be spent finding suitable package footprints or designing footprints. EasyEDA simplifies things, with most parts in LCSC's library being available to search for and drop into the design. Even if it is an external part, there are many community part footprints and schematic designs. For community derived parts, it is worth reading the *datasheet* to ensure it matches up with that design. Most *datasheets* should provide information on suitable **PCB** footprint design.

0.10 Resources

There are many electronics resources for further learning. Particularly useful resources are referenced below, with their purpose.

0.10.1 Manufacturers

It is handy to know reputable manufacturers of components and **Modules**. This is not definitive, but provides a trustworthy list. This focuses on larger manufacturers, but there are many more trusted manufacturers. Keep in mind that there are fake components in the market, so ensure you source parts from a trusted supplier, talked about in the section below! As touched upon in the finding components section, most parts through a site such as DigiKey should be reliable.

Resistors- Yageo, BOURNS, Panasonic, ROHM, Samsung, TE Connectivity, Vishay, Walsin.

Capacitors- Rubycon, Panasonic, Hitachi, Sanyo, Vishay, Nichicon, NCC, Wurth, Illinois **Capacitor**, Cornell Dubilier.

Inductors- Wurth, Walsin, Vishay, TDK, TE Connectivity, Pulse Elec, Murata Electronics, BOURNS, EATON.

Transistors- Vishay, TOSHIBA, Texas Instruments, STMicroelectronics, ROHM, RENESAS, onsemi, NXP Semicon, Nexperia, Infineon, **Diodes** Incorporated.

Diodes- Vishay, TOSHIBA, STMicroelectronics, ROHM, onsemi, Nexperia, Microchip Tech, Infineon, **Diodes** Incorporated.

Sensors- Infineon, Analog Devices, OMRON, Texas Instruments, TE Connectivity, NXP, Microchip Technology, Murata, BOSCH, STMicroelectronics.

Microcontrollers- Microchip, ATMEL/AVR, NXP, STMicroelectronics, Espressif Systems, Infineon, Altera, Raspberry Pi, RENESAS.

ICs- Texas Instruments

0.10.2 Suppliers

Starting with several trusted parts suppliers.

Arrow Electronics- Europe based electronics components shop.

RS Components- UK based electrical and industrial components shop.

Mouser- US based electronics components shop.

Farnell/CPC- Electronics components shop based in several regions.

LCSC- Electronics components shop based in China, with links to **JLCPCB** and EasyEDA, offering lower costs than most other suppliers for larger orders.

Digi-Key

Rapid- UK based electrical and industrial components shop.

EuroCircuits- Lower cost **PCB** manufacturer based in Europe.

JLCPCB- Low cost **PCB** manufacturer based in China

Aisler- Lower cost **PCB** manufacturer based in Europe.

Most the above focus on singular components, which may not be what you are looking for. If you are looking more for **Modules** or DIY components, here are a few trusted retailers.

HobbyTronics- UK Based hobbyist electronics shop.

Bitsbox- UK Based hobbyist electronics shop.

Adafruit- US Based company producing a range of boards/ **Modules**.

Sparkfun- US Based company producing a range of boards/ **Modules**.

Pimoroni- UK Based **Module** maker and hobbyist electronics shop.

There are a couple of sites used to find stock of components across suppliers, while comparing their costs. Within these tools, there are multiple suppliers mentioned, a few of which being resellers, where you may pay more, but they often have parts in tight supply.

These could be thought of Electronic Part Search Engines.

Octopart

Findchips

OEMSecrets

EasyBom

0.10.3 Electronics Software

There are several bits of electronics software mentioned below, whether it is for simulation or **PCB** design.

Falstad- Free online electronics simulation program, which is easy to visualise what is happening in a circuit.

LTSPICE- Free and powerful electronics simulator, although slightly dated presentation, produced by LT.

TinkerCAD- Simple online software for basic 3D design and electronics design/ simulation.

MicroCap 12- Although it can be seen as abandonware, it is now free, relatively recent and a powerful piece of software.

KiCAD- Free and open-source **PCB** design package

EasyEDA- Free and easy-to-use **PCB** Design Package with links to both LCSC and JLCPCB.

subsectionFurther learning sites

Another helpful resource could be additional places to go to learn further.

Allaboutcircuits

Hackaday

Hackster.io

There are a range of helpful YouTube channels, such as the below:

GreatScott- Page with many tutorials and projects, in plenty of detail, although it can be complex for beginners. If you like learning through a project-based ideas, it's worth checking out.

Electronoobs- Another project based channel, teaching you a range of things.

EEVBlog- One of the biggest electronics video blogs, covering a range of areas, from an Electronics Engineer. Known to be unscripted, and "off-the-cuff", but informative.

Adafruit Industries- Channel set up by Adafruit, discussing electronics and their **Modules**.

Element 14 Presents- A channel with a wide range of presenters doing electronics and engineering projects

0.11 Necessary software

In this document, you are encouraged to check simulations through Falstad. Falstad is a web-based, simple but powerful circuit simulation program. It was designed by Paul Falstad and is free to use.

It was selected because of its ease of use and ability to represent circuit information in a clear and helpful way.

This can be found through the following link- [Link](#)

It provides a visual and easy way to represent circuits, with the ability to plot **Voltage** vs **Current** for set positions or components. There is a vast array of sample circuits to look at for reference. The simulations mentioned in this course use this software, so a brief understanding of how it works would be useful. Each component have nodes/ squares where other components connect to. Components are found in the draw section, and you can click and drag to alter its size.

LabVIEW is required for the practical part of this course. LabVIEW is a visual programming platform, intended for test and measurement, selected as a suitable program for testing out skills developed through the course. This need to be installed, using the Universities licence, the steps of which can be found here- [Link](#)

LabVIEW will be used to interface with an Arduino, rather than using a programming environment such as the Arduino IDE. It is useful to mention that platforms such as this are often used to program **Microcontrollers**, with Arduino IDE based on C++. The package for interfacing requires Windows specific libraries to run, although has been tested to work on a Windows 10 virtual machine.

We will go through steps now to install LabVIEW, Arduino IDE and the LabVIEW Linx package. Although we will mostly be graphically programming through LabVIEW, it is useful to know Arduino programming basics, especially if you require use of specific parts or scripts which the Linx package doesn't integrate.

Step 1- Go onto [Link](#) Go onto the "Obtaining the software" tab, and follow the first link. As shown, you first need to create an account with National Instruments. Ensure that the email used is your University email.

Once this has been done, follow the next link to download the software. You want to be installing the most recent version, at the time of writing this was 2021 SP1. It is the "Base, Full, Professional" included editions version you require, as it is a Professional licence included from the University. If

possible, you should install the 64-bit version, with driver software included. Then on the right you can click on the download button. This will install the package manager which allows you to select what packages are needed. The default ticked packages are all you should need, at least initially, such as LabVIEW under programming environments, some of the ticked drivers are necessary for the Linx package, so leave them as is. You then need to agree to installing them, and then follow the steps. Once it is all installed, you will need to activate it, which is where the third link from the university page comes in. After clicking that link, you may first be prompted to sign in with your university details. Scroll down to the bottom of the page, where it says "Licence keys". You should select a link depending on whether you are using a University owned computer or your own. The code shown is a **Serial** code so you need to use that option. You can copy and paste the code into all of the below. Once you press continue, it will state that 4 should have been varified, which is all that need to be, as it is the Professional version, not base or full etc which the university use. You can then press done, and the software is installed! The only specific package you need to install ontop is the Linx package, which allows an interface between an Arduino (as well as other **Microcontrollers** and small board computers) with LabVIEW.

It is pretty simple to get Linx installed, you have to use the VI package manager. It will have to install a few things first, which you have to wait for. Once these have been done, you can use the search bar in the top right, to search for Linx. It should be the top option, which you can then click and press install, accepting the stuff that comes up. Now you have the main things needed for running the software!

We will quickly go over the steps to install Arduino IDE now. You should go to this **Link**, and click on whichever download option on the right suits best. You should then run and install it, accepting any driver installs which are necessary. Once it is installed, you can plug the Arduino in and see if it can be read. If you go onto the tool bar, onto tools, you should be able to go onto board, and then scroll to Arduino AVR boards and then to Arduino Uno. Just below board, there should be Port, which there should be an option available either with the name Arduino Uno or COM followed by a number. This shows that it has successfully been read by the computer.

Now we can go to the initial steps to set up an Arduino with LabVIEW. LabVIEW will use the graphical interface/ code which you have designed to create code which runs on an Arduino. This needs firmware to be set up on it first.

If you open LabVIEW and do a new project, under the name Blank VI. Once this is open, there should be both a front panel and block diagram which opens. The front panel is what you interface with, with

the final program, such as buttons to turn on and off a heater, or a scroll to choose what temperature a heater should go to. The block diagram is where the visual programming is done. When you add things to the front panel, they will also appear on the block diagram to use.

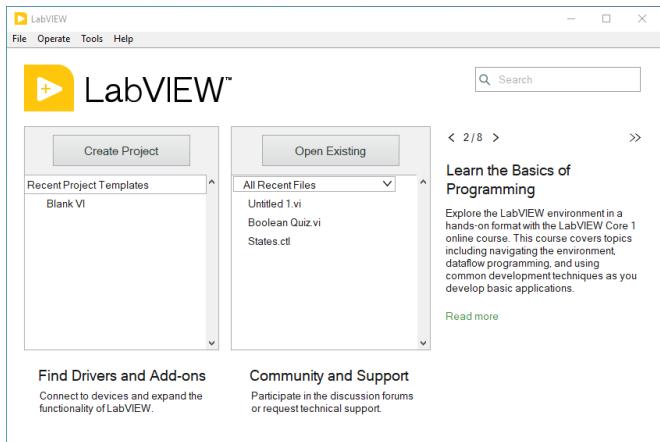
We will now use the Linx firmware wizard to generate the firmware for the Arduino. Go to the Tools section of the toolbar, and then move your mouse to MakerHub. After this, go to Linx and then LINX Firmware Wizard. There should then be a pop up. You should ensure that Arduino is selected as the Device Family, then for device type, you want to select Arduino Uno and the **Serial / USB** Firmware Upload Method. You can then click on "Next". You should next select the COM port, for example in my case, it is COM3. The Firmware Version should be LINX - **Serial / USB**, and you can select Pre-Built Firmware for Upload Type. It should then go through the stages of uploading this firmware. You can then press finish, or Launch Example. We will view this example, as it would be good to explain some of the basics about LabVIEW and the extras that the LINX package provides.

The example is a manual blink, where you can click on the button on the right of the front panel to control the turn on and off of an **LED**. We can run this without using an external **LED**, using the built in **LED**, which is linked with Pin 13. Therefore, for **Digital** output channel, you can type in 13. You should also select the **SerialPort** which the Arduino is connected to. You can then press the run arrow in the top left. You should make sure to press the stop button before closing it, as otherwise it can cause a couple of issues of getting the Arduino to connect to the computer.

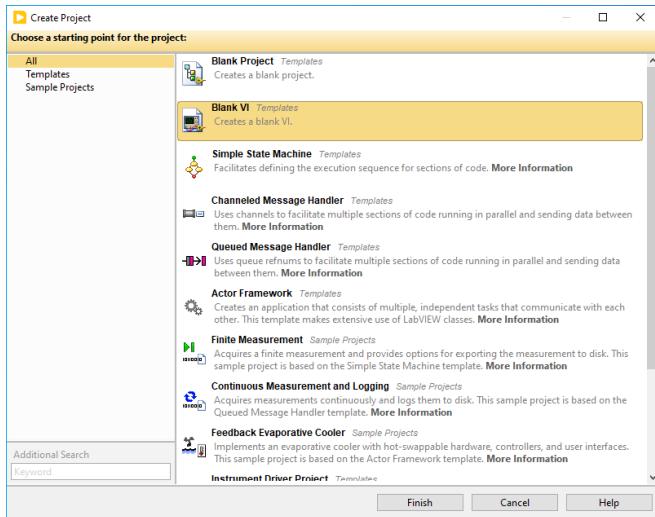
You should see the RX and TX **LEDs** light up, which indicate that the **Serial** bus is being used to transfer data both ways. After a few seconds you should be able to see the **LED** turn on and off based from button presses.

We will now talk through some steps in the design of a LabVIEW design. As stated, LabVIEW provides a graphical programming interface through the block diagram, as well as a front panel meant for input and output both of which will be used. A good way to learn would be taking you through an example, which you can run yourself. A basic example being interfacing with the built in LED like mentioned above, with the practice example you are given, but in this case we will use a couple more advanced features too.

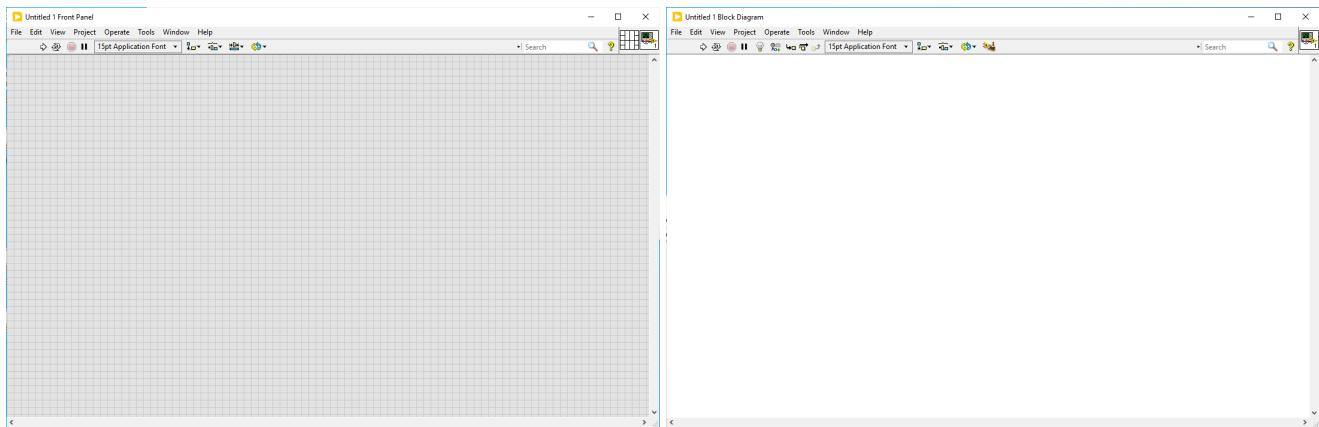
You first want to open up LabVIEW and then select new project.



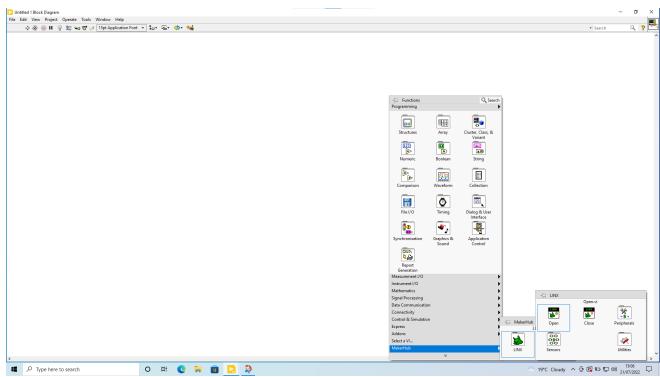
It is a Blank VI which you most likely want to use to get started.



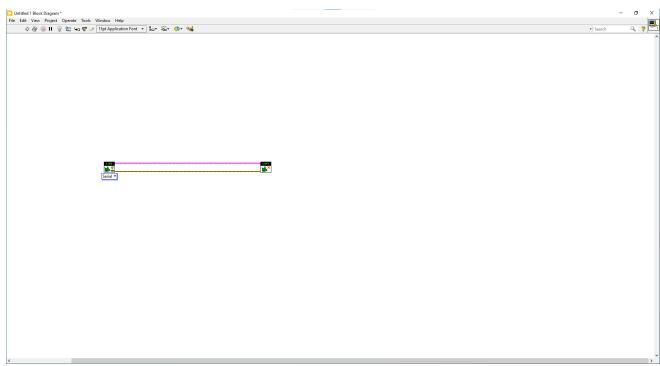
Then it will open up both a front panel and the block diagram.



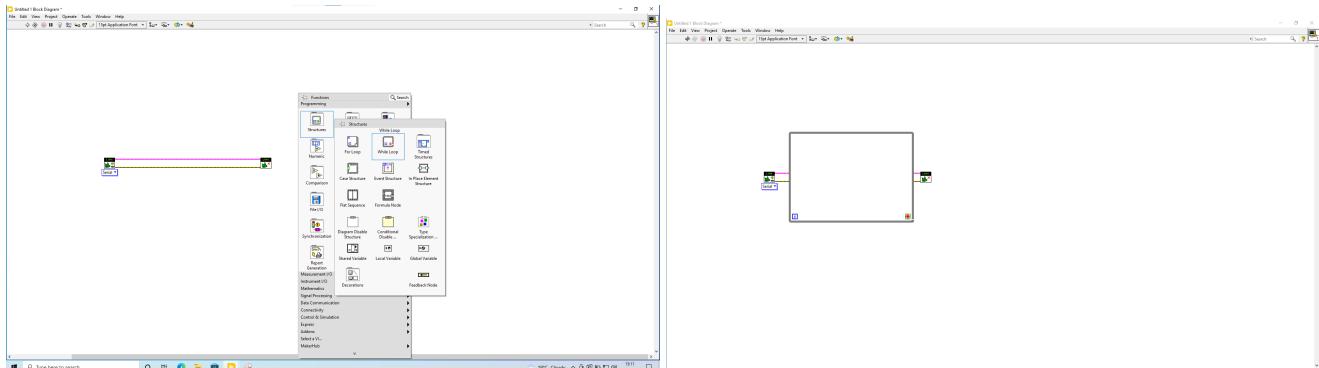
We first need to decide what we want to do, it is worth setting up the basic backend elements, which you know your project will require, along with the basic inputs and outputs needed. First for a project which interfaces with an arduino, you need to Linx start and close blocks.



The start block requires a **Serial** input, which corresponds to the **Port** used for communication between the computer and the arduino. The stop **Protocol** close **Protocol** should run to ensure the program stops correctly, and should be an end point after all other potential processes.

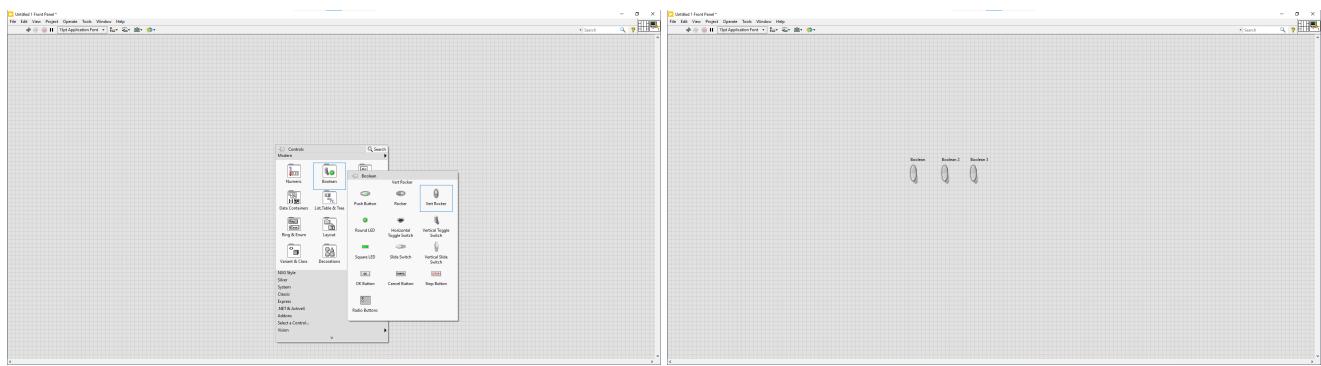


It is likely that you would want to encapsulate most processes within a while loop, so it continues to run until it is triggered to stop, which can then allow the close function to run.



There are a range of processes that can be done on the computer side and on the arduino side. Those that may be regularly used is the digital and analogue write and read. Each of the Linx elements/ blocks are connected through the Linx resource line, which shows the order in which these are done. Each Linx resource should be connected to the error out, which can also be connected to the loop condition, so if there is an error, it exists out the loop, so that the Arduino can safely close with the Linx close block. A DO channel and DI channel can be used to select a pin to either write or read to, which can

be passed to the Linx digital/ analogue read or write. Then you have a range of other elements not part of the Linx package but may be necessary. Such as a range of numeric, boolean and comparison functions. These can then connect to items which are placed within the front panel, which then appear in the block diagram. So for example, a combination of boolean elements, buttons, and Linx elements, along with the while loop. All of these used together could be done to make a system where the LED comes on if either or both of two switches are pressed, but if a pause button is pressed, pressing either of the switches will not affect the state of the LED. An output could be done on the front panel to represent the LED too. We can imagine this LED to be a certain process needed for an experiment, which may need to run if either one of two variables are true, unless manually overridden.



Glossary

This stands for Operational Amplifier, and is an IC for voltage amplification, which can be used in a range of configurations, depending on intended output. 37, 38, 40

AC Alternating current is a current which continually changes direction as it flows. 10, 11, 16, 18, 22, 23, 25, 29, 30, 60, 62, 63

Ampere The unit for current, often shortened to Amp. 4

Analogue It is the representation of information like voltage as a continuous and variable value. 19, 23, 24, 25, 37, 40

Asynchronous A type of communication where it is not at a set clock rate. 81

Binary A mathematical system which uses 2 rather than 10 as a base, often used in computing. 19

BJT It is short for Bipolar Junction **Transistor**, where the current flow between the collector and emitter depends on the current flow through the base. 21, 22, 25, 43, 64

Boolean Algebra A field of mathematics only using true or false comparisons. 19, 40

CAN This stands for Controller Area Network, and is meant for communication between embedded devices for a larger system or process. 31, 33

Capacitance The ability to store an electrical charge. 3, 12, 13, 23, 28, 43, 64

Capacitor A component which stores energy as electrical charge. 11, 12, 13, 14, 21, 29, 30, 43, 48, 49, 57, 60, 61, 63, 67

Control Loop Uses a combination of components and processes to adjust a value or process. 3

Core A component which transfers power from one source to another through **Electromagnetic** induction, which are typically highly magnetic. Sometimes a term for a central or key part of a component. 17, 23

Coupled Components which are connected **Electromagnetically** through induction, electrostatically or optically. 17

Current Electrical flow due to directional movement of electrons. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 28, 37, 38, 42, 43, 47, 48, 49, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 60, 61, 64, 65, 66, 70

Darlington Pair A **Transistor** which internally uses a pair of BJT **Transistors** to allow for higher current amplification. 22

DC Direct current is current with a constant direction of flow. 10, 11, 19, 20, 22, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 60, 62, 63

DIAC A type of diode which conducts current after a certain voltage (breakover voltage) is momentarily reached. 16

Die A piece of semiconducting material on which a functional circuit such as a **Microcontroller** or IC is fabricated. 20, 53

Digital It is where data or signals are expressed either as 0 or 1. 6, 11, 19, 20, 23, 24, 36, 37, 40, 43, 60, 72

Diode A component which limits how current can flow. 15, 16, 17, 24, 25, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67

DIP This stands for Dual In-line Package, but has become a common term for components with pins that go through a **PCB**, or into a breadboard. 20, 44, 45, 59

Doped The process of adding an impurity to get a desired electrical characteristic. 15, 16, 24, 65

Electromagnet This is typically a coil of wire which is magnetised only when current flows through it. 21, 22, 65, 76, 77

ESD This stands for Electrostatic Discharge, and is the sudden flow of current between two electrically charged objects, typically through contact. 36

Farad The unit for capacitance. 12, 14

Ferritic Metallic materials which contain a portion of iron. 17

Flash This is a memory type which retains its data without power. 37

Flux A substance added to solder to improve the wetting of the solder, by removing oxides. 48

Gate Within switches, it can be thought of as the trigger to allow current flow in the switch. Where

in boolean algebra it is an idealized device which implements a Boolean function. 20, 21, 23, 41, 42, 64, 81

Gauge A standardised measurement for the diameter of wire. 48

Generator A device which converts mechanical energy to electrical energy. 2, 28, 62, 65, 66

GPIO This stands for General Purpose Input Output and is typically used to describe microcontroller pins that can be used for a range of purposes, and sometimes a range of protocols too. 32, 37

Grid A network transferring energy as either gas or electric. 10, 11

Henry The unit for Inductance. 14

I2C This stands for Inter-Integrated Circuit, and is a protocol for serial communication between two devices/ ICs. There are separate lines for data to be written and read. 24, 31, 33

Impedance This is the effective resistance of an AC circuit, being a combination of both resistance and reactance. 29, 57

Inductance The ability to generate an electromotive force due to changing current flow. 3, 14, 15, 23, 28

Inductor A component which stores energy in the magnetic field. 14, 15, 17, 29, 30, 43, 49, 57, 67

Jack A term widely used in audio and video as well as power, for a typically rounded **Port** or socket. 27, 28

Joules The unit for energy. 12

Jump A wire meant to temporarily connect or short components, regularly used with breadboards. 44

Lamination It is the process of using stacked sheets of core material rather than a single "block". 17

LED This stands for Light Emitting Diode, which are diodes doped so that they emit light. 15, 16, 17, 23, 25, 36, 44, 45, 52, 53, 55, 62, 72

LiDAR This stands for light detection and ranging, using a laser to measure distance by the time it takes to reflect back to the sensor. 24

MEMS This stands for MicroElectroMechanical Systems, and is a combination of micromechanical components such as springs or levers, along with microelectronic circuitry, such as capacitors. 23

Microcontroller An integrated circuit with built in microprocessor, memory and other IC elements, which can be thought of as a small computer for a single task. 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 35, 36, 37, 49, 59, 64, 67, 70, 71, 77

ModBus The most commonly used protocol for communication between industrial devices. 32

Module A Module is a distinct assembly of parts which can easily be used in a system. 23, 24, 29, 30, 34, 36, 45, 49, 50, 58, 59, 67, 68, 69

MOSFET This stands for Metal-Oxide Semiconductor Field-Effect **Transistor**, and is a voltage controlled switch, where a certain voltage on its gate will cause current to flow between its drain and source. 21, 64

Motor A device which provides a motive force, typically converting electrical energy to magnetic to mechanical. 2, 11, 23, 28, 65, 66

Multimeter A common piece of test equipment for typically measuring current, voltage and resistance, and sometimes extra functions. 42, 43, 49

Optoisolator A component which transfers an electrical signal using light, between two isolated circuits. 25, 26

Parallel It is a circuit configuration where it splits into several branches, where current also splits through. It can also stand for a communication bus of multiple concurrent data lines. 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 30, 31, 45, 52, 55, 60

PCB This stands for printed circuit board, and is a manufactured board with the necessary connections and solder points for a given circuit. 2, 45, 51, 66, 68, 69, 77, 80

Period An interval of time regarding successive occurrences, such as with waves. 10, 19, 48, 50, 51

Port This is a point where communication can be done from, usually for a select number of protocols. 32, 34, 72, 74, 78

Potential Divider A resistor configuration to get an output which is a fraction of a voltage. 6, 9, 10, 79

Potentiometer A variable resistor acting as a **Potential Divider**. 6, 24, 29

Protocol A set of rules regarding data communication between devices. 24, 25, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 59, 74

RAM This stands for Random Access Memory, which is fast to access, short term memory. 37

Reactance This is due to a combination of inductance and capacitance, and makes up the non-reactive part of impedance, so is AC specific. 29

Rectification This is the process of converting between AC and DC. 1, 29, 60, 62

Rectifier A component which allows AC to DC conversion. 30, 60, 61, 62, 63

Resistance The degree to which a component opposes current flow. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, 21, 23, 24, 28, 29, 38, 42, 43, 47, 48, 55, 57

Resistor A component which opposes current flow. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 24, 29, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 64, 67

RMS A Root Mean Squared value is the effective value of a waveform. 10, 11, 18, 19, 60, 61, 62

ROM This stands for Read Only Memory, which is long term memory, which cannot be written to by the device itself, but is done externally on setup, so often contains firmware necessary for a device to function. 37

RS232 This stands for Recommended Standard 232, and is a serial communication protocol meant for communication between a computer and other devices. 32

RTD This stands for Resistance Temperature Detector and is a sensor which has its resistance vary significantly with temperature. They are also fairly commonly referred to as a resistance thermometer. 23

Schottky A type of diode which has low voltage drop and fast switching. 16

Semiconductor A substance with conductivity between a metal and an insulator. 11, 15, 16, 19, 20

Sensor Device which measures and responds to physical properties. 3, 19, 23, 24, 25, 36, 37, 38, 67

Serial Refers to data communication down a single data line. 30, 31, 32, 33, 71, 72, 74

Series It is a circuit configuration where current passes through each one after another. 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 29, 42, 43, 52, 55, 60

SMD This stands for Surface-Mounted Device, and are components whose pins are soldered directly onto a **PCB**, so are generally unsuitable for breadboard or veroboard design. 45, 58, 59

Soldering This is the process of using molten metal/ solder to bond parts together, for improved electrical, mechanical and thermal properties. 1, 43, 45, 46, 48, 49, 56

SPI This stands for Serial Peripheral Interface, and is a protocol for serial communication between two devices/ ICs. 24, 31, 32, 33, 66, 69

Supercapacitor A form of capacitor, with far higher energy density, not many magnitudes off of standard batteries, ideal for high power scenarios, due to their low resistance. 28

Synchronous A type of communication where a specific clock rate is required, usually from the controller. 33

Thermistor A resistor which has a resistance which changes due to temperature change, commonly used as a sensor. 23, 25

Thermocouple A sensor for measuring temperature, based on the voltage developed between two junctions, being proportional to temperature difference. 23

Tolerance In electronics, Tolerance stands for the percentage at which a value can deviate from its rated value. 37, 47, 55, 57

Transformer A device which will increase or decrease the voltage of an alternating current source. 10, 17, 18, 19, 30

Transistor A semiconductor meant for electronics control, signal generation and amplification. 22, 23, 25, 34, 41, 43, 64, 67, 76, 77, 79

TRIAC A type of diode which will conduct current in either direction after triggered by a signal at its **Gate**. 16

UART A component for converting between parallel and serial data, for better communication. UART stands for Universal **Asynchronous** Reciever-Transmitter. 31, 34

Ultrasonic These are sound waves above the human audible hearing range, typically above 20000Hz. 24

USB This stands for Universal Serial Bus, and has a collection of linked protocols and connectors. 27, 28, 31, 34, 72

Volt The unit for voltage. 4

Voltage Key electronics unit, otherwise known as Electromotive Force or Potential Difference. 3, 4, 5,

6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48, 53, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 70

Watt The unit for power. 4, 27

Wavelength It is the distance between successive peaks of waves. 16, 19

Zener A type of diode which allows reverse current flow after a certain threshold voltage is met. 16