Fundamental of electricity - conductors - insulators - wire size measurement - crimping

Objectives: At the end of this lesson you shall be able to
- **define electricity and atom**
- **explain about the atomic structure**
- **define the fundamental terms and definition of electricity**
- **state the type of supply, polarity and the effects of electric current**
- **state the conductors, insulators, wires - size measurement methods**

Introduction

Electricity is one of the today's most useful sources of energy. Electricity is of utmost necessity in the modern world of sophisticated equipment and machinery.

Electricity in motion is called electric current. Whereas the electricity that does not move is called static electricity.

Examples of static electricity

- Shock received from door knobs of a carpeted room.
- Attraction of tiny paper bits to the comb.

Structure of matter

Electricity is related to some of the most basic building blocks of matter that are atoms (electrons and protons). All matter is made of these electrical building blocks, and, therefore, all matter is said to be 'electrical'.

Atom

Matter is defined as anything that has mass and occupies space. A matter is made of tiny, invisible particles called molecules. A molecule is the smallest particle of a substance that has the properties of the substance. Each molecule can be divided into simpler parts by chemical means. The simplest parts of a molecule are called atoms.

Basically, an atom contains three types of sub-atomic particles that are of relevance to electricity. They are the electrons, protons and neutrons. The protons and neutrons are located in the centre, or nucleus, of the atom, and the electrons travel around the nucleus in orbits.

Atomic structure

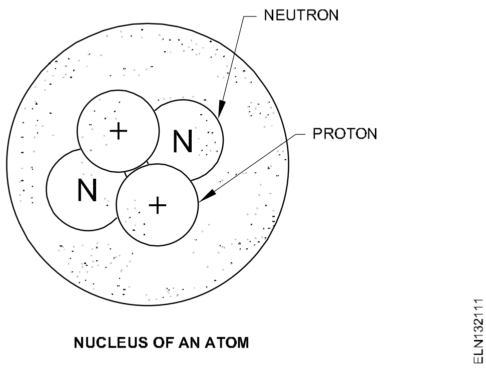
The Nucleus

The nucleus is the central part of the atom. It contains the protons and neutrons in equlal numbrs shown in Fig 1.

Protons

The proton has a positive electrical charge. (Fig 1) It is almost 1840 times heavier than the electron and it is the permanent part of the nucleus; protons do not take an active part in the flow or transfer of electrical energy.

Fig 1

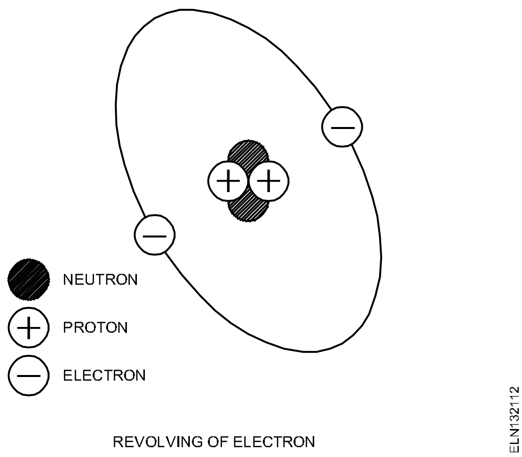


NUCLEUS OF AN ATOM

Electron

It is a small particle revolving round the nucleus of an atom (as shown in Fig 2). It has a negative electric charge. The electron is three times larger in diameter than the proton. In an atom the number of protons is equal to the number of electrons.

Fig 2



REVOLVING OF ELECTRON

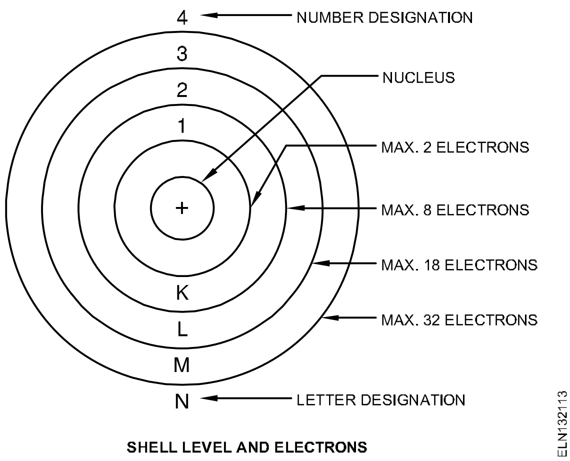
Neutron

A neutron is actually a particle by itself, and is electrically neutral. Since neutrons are electrically neutral, they are not too important to the electrical nature of atoms.

Energy shells

In an atom, electrons are arranged in shells around the nucleus. A shell is an orbiting layer or energy level of one or more electrons. The major shell layers are identified by numbers or by letters starting with 'K' nearest the nucleus and continuing alphabetically outwards. There is a maximum number of electrons that can be contained in each shell. Fig 3 illustrates the relationship between the energy shell level and the maximum number of electrons it can contain.

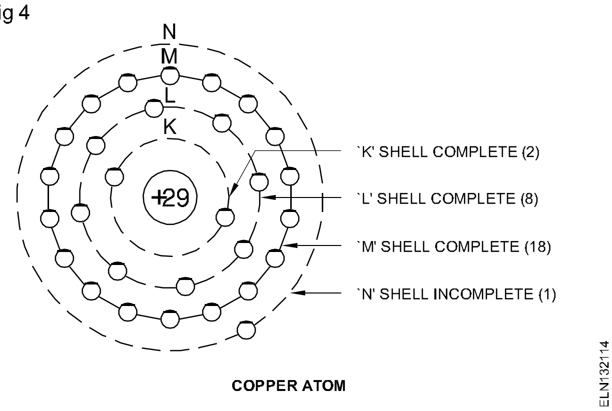
Fig 3



SHELL LEVEL AND ELECTRONS

If the total number of electrons for a given atom is known, the placement of electrons in each shell can be easily determined. Each shell layer, beginning with the first, is filled with the maximum number of electrons in sequence. For example, a copper atom which has 29 electrons would have four shells with a number of electrons in each shell as shown in Fig 4.

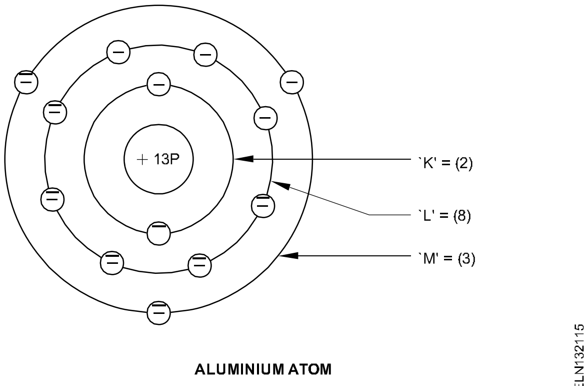
Fig 4



COPPER ATOM

Similarly an aluminium atom which has 13 electrons has 3 shells as shown in Fig 5.

Fig 5



ALUMINIUM ATOM

Electron distribution

The chemical and electrical behaviour of atoms depends on how completely the various shells and sub-shells are filled.

Atoms that are chemically active have one electron more or one less than a completely filled shell. Atoms that have the outer shell exactly filled are chemically inactive. They are called inert elements. All inert elements are gases and do not combine chemically with other elements.

Metals possess the following characteristics.

- They are good electric conductors.
- Electrons in the outer shell and sub-shells can move more easily from one atom to another.
- They carry charge through the material.

The outer shell of the atom is called the valence shell and its electrons are called valence electrons. Because of their greater distance from the nucleus, and because of the partial blocking of the electric field by electrons in the inner shells, the attracting force exerted by nucleus on the valence electrons is less. Therefore, valence electrons can be set free most easily. Whenever a valence electron is removed from its orbit it becomes a free electron. Electricity is commonly defined as the flow of these free electrons through a conductor. Though electrons flow from negative terminal to positive terminal, the conventional current flow is assumed as from positive to negative.

Conductors, insulators and semiconductors

Conductors

A conductor is a material that has many valance electrons permitting electrons to move through it easily. Generally, conductors have many valence shells of one, two or three electrons. Most metals are conductors.

Some common good conductors are Copper, Aluminium, Zinc, Lead, Tin, Eureka, Nichrome, are conductors, where as silver and gold are very good conductors

Insulators

An insulator is a material that has few, if any, free electrons and resists the flow of electrons. Generally, insulators have full valence shells of five, six or seven electrons. Some common insulators are air, glass, rubber, plastic, paper, porcelain, PVC, fibre, mica etc.

Semiconductors

A semiconductor is a material that has some of the characteristics of both the conductor and insulator. Semiconductors have valence shells containing four electrons.

Common examples of pure semiconductor materials are silicon and germanium. Specially treated semiconductors are used to produce modern electronic components such as diodes, transistors and integrated circuit chips.

Simple electrical circuit and its elements

Objectives: At the end of this lesson you shall be able to
- **describe a simple electric circuit**
- **explain the current, its units and method of measurement (ammeter)**
- **explain the emf, potential difference, their units and method of measurement (voltmeter)**
- **explain resistance and its unit, and quantity of electricity.**

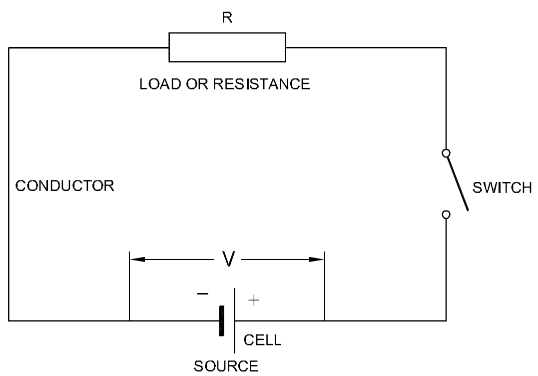
Simple electric circuit

A simple electrical circuit is one in which the current flows from the source to a load and reaches back the source to complete the path.

As shown in Fig 1, the electrical circuit should consist of the following.

- An energy source (cell) to provide the voltage needed to force the current through the circuit.
- Conductors through which the current can flow.
- A load (resistor 'R') to control the amount of current and to convert the electrical energy to other forms.
- A control device (switch 'S') to start or stop the flow of current.

Fig 1



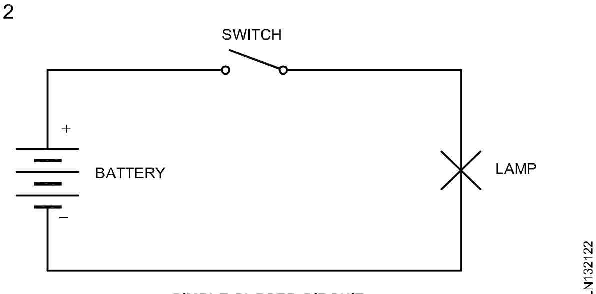
ELECTRICAL CIRCUIT

In addition to the above, the circuit may have insulators (PVC or rubber) to confine the current to the desired path, and a protection device (fuse 'F') to interrupt the circuit in case of malfunction of the circuit (excess current).

Electric current

Fig 2 shows a simple circuit which consists of a battery as the energy source and a lamp as the resistance. In this circuit, when the switch is closed, the lamp glows because of the electric current flows from the +ve terminal of the source (battery) via the lamp and reaches back the –ve terminal of the source.

Fig 2



SIMPLE CLOSED CIRCUIT

Flow of electric current is nothing but the flow of free electrons. Actually the electrons flow is from the negative terminal of the battery to the lamp and reaches back to the positive terminal of the battery.

However direction of current flow is taken conventionally from the +ve terminal of the battery to the lamp and back to the –ve terminal of the battery. Hence, we can conclude that conventional flow of current is opposite to the direction of the flow of electrons. Throughout the Trade Theory book, the current flow is taken from the +ve terminal of source to the load and then back to the –ve terminal of the source.

Ampere

The unit of current (abbreviated as I) is an ampere (symbol A). If 6.24 x 10^{18} electrons pass through a conductor per second having one ohm resistance with a potential difference of one volt causes one ampere current has passed through the conductor.

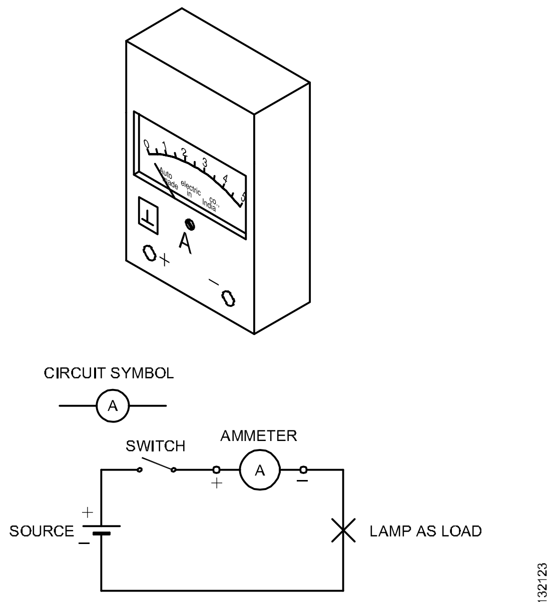
Ammeter

We know the electrons cannot be seen and no human being can count the electrons. As such an instrument called ammeter is used to measure the current in a circuit.

As an ammeter measures the flow of current in amperes it should be connected in series with the resistance (Load).

as shown in Fig 3. For the decimal and decimal sub-multiples of the ampere we use the following expressions.

Fig 3



AMMTER WITH LOAD

1 kilo-ampere = 1 kA = 1000 A = 1 x 10^3A

1 milli-ampere = 1 mA = 1/1000 A = 1 x 10^{-3}A

1 micro-ampere = 1 μA = 1/1000000 A = 1 x 10^{-6}A

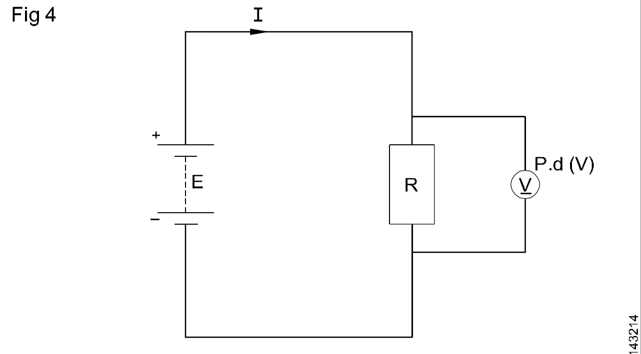
Electro Motive Force (EMF)

In order to move the electrons in a circuit- that is to make the current to flow, a source of electrical energy is required. In a torch light, the battery is the source of electrical energy.

The terminals of the battery are indicated in the circuit symbol by two lines, the longer line for the positive and the shorter for the negative terminal.

Within the battery the negative terminal contains an excess of electrons whereas the positive terminal has a deficit of electrons. The battery is said to have an electromotive force (emf) which is available to drive the free electrons in the closed path of the electrical circuit. The difference in the distribution of electrons between the two terminals of the battery produces this emf.

Fig 4



ELECTROMOTIVE FORCE

In Simple,

Electromotive force (EMF) is the electrical force, which is initially available in elecrical source, cause to move the free electrons in a conductor

Its unit is 'Volt'

It is denoted by letter 'E'

It cannot be measured by any meter. It can be only calculated by using the formula

E = Potential Difference (P.D) + V. drop

= p.d + V.drop

$E = V + IR$

Electromotive force is essential to drive the electrons in circuit

This force is obtained from the source of supply i.e. Torch lights, dynamo

System International (SI) unit of electromotive force is Volts (symbol 'E')

Potential Difference (PD)

The difference of volatge and pressure across two points in a circuit is called a potential difference (p.d) and is measured in volts.

In a circuit, when a current flows, there will be a potential difference across the terminals of the resistor/load. In the circuit shown in Fig 4, when the switch is in open conidition, the voltage across the terminals of the cell is called electromotive force (E) whereas when the switch is in the closed position, the voltage across the cell is called potential difference (p.d) which wil be lesser in value than the electromotive force earlier measured. This is due to the fact that the internal resistance of the cell drops a fer volts when the cell supplies current to the load.

The force which causes current to flow in the circuit is called emf. Its symbol is E and its unit is Volts (V). It can be calculated as

EMF = voltage at the terminal of source of supply + voltage drop in the source of supply

or emf = $V_T + IR$

Terminal voltage (p.d)

It is the voltage available at the terminal of the source of supply. Its symbol is V_T. Its unit is also the volt and is also measured by a voltmeter. It is given by the emf minus the voltage drop in the source of supply, i.e.

$V_T = EMF - IR$

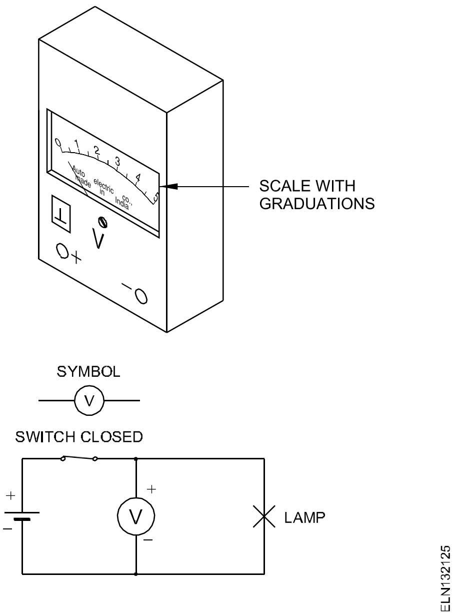
where I is the current and R is the resistance.

Hence EMF is always greater than p.d [E.M.F>p.d]

Voltmeter

Electrical voltage is measured with a voltmeter. In order to measure the voltage of a source, the terminals of the voltmeter must be connected to the terminals of the source. Positive to the positive terminal and negative to the negative terminal, as shown in Fig 5. The voltmeter connection is across or it is a parallel connection.

Fig 5



For the decimal or decimal sub-multiples of the volt, we use the following expressions.

1 kilo-volt = 1 KV = 1000 V

$= 1 \times 10^3 V$

1 milli-volt = 1 mV = 1/1000 V

= 1 x 10^{-3}V

1 micro-volt = 1 μV = 1/1000000 V = 1 x 10^{-6}V

Resistance (R)

In addition to the current and voltage there is a third quantity which plays a role in a circuit, called the electrical resistance. Resistance is the property of a material by which it opposes the flow of electric current.

The resistance is the property of opposition to the flow of the current offered by the circuit elements like resistance of the conductor or load is limit the flow of current

In absence of resistance in a circuit, the current will reach an abnormal high value endangering the circuit itself

Ohm

The unit of electrical resistance (abbreviated as R) is ohm (symbol Ω).

For the decimal multiples or decimal sub-multiples of the ohm we use the following expressions:

1 megohm = 1 MΩ = 1000000Ω = 1 x 10^6Ω

1 kilo-ohm = 1 kΩ = 1000Ω = 1 x 10^3Ω

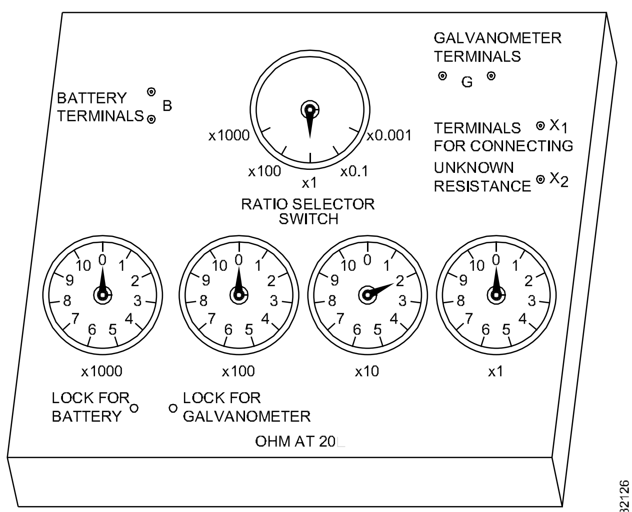
1 milli-ohm = 1 mΩ = 1/1000Ω = 1 x 10^{-3}Ω

1 micro-ohm = 1 μΩ = 1/1000000Ω = 1 x 10^{-6}Ω

Meter to measure resistance

Ohmic value of a medium resistance is measured by an ohmmeter or a Wheatstone bridge. (Fig 6) There is a provision to measure the ohmic value of a resistance in a multimeter. There are various methods to determine the ohmic value of resistance. Some of these methods will be explained later in this book.

Fig 6



WHEATSTONE BRIDGE

International Ohm

It is defined as that resistance offered to an unvarying current (DC) by a column of mercury at the temperature of melting ice (i.e. 0°C), 14.4521 g in mass, of constant cross-sectional area (1 sq. mm) and 106.3 cm in length.

International ampere

One international ampere may be defined as that unvarying current (DC) which when passed through a solution of silver nitrate in water, deposits silver at the rate of 1.118 mg per second at the cathode.

Internation volt

It is defined as that potential difference which when applied to a conductor whose resistance is one international ohm produces a current of one international ampere. Its value is equal to 1.00049V.

Conductance

The property of a conductor which conducts the flow of current through it is called conductance. In other words, conductance is the reciprocal of resistance. Its symbol is G (G = 1/R) and its unit is mho represented by ℧. Good conductors have large conductances and insulators have small conductances. Thus if a wire has a resistance of R Ω, its conductance will be 1/R

Quantity of electricity

As the current is measured in terms of the rate of flow of electricity, another unit is necessary to denote the quantity of electricity (Q) passing through any part of the circuit in a certain time. This unit is called the coulomb (C). It is denoted by the letter Q. Thus

Quantity of electricity = current in amperes (I) x time in seconds (t)

or $Q = I \times t$

Coulomb

It is the quantity of electricity transferred by a current of one ampere in one second. Another name for the above unit is the ampere-second. A larger unit of the quantity of electricity is the ampere-hour (A.h) and is obtained when the time unit is in hours

1 A.h = 3600 Asec or 3600 C

Types of electrical supply

Objectives: At the end of this lesson you shall be able to
- **explain the difference types of electrical supply**
- **differentiate between alternating current and direct current**
- **explain the method of identification of polarity in DC source**
- **state the effect of electric current**

There are various types of instruments working on different principles. Each instrument is designed to measure a particular electrical quantity or more than one quantity with suitable modification and necessary instruction. Further they may be designed to measure AC or DC supply quantities or can be used in either supply.

To enable proper use of the instruments, the technician should be able to identify the type of supply with the help of the details given below.

Type of electrical supply (Voltage)

There are two types of electrical supply in use for various technical requirements. The alternating current supply (AC) and the direct current supply (DC).

___ DC is represented by this symbol.

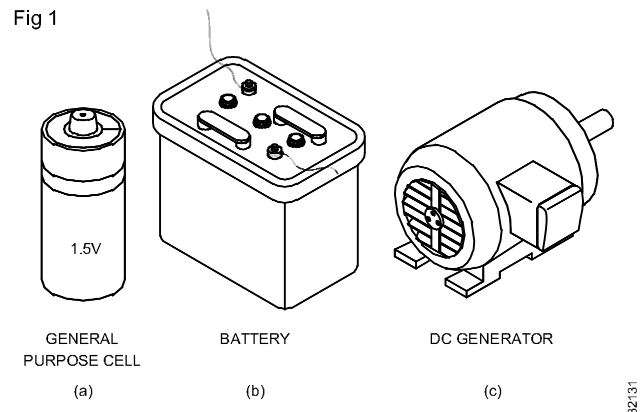
~ AC is represented by this symbol.

DC Supply

The most common sources of DC supply are the cells/ batteries (Figs 1a and 1b) and DC generators (dynamos). (Fig 1C)

Direct voltage is of constant magnitude (amplitude). It remains at the same amplitude from the moment of switching on to the moment of switching off. The polarity of the voltage source does not change. (Fig 2)

Fig 1



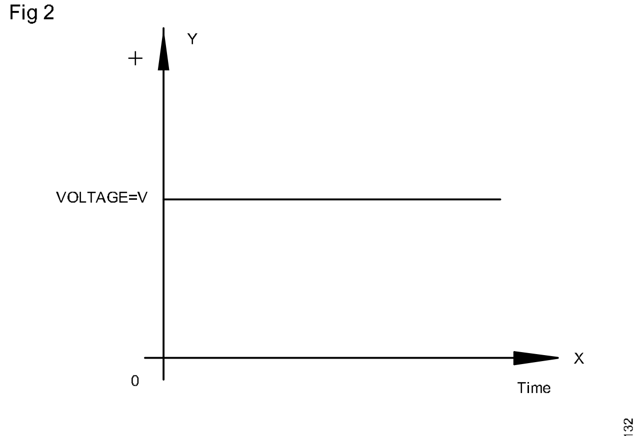
VARIOUS DC SOURCES

The polarity of direct voltage (commonly known as DC voltage) is positive (+ve) and negative (–ve). The direction of conventional flow of current is taken as from the positive to the negative terminal outside the source. (Fig 3)

Direct Current (D.C) (Fig 4)

Voltage is the cause of electrical current. If a direct current flows through a circuit, the movement of electrons in the circuit is unidirectional.

Fig 2



LINEAR VOLTAGE CHARCTERISTIC

Fig 3

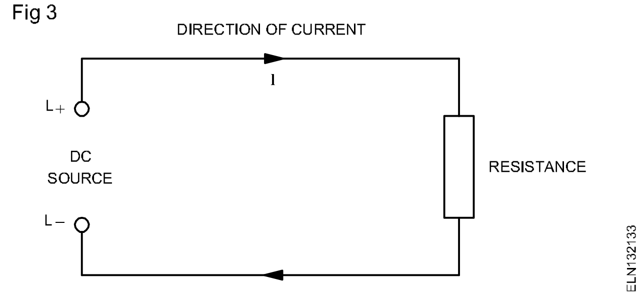
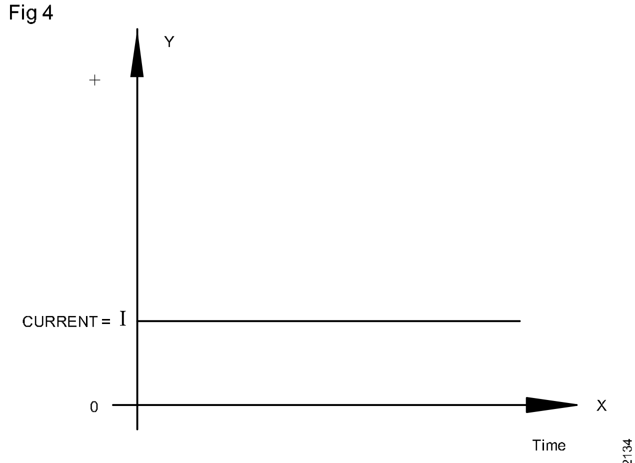


Fig 4



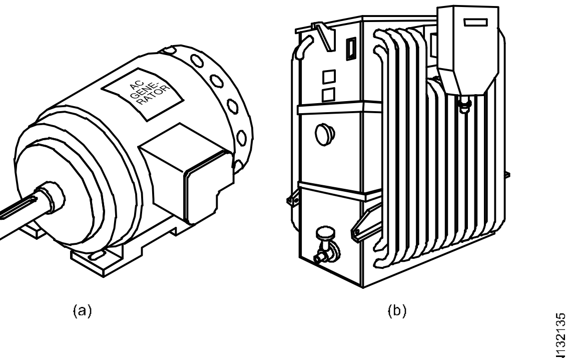
LINEAR CURRENT CHARECTERISTIC

Thus direct current remains at the same value from the moment of switching on to the moment of switching off. (Direct current in common usage is known as DC current.)

AC Supply

The source of AC supply is AC generators (alternators). (Fig 5a) The supply from a transformer (Fig 5b) is also AC.

Fig 5

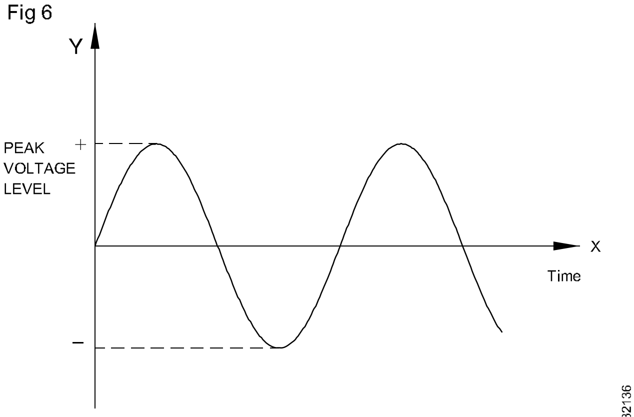


VARIOUS AC SOURCES

Alternating voltage

AC supply sources change their polarity constantly, and consequently the direction of voltage also magnitude. The voltage supplied to our homes by power plants is alternating. Fig 6 shows a sinusoidal alternating voltage over time (wave-form).

Fig 6



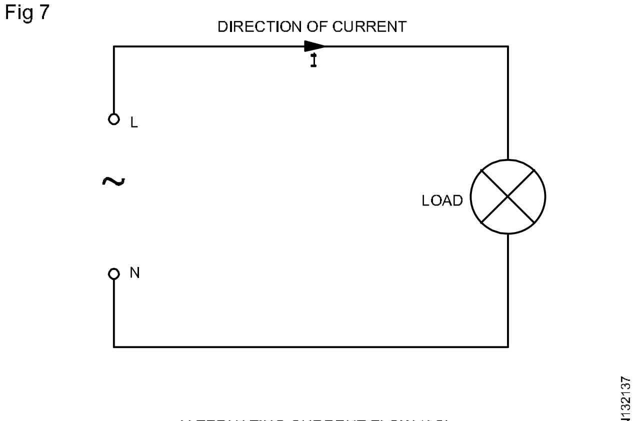
AC VOLTAGE

AC supply is expressed by the effective value of the voltage, and the number of times it changes in one second is known as frequency. Frequency is represented by 'F' and its unit is in Hertz(Hz).

For example, the AC supply used for lighting is 240V 50 Hz. (Alternating voltage in common use is known as AC voltage.) AC supply terminals are marked as phase/line(L) and neutral(N).

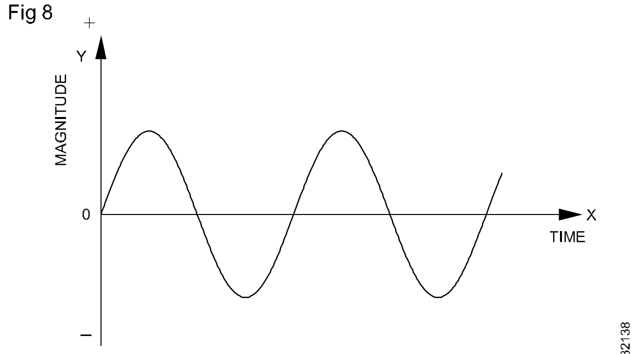
Current is caused in an electric circuit due to the application of voltage. If an alternating voltage is applied to an electrical circuit, an alternating current (commonly known as AC current) will flow. (Figs 7 and 8)

Fig 7



ALTERNATING CURRENT FLOW (AC)

Fig 8



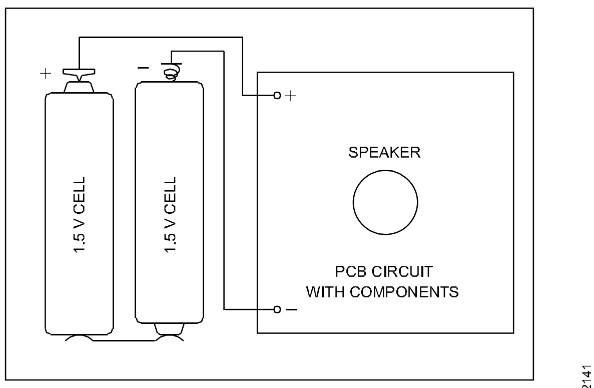
ALTERNATING CURRENT

Polarity test in DC

Polarity

The polarity of a DC supply source should be identified as positive or negative. We can also use the term to indicate how an electric device is to be connected to the supply. For example, when putting new cells in a transistor radio we must put the cells correctly such that the positive terminal of one cell connects to the positive terminal of the radio and the negative terminal of the other cell connects to the negative terminal of the radio as shown in Fig 1.

Fig 1



TRANSISTOR RADIO

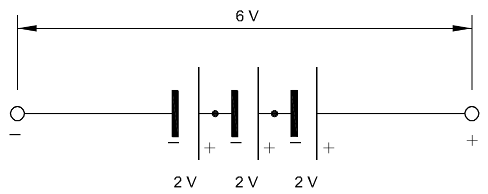
Importance of the polarity

Direct current supply has fixed polarity, positive and negative marked as + and –. Electric devices which have positive and negative identifications on their terminals are said to be polarised. When connecting such devices to a source of voltage (such as a battery or DC supply)

We must observe the correct polarity markings. That is the positive terminal of the device must be connected to the positive terminal of the source, and the negative to the negative. If the polarity is not observed correctly (that is, if +ve is connected to –ve) the device will not function and may be damaged.

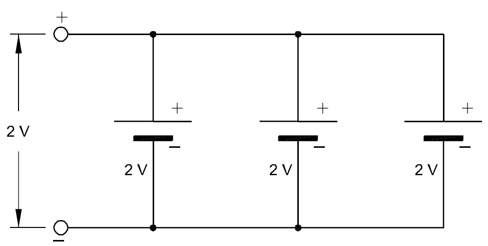
To get more voltage, current and power, the voltage sources like cells, batteries and generator are often connected in series, or in parallel or in series/parallel combination circuit. To connect them in such a manner we must know the correct polarity of the source. Fig 2 shows the method of connecting 3 cells in series to get more voltage. Fig 3 shows connection of 3 cells in parallel for getting more current.

Fig 2



CELL IN SERIES FOR GETTING MORE VOLTAGE

Fig 3



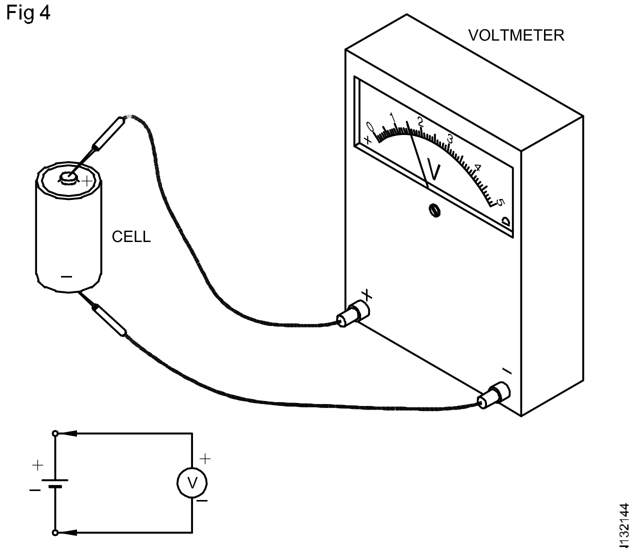
CELLS IN PARALLEL FOR GETTING MORE CURRENT.

Testing polarity by MC meter

The polarity of a cell is determined by the use of a moving coil volt-meter. The terminals of the MC meter are marked as +ve and –ve. MC meters are called as polarised as they have to be connected as per the polarity marking. By using a low range (0-10V) MC voltmeter we can find out the voltage of a cell.

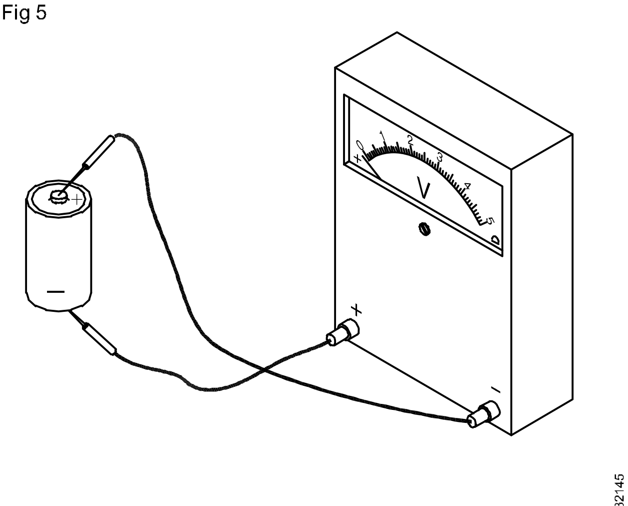
The connections are made as per Fig 4 the voltmeter reads 1.5 volts. The polarity of the cell is correct as per the marked polarity on the meter terminals. If the pointer of the voltmeter deflects as in Fig 5, below zero, the polarity is not correct. From this we conclude that the meter reads in forward direction only if the instrument is connected with correct polarity as per the markings on the instrument terminals.

Fig 4



CORRECT POLARITY INDICATION

Fig 5



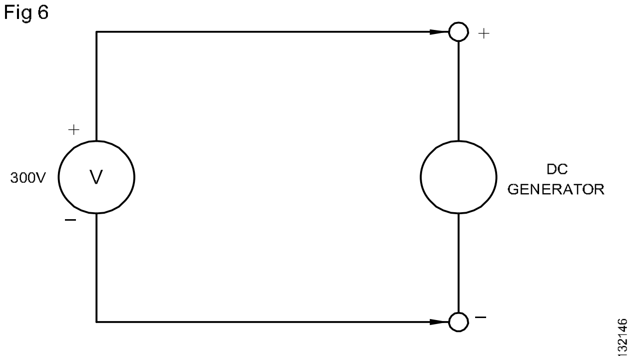
WRONG POLARITY INDICATION

Polarity of the battery

To determine the polarity of the terminals of an unmarked battery, that is +ve and –ve we can use a low range MC voltmeter. If the voltmeter reads positive reading, say 10 or 12 volts then the polarity of the terminals are correct as per the markings on the meter terminals. If the meter reading is negative, that is below zero, the battery polarity is not correct with respect to the meter.

Polarity of DC supply

Fig 6



POLARITY TEST BY D.C GENERATOR

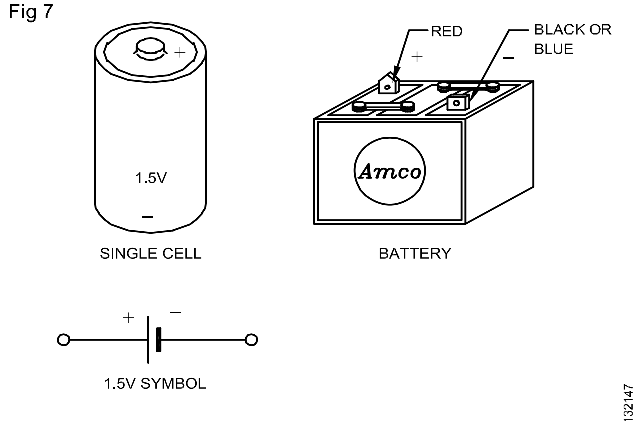
In the same way to find out the polarity of DC generator or a DC source it is advisable to use a moving coil type voltmeter with a suitable range, of say 0-300 volts (Fig 6). To protect the meters, always use higher range meters above the rated voltage of the generator or DC source supply.

Marking made in practice

Generally in DC source the +ve terminal of the supply lead is Red in colour and –ve terminal of the supply lead is Blue or Black in colour. Battery terminals are marked as +ve and –ve on the body or on the terminal post.

- For cells on top of the cell is marked as +ve and the bottom is marked as –ve
- The battery terminal is marked as + and is Red in colour, and the other terminal is marked as – and Black or Blue in colour. (Fig 7)

Fig 7



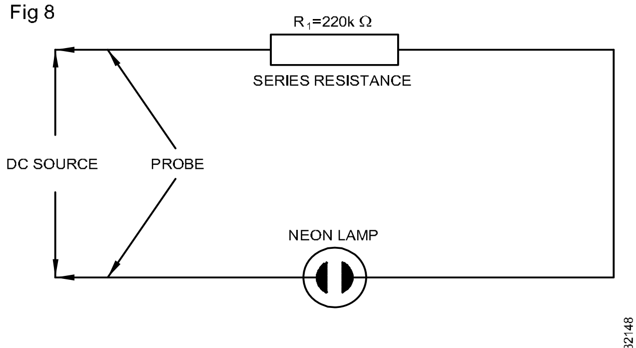
CELL & BATTERY WITH COLOUR POLARITY

Neon polarity indicator

To check the polarity, a neon lamp in series with a 220k ohms resistor could be used (as shown in Fig 8). Touch the probes of the neon lamp circuit across the circuit to be tested. The lamp will light when voltage is present. If both electrodes in the lamp glow, you have an AC power source. If only one electrode glows, the voltage is DC and the lighted electrode will be on the side of the negative polarity of the source.

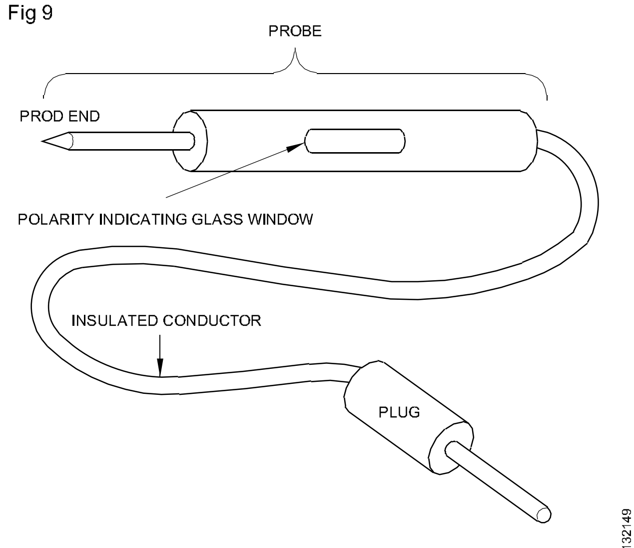
Therefore, you also have a polarity check on DC circuits. (Fig 8) A commercial neon polarity indicator is shown in Fig 9. It has an indicating glass window in which the polarity touched by the pointed end of the indicator will be displayed as +ve or –ve through neon signs.

Fig 8



POLARITY TEST BY NEON INDICATOR

Fig 9



NEON POLARITY INDICATOR

Effects of electric current

When an electric current flows through a circuit, is judged by its effects, which are given below.

1 Chemical effect

When an electric current is passed through a conducting liquid (i.e. acidulated water) called an electrolyte, it is decomposed into its constituents due to chemical action. The practical application of this effect is utilized in electroplating, block making, battery charging, metal refinery, etc.

2 Heating effect

When an electric potential is applied to a conductor, the flow of electrons is opposed by the resistance of the conductor and thus some heat is produced. The heat produced may be greater or lesser according to the circumstances, but some heat is always produced. The application of this effect is in the use of electric presses, heaters, electric lamps, etc.

3 Magnetic effect

When a magnetic compass is placed under a current carrying wire, it is deflected. It shows that there is some relation between the current and magnetism. The wire carrying current does not become magnet but produces a magnetic field in the space. If this wire is wound on an iron core (i.e. bar), it becomes an electro-magnet. This effect of electric current is applied in electric bills, motors, fans, electric instruments, etc.

4 Gas ionization effect

When electrons pass through a certain gase sealed in a glass tube, it becomes ionised and starts emitting light rays, such as in fluorescent tubes, mercury vapour lamps, sodium vapour lamps, neon lamps, etc.

5 Special rays effect

Special rays like X-rays and laser rays can also be developed by means of an electric current.