

You are surrounded by devices that depend on the physics of electromagnetism, which is the combination of electric and magnetic phenomena. This physics is at the root of computers, television, radio, telecommunications, household lighting, and even the ability of food wrap to cling to a container. This physics is also the basis of the natural world. Not only does it hold together all the atoms and molecules in the world, it also produces lightning, auroras, and rainbows.

The physics of electromagnetism was first studied by the early Greek philosophers, who discovered that if a piece of amber is rubbed and then brought near bits of straw, the straw will jump to the amber. We now know that the attraction between amber and straw is due to an electric force. The Greek philosophers also discovered that if a certain type of stone (a naturally occurring magnet) is brought near bits of iron, the iron will jump to the stone. We now know that the attraction between magnet and iron is due to a magnetic force.

From these modest origins with the Greek philosophers, the sciences of electricity and magnetism developed separately for centuries—until 1820, in fact, when Hans Christian Oersted found a connection between them: an electric current in a wire can deflect a magnetic compass needle. Interestingly enough, Oersted made this discovery, a big surprise, while preparing a lecture demonstration for his physics students.

The new science of electromagnetism was developed further by workers in many countries. One of the best was Michael Faraday, a truly gifted experimenter with a talent for physical intuition and visualization. That talent is attested to by the fact that his collected laboratory notebooks do not contain a single equation. In the mid-nineteenth century, James Clerk Maxwell put Faraday's ideas into mathematical form, introduced many new ideas of his own, and put electromagnetism on a sound theoretical basis. We begin with electrical phenomena, and our first step is to discuss the nature of electric charge and electric force.

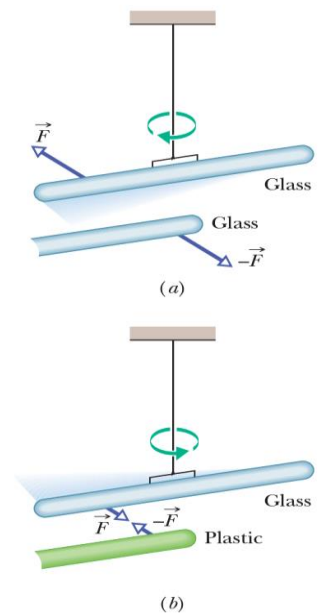
Electric Charge

Here are two demonstrations that seem to be magic, but our job here is to make sense of them. After rubbing a glass rod with a silk cloth (on a day when the humidity is low), we hang the rod by means of a thread tied around its centre (Fig. a). Then we rub a second glass rod with the silk cloth and bring it near the hanging rod. The hanging rod magically moves away. We can see that a force repels it from the second rod, but how? There is no contact with that rod, no breeze to push on it, and no sound wave to disturb it.

In the second demonstration we replace the second rod with a plastic rod that has been rubbed with fur. This time, the hanging rod moves toward the nearby rod (Fig. b). Like the repulsion, this attraction occurs without any contact or obvious communication between the rods.

In the first demonstration, the force on the hanging rod was *repulsive*, and in the second, *attractive*. After a great many investigations, scientists figured out that the forces in these types of demonstrations are due to the *electric charge* that we set up on the rods when they are in contact with silk or fur. Electric charge is an intrinsic property of the fundamental particles that make up objects such as the rods, silk, and fur. That is, charge is a property that comes automatically with those particles wherever they exist.

Two Types. There are two types of electric charge, named by the American scientist and statesman Benjamin Franklin as positive charge and negative charge. He could have called them anything (such as cherry and walnut), but using algebraic signs as names comes in handy when we add up charges to find the net charge. In most everyday objects, such as a mug, there are about equal numbers of negatively charged particles and positively charged particles, and so the net charge is zero, the charge is said to be *balanced*, and the object is said to be *electrically neutral* (or just *neutral* for short).



(a) The two glass rods were each rubbed with a silk cloth and one was suspended by thread. When they are close to each other, they repel each other. (b) The plastic rod was rubbed with fur. When brought close to the glass rod, the rods attract each other.

Particles with the same sign of electrical charge repel each other, and particles with opposite signs attract each other.

Charge Quantization

Any positive or negative charge q that can be detected can be written as

$$q = ne, \quad n = \pm 1, \pm 2, \pm 3, \dots,$$

in which e , the **elementary charge**, has the approximate value

$$e = 1.602 \times 10^{-19} \text{ C}.$$

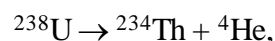
The elementary charge e is one of the important constants of nature. The electron and proton both have a charge of magnitude e (Quarks, the constituent particles of protons and neutrons,

have charges of $\pm e/3$ or $\pm 2e/3$, but they apparently cannot be detected individually. For this and for historical reasons, we do not take their charges to be the elementary charge.) You often see phrases—such as “the charge on a sphere,” “the amount of charge transferred,” and “the charge carried by the electron”—that suggest that charge is a substance. You should, however, keep in mind what is intended: *Particles* are the substance and charge happens to be one of their properties, just as mass is. When a physical quantity such as charge can have only discrete values rather than any value, we say that the quantity is **quantized**. It is possible, for example, to find a particle that has no charge at all or a charge of $+10e$ or $-6e$, but not a particle with a charge of, say, $3.57e$.

Charge is Conserved

If you rub a glass rod with silk, a positive charge appears on the rod. Measurement shows that a negative charge of equal magnitude appears on the silk. This suggests that rubbing does not create charge but only transfers it from one body to another, upsetting the electrical neutrality of each body during the process. This hypothesis of **conservation of charge**, first put forward by Benjamin Franklin, has stood up under close examination, both for large-scale charged bodies and for atoms, nuclei, and elementary particles. No exceptions have ever been found. Thus, we add electric charge to our list of quantities—including energy and both linear momentum and angular momentum—that obey a conservation law.

Important **examples** of the conservation of charge occur in the *radioactive decay* of nuclei, in which a nucleus transforms into (becomes) a different type of nucleus. For example, a uranium-238 nucleus (^{238}U) transforms into a thorium-234 nucleus (^{234}Th) by emitting an *alpha particle*. Because that particle has the same makeup as a helium-4 nucleus, it has the symbol ^4He . The number used in the name of a nucleus and as a superscript in the symbol for the nucleus is called the *mass number* and is the total number of the protons and neutrons in the nucleus. For example, the total number in ^{238}U is 238. The number of protons in a nucleus is the *atomic number* Z , which is listed for all the elements in Appendix F. From that list we find that in the decay



the *parent* nucleus ^{238}U contains 92 protons (a charge of $+92e$), the *daughter* nucleus ^{234}Th contains 90 protons (a charge of $+90e$), and the emitted alpha particle ^4He contains 2 protons (a charge of $+2e$). We see that the total charge is $+92e$ before and after the decay; thus, charge

is conserved. (The total number of protons and neutrons is also conserved: 238 before the decay and $234 + 4 = 238$ after the decay.)

Another example of charge conservation occurs when an electron e^- (charge $-e$) and its antiparticle, the *positron* e^+ (charge $+e$), undergo an *annihilation process*, transforming into two *gamma rays* (high-energy light):

$$e^- + e^+ \rightarrow \gamma + \gamma \text{ (annihilation).}$$

In applying the conservation-of-charge principle, we must add the charges algebraically, with due regard for their signs. In the annihilation process of, the net charge of the system is zero both before and after the event. Charge is conserved.

In *pair production*, the converse of annihilation, charge is also conserved. In this process a gamma ray transforms into an electron and a positron:

$$\gamma \rightarrow e^- + e^+ \text{ (pair production).}$$

Pair-production event that occurred in a bubble chamber. (This is a device in which a liquid is suddenly made hotter than its boiling point. If a charged particle passes through it, tiny vapor bubbles form along the particle's trail.) A gamma ray entered the chamber from the bottom and at one point transformed into an electron and a positron. Because those new particles were charged and moving, each left a trail of bubbles. (The trails were curved because a magnetic field had been set up in the chamber.) The gamma ray, being electrically neutral, left no trail. Still, you can tell exactly where it underwent pair production at the tip of the curved V, which is where the trails of the electron and positron begin.