

ROAD MAP TO...

THE CHEMISTRY CURRICULUM

Study Chemistry A Level at AHS Sixth Form or elsewhere

Use critical skills gained in a variety of jobs

Study a course related to Chemistry or Earth Sciences at University

4.6 The rate and extent of chemical change

Chemical reactions can occur at vastly different rates. Whilst the reactivity of chemicals is a significant factor in how fast chemical reactions proceed, there are many variables that can be manipulated in order to speed them up or slow them down. Chemical reactions may also be reversible and therefore the effect of different variables needs to be established in order to identify how to maximise the yield of desired product. Understanding energy changes that accompany chemical reactions is important for this process. In industry, chemists and chemical engineers determine the effect of different variables on reaction rate and yield of product. Whilst there may be compromises to be made, they carry out optimisation processes to ensure that enough product is produced within a sufficient time, and in an energy-efficient way

4.5 Energy changes

Energy changes are an important part of chemical reactions. The interaction of particles often involves transfers of energy due to the breaking and formation of bonds. Reactions in which energy is released to the surroundings are exothermic reactions, while those that take in thermal energy are endothermic. These interactions between particles can produce heating or cooling effects that are used in a range of everyday applications. Some interactions between ions in an electrolyte result in the production of electricity. Cells and batteries use these chemical reactions to provide electricity. Electricity can also be used to decompose ionic substances and is a useful means of producing elements that are too expensive to extract any other way.

4.8 Chemical analysis

Analysts have developed a range of qualitative tests to detect specific chemicals. The tests are based on reactions that produce a gas with distinctive properties, or a colour change or an insoluble solid that appears as a precipitate. Instrumental methods provide fast, sensitive and accurate means of analysing chemicals, and are particularly useful when the amount of chemical being analysed is small. Forensic scientists and drug control scientists rely on such instrumental methods in their work.

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4.1 Atomic structure and the periodic table

The periodic table provides chemists with a structured organisation of the known chemical elements from which they can make sense of their physical and chemical properties. The historical development of the periodic table and models of atomic structure provide good examples of how scientific ideas and explanations develop over time as new evidence emerges. The arrangement of elements in the modern periodic table can be explained in terms of atomic structure which provides evidence for the model of a nuclear atom with electrons in energy levels.

4.3 Quantitative chemistry

Chemists use quantitative analysis to determine the formulae of compounds and the equations for reactions. Given this information, analysts can then use quantitative methods to determine the purity of chemical samples and to monitor the yield from chemical reactions. Chemical reactions can be classified in various ways. Identifying different types of chemical reaction allows chemists to make sense of how different chemicals react together, to establish patterns and to make predictions about the behaviour of other chemicals. Chemical equations provide a means of representing chemical reactions and are a key way for chemists to communicate chemical ideas.

4.2 Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter

Chemists use theories of structure and bonding to explain the physical and chemical properties of materials. Analysis of structures shows that atoms can be arranged in a variety of ways, some of which are molecular while others are giant structures. Theories of bonding explain how atoms are held together in these structures. Scientists use this knowledge of structure and bonding to engineer new materials with desirable properties. The properties of these materials may offer new applications in a range of different technologies.

4.4 Chemical changes

Understanding of chemical changes began when people began experimenting with chemical reactions in a systematic way and organizing their results logically. Knowing about these different chemical changes meant that scientists could begin to predict exactly what new substances would be formed and use this knowledge to develop a wide range of different materials and processes. It also helped biochemists to understand the complex reactions that take place in living organisms. The extraction of important resources from the earth makes use of the way that some elements and compounds react with each other and how easily they can be 'pulled apart'.

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4.10 Using resources

Industries use the Earth's natural resources to manufacture useful products. In order to operate sustainably, chemists seek to minimise the use of limited resources, use of energy, waste and environmental impact in the manufacture of these products. Chemists also aim to develop ways of disposing of products at the end of their useful life in ways that ensure that materials and stored energy are utilised. Pollution, disposal of waste products and changing land use has a significant effect on the environment, and environmental chemists study how human activity has affected the Earth's natural cycles, and how damaging effects can be minimised.

4.9 Chemistry of the atmosphere

The Earth's atmosphere is dynamic and forever changing. The causes of these changes are sometimes man-made and sometimes part of many natural cycles. Scientists use very complex software to predict weather and climate change as there are many variables that can influence this. The problems caused by increased levels of air pollutants require scientists and engineers to develop solutions that help to reduce the impact of human activity.

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4.7 Organic chemistry

The chemistry of carbon compounds is so important that it forms a separate branch of chemistry. A great variety of carbon compounds is possible because carbon atoms can form chains and rings linked by C-C bonds. This branch of chemistry gets its name from the fact that the main sources of organic compounds are living, or once-living materials from plants and animals. These sources include fossil fuels which are a major source of feedstock for the petrochemical industry. Chemists are able to take organic molecules and modify them in many ways to make new and useful materials such as polymers, pharmaceuticals, perfumes and flavourings, dyes and detergents

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8U-Pure substances
8KC-Elements & compounds
8KC-Simple & giant

8U-Reactants & products
8KC-Acid reactions
8KC-Oxidation & reduction

8U-Earth systems
8KC-Earth processes
8KC-Potable water

HOMEWORK PROJECT
– Research an Element

7U-Changing substances
7KC-Chemical & physical
7KC-pH scale
7KC-Neutralisation

7U-Substances & particles
7KC-Particle model
7KC-Mixtures
7KC-Solutions

Safety in Science

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HOMEWORK PROJECT
– Research a Scientist

Practical Skills

Practical Skills