### Physics 121 - Electricity and Magnetism Lecture 08 - Multi-Loop and RC Circuits Y&F Chapter 26 Sect. 2 - 5

- Kirchhoff's Rules
- Multi-Loop Circuit Examples
- RC Circuits
  - Charging a Capacitor
  - Discharging a Capacitor
- Discharging Solution of the RC Circuit Differential Equation
- The Time Constant
- Examples
- Charging Solution of the RC Circuit Differential Equation
- Features of the Solution
- Examples
- Summary

## Kirchhoff's Rules:

- Branch/Junction Rule (charge conservation): The current through all series elements in a branch is the same. At any junction:
- Loop Rule (energy conservation): The net change in potential difference is zero for any closed path around a circuit:

$$\sum_{i_{2}}^{i_{1}} = \sum_{i_{0}}^{i_{0}} i_{0}$$

$$\sum \Delta V = 0$$

#### Generating Circuit Equations with the Kirchoff Loop Rule

- The algebraic sum of voltage changes = zero around all complete loops through a circuit (including multi-loop).
- OK to assume either current direction. Expect minus signs when choice is wrong.
- OK to traverse circuit with or against assumed current direction
- Across resistances, voltage drop DV = iR if following assumed current direction. Otherwise, set  $\Delta V = +iR$ .
- When crossing EMFs from to +,  $DV = +\mathcal{E}$ . Otherwise  $DV = -\mathcal{E}$
- Dot product <u>i.</u> determines whether power is actually supplied or dissipated in EMFs

#### **Equivalent resistance for resistors in series**

Junction Rule: The current through all of the resistances in series (a single branch) is identical:

$$\mathbf{i} = \mathbf{i}_1 = \mathbf{i}_2 = \mathbf{i}_3$$

Loop Rule: The sum of the potential differences around a closed loop equals zero:

$$\varepsilon - iR_1 - iR_2 - iR_3 = 0$$
  $i = \frac{\varepsilon}{R_1 + R_2 + R_3}$ 

The equivalent circuit replaces the series resistors with a single equivalent resistance:

$$\varepsilon - iR_{eq} = 0$$
  $i = \frac{\varepsilon}{R_{eq}}$ 

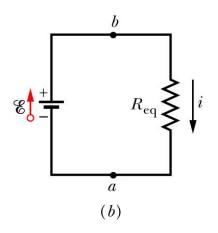
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The equivalent resistance for a series combination is the sum of the individual resistances and is always greater than any one of them.

$$R_{eq} = R_1 + R_2 + R_3$$

$$R_{eq} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} R_i$$

 $\overset{i}{\underset{R_{1}}{\overset{k}{\underset{R_{2}}{\overset{k}{\underset{R_{3}}{\underset{R_{3}}{\overset{k}{\underset{R_{3}}{\underset{R_{3}}{\underset{R_{3}}{\overset{k}{\underset{R_{3}}{\underset{R_{1}}{1}{\atop{R_{1}}{1}}{\underset{R_{1}}{1}{1}}{1}{1}{1}}{1$ 



inverse of series capacitance rule

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### **Equivalent resistance for resistors in parallel**

Loop Rule: The potential differences across each of the parallel branches are the same.

$$\begin{split} \mathcal{E} - \mathbf{i}_1 \mathbf{R}_1 &= \mathbf{0} \qquad \mathcal{E} - \mathbf{i}_2 \mathbf{R}_2 = \mathbf{0} \qquad \mathcal{E} - \mathbf{i}_3 \mathbf{R}_3 = \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{i}_1 &= \frac{\mathcal{E}}{\mathbf{R}_1}, \quad \mathbf{i}_2 = \frac{\mathcal{E}}{\mathbf{R}_2}, \quad \mathbf{i}_3 = \frac{\mathcal{E}}{\mathbf{R}_3} \qquad \stackrel{\text{i not in equations}}{\overset{\text{i not in equations}}} \end{split}$$

Junction Rule: The sum of the currents flowing in equals the sum of the currents flowing out. Combine equations for all the junctions at "a" & "b".

$$i = i_1 + i_2 + i_3 = \mathcal{E}\left(\frac{1}{R_1} + \frac{1}{R_2} + \frac{1}{R_3}\right)$$

The equivalent circuit replaces the series resistors with a single equivalent resistance:

The reciprocal of the equivalent resistance for a parallel combination is the sum of the individual reciprocal resistances and is always smaller than any one of them.

same  $\mathcal{E}_{i}$ , same i as above

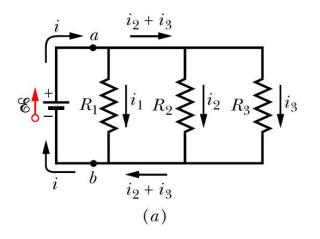
$$\frac{1}{R_{eq}} = \frac{1}{R_1} + \frac{1}{R_2} + \frac{1}{R_3}$$

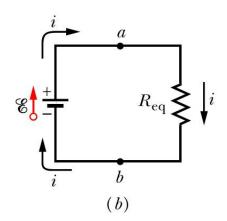
 $\varepsilon - iR_{eq} = 0$ 

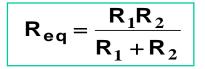
$$\frac{1}{\mathsf{R}_{eq}} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{1}{\mathsf{R}_{i}}$$

 $i = \frac{\epsilon}{R_{eq}}$ 

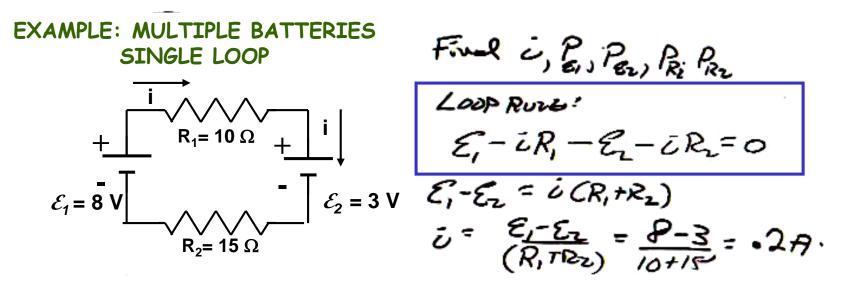
inverse of parallel capacitance rule







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A battery (EMF) absorbs power (charges up) when I is opposite to E

$$\mathcal{E} = \frac{1}{\tau} \int i \qquad \mathbf{P}_{emf} = \pm \mathcal{E} \mathbf{i} = \mathbf{E} \cdot \mathbf{i}$$

$$P_{e_1} = E_1 i = 8 \times 02) = 1.6W \quad Provided To CRCUIT:
P_{e_2} = E_2 i = -3.6 = -6W \quad absorbed;
P_1 = -i^2 R_1 = -(2)^2 / 0 = -90 \quad dimitod
P_2 = -i^2 R_2 = -(2)^2 / m = -6W \quad "
P_2 = -i^2 R_2 = -(2)^2 / m = -6W \quad "
P_{e_1} = P_{e_2} tP_{e_1} + P_{e_2}.$$

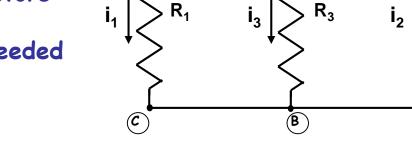
## Example: Multi-loop circuit with 2 EMFs

Given all resistances and EMFs in circuit:

- Find currents  $(i_1, i_2, i_3)$ , then potential drops and power dissipated by resistors
- · 3 unknowns (currents)

imply 3 independent equations needed

## Apply Procedure:



- Identify branches & junctions. Name all currents (3) and other variables.
- Same current flows through all elements in any series branch.
- Assume arbitrary current directions; negative result means opposite direction.
- Find junctions, write Junction Rule equations for all.

$$\sum i_{in} = \sum i_{out}$$

- Same equation at junctions A and B (not independent).
- Junction Rule yields only 1 of 3 equations needed
- · Are points C, D, E, F junctions? (No)

$$i_2 = i_1 + i_3$$
 (1)

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## Procedure, continued:

- Apply Loop Rule as often as needed to find equations that include all the unknowns (3).
- Traversal direction is arbitrary.
- IR's are voltage drops when following the assumed current direction: use iR
- IR's are steps up when going against assumed current
- EMF's are positive when traversed from to + side
- EMF's are negative when traversed from + to sides

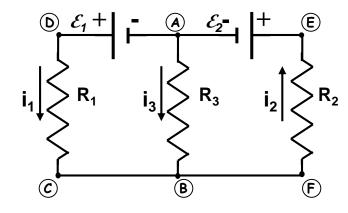
$$\sum \Delta V = 0$$

Loop equations for the example circuit:

Solution: (after a <u>lot</u> of algebra)

Define:

 $[] = \mathsf{R}_1 \mathsf{R}_2 + \mathsf{R}_2 \mathsf{R}_3 + \mathsf{R}_1 \mathsf{R}_3$ 



Only 2 of these
three are independent
Now have 3 equations
in 3 unknowns

$$i_{1} = \frac{\mathcal{E}_{1}R_{2} + \mathcal{E}_{1}R_{3} - \mathcal{E}_{2}R_{3}}{[]}$$

$$i_{2} = \frac{\mathcal{E}_{1}R_{3} - \mathcal{E}_{2}R_{3} - \mathcal{E}_{2}R_{1}}{[]}$$

$$i_{3} = \frac{-\mathcal{E}_{2}R_{1} - \mathcal{E}_{1}R_{2}}{[]}$$
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# **Example: find currents, voltages, power** 6 BRANCHES $\rightarrow$ 6 CURRENTS.

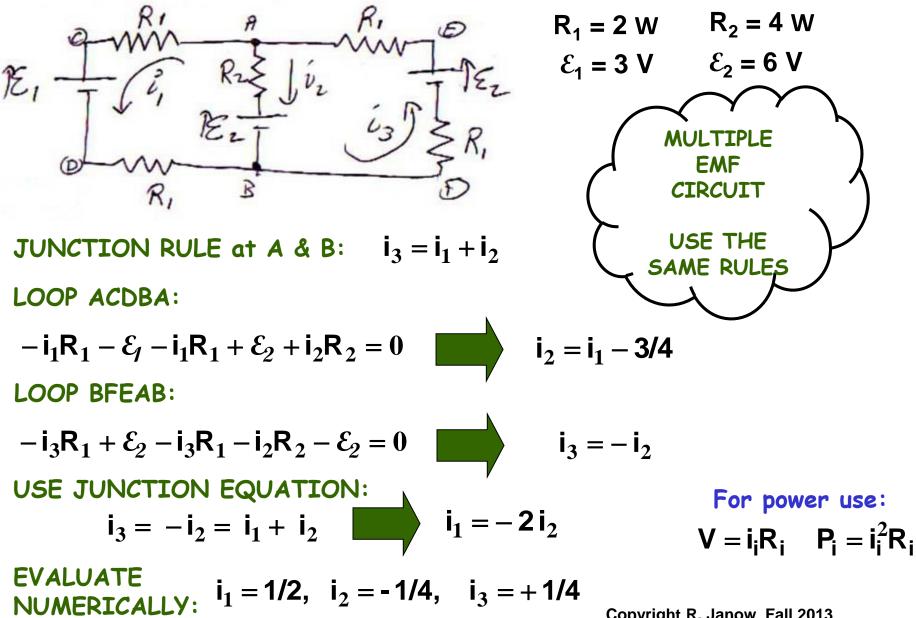
•JUNCTION RULE: Branches C,E,G are the same point, as are D, F, H. 4 currents left. Remaining 2 junction equations are dependent 1 junction equation

$$i = i_1 + i_2 + i_3$$

LOOP RULE:

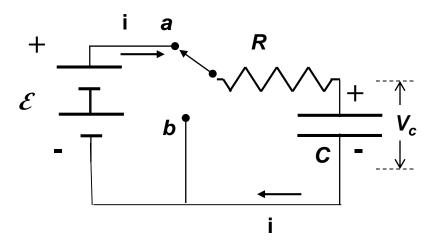
ABCDA - CW  $\mathcal{E} - i_1 R_1 = 0 \implies \mathcal{E} = i_1 R_1 \implies i_1 = \mathcal{E}/R_1 = 12/3 = 4.0 \text{ A}.$ CEFDC - CW  $-i_2R_2 + i_1R_1 = 0 \implies i_2 = i_1R_1/R_2 = 4x3/8 = 1.5 \text{ A}.$ EGHFE - CW  $-i_3R_3 + i_2R_2 = 0 \implies i_3 = i_2R_2/R_3 = 1.5x8/6 = 2.0 \text{ A}.$  $R_{ea} = 1.6 \Omega$  $i = i_1 + i_2 + i_3 = 4.0 + 1.5 + 2.0 = 7.5 A.$ CHECK:  $\mathcal{E}$  should = V<sub>R1</sub> = i<sub>1</sub>R<sub>1</sub> = 4.0x3.0 = 12.0 Volts **POWER:**  $P_{R1} = i_1^2 R_1 = 48.0$  Watts  $P_{\mathcal{E}} = \vec{\mathcal{E}} \circ \vec{i} = 90.0$  Watts  $P_{R2} = i_2^2 R_2 = 18.0$  Watts  $= P_{R1} + P_{R2} + P_{R3}$  $P_{R3} = i_3^2 R_3 = 24.0$  Watts Copyright R. Janow Fall 2013

Multiple EMF Example: find currents, voltages, power



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## **RC Circuits: Time dependance**



Can constant current flow through a capacitor indefinitely?

- Given Capacitance + Resistance + EMF
- Loop Rule + Junction Rule
- Find Q, i, V, U for capacitor as functions of time

First charge C (switch to "a") then discharge (switch to "b")

Charging: Switch to "a". Loop equation:

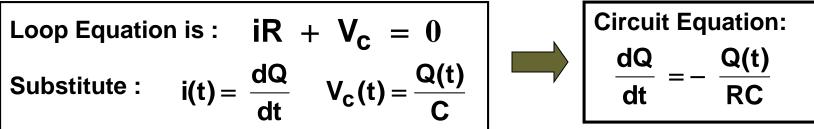
$$\mathcal{E} - iR - V_c = 0$$

Discharging: Switch to "b' no *EMF*, Loop equation:

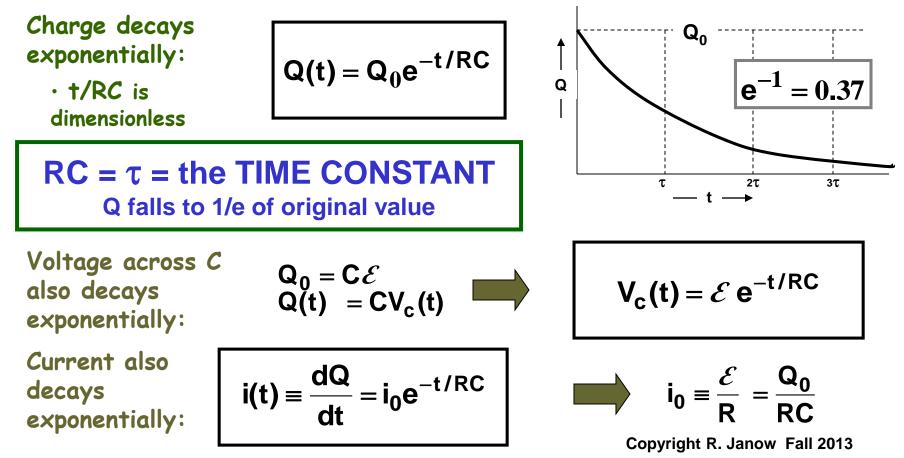
$$- \mathsf{iR} - \mathsf{V_c} = 0$$

- Assume current i through R is clockwise
- Expect largest current at t = 0,
- Expect zero current as t  $\rightarrow$  infinity
- $V_{cap} \rightarrow \mathcal{E} = V_{inf}$  as t  $\rightarrow$  infinity
- Energy stored in C, plus some dissipated in R
- Discharging: Switch to "b". Energy stored in C now dissipated in R
  - Arbitrarily assume current is still CW
  - $V_{cap}$ =  $\mathcal{E}$  at t =0, but it must die away
  - $Q_0$  = full charge =  $CV_{inf}$  =  $C\mathcal{E}$
  - Result: i through R is actually CCW Copyright R. Janow Fall 2013

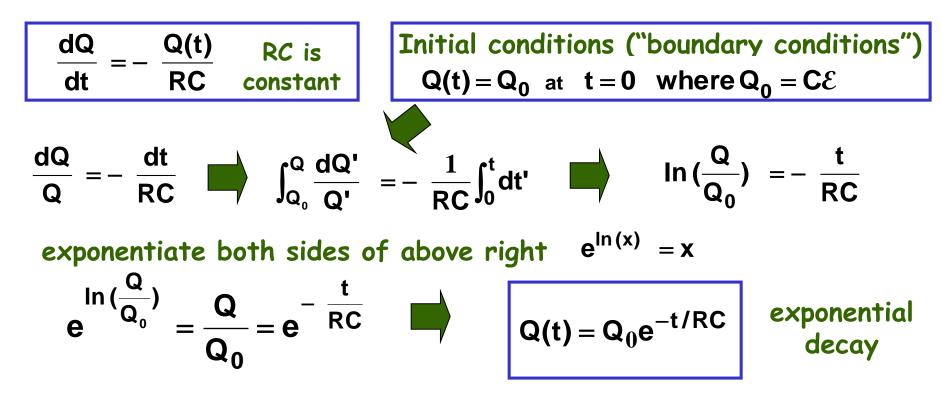
## **RC Circuit: solution for discharging**



First order differential equation, form is  $Q' = -kQ \rightarrow Exponential solution$ 



#### Solving for discharging phase by direct integration



RC = time constant = time for Q to fall to 1/e of its initial value

**RC** = 
$$\tau$$
  
 $e^{-1} = \frac{1}{e} = \frac{1}{2.71828} \approx .37$ 

Timet2t3t4t5tValue
$$e^{-1}$$
 $e^{-2}$  $e^{-3}$  $e^{-4}$  $e^{-5}$ % left36.813.55.01.80.67After 3-5 timeconstantsthe action is over

## **Units for RC**

8-1: We defined  $\tau = RC$ , which of the choices best conveys the physical units for the decay constant  $\tau$  ?

$$[\tau] = [RC] = [(V/i)(Q/V)] = [Q/Q/t] = [t]$$

- A.  $\Omega \cdot F$  (ohm farad)
- B. C/A (coulomb per ampere)
- C.  $\Omega \cdot C/V$  (ohm · coulomb per volt)
- D. V·F/A (volt-farad per ampere)
- E. s (second)



#### Examples: discharging capacitor C through resistor R

a) When has the charge fallen to half of it's initial value  $Q_0$ ?

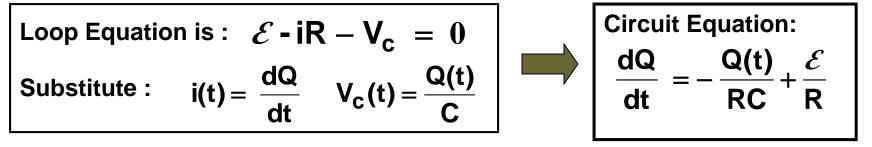
**set:**  $Q(t) = \frac{1}{2}Q_0 = Q_0 e^{-t/\tau}$  **take log:**  $\ln(\frac{1}{2}) = -t/\tau$   $\ln(1) = 0$   $\ln(a/b) = \ln(a) - \ln(b)$  $-\ln(2) = -t/\tau$   $\ln(2) = 0.69$   $\therefore$   $t = 0.69 \tau$ 

b) When has the stored energy fallen to half of its original value?

recall: 
$$U(t) = \frac{Q^2}{2C}$$
 and  $Q(t) = Q_0 e^{-t/RC}$   
at any time t:  $U(t) = U_0 e^{-2t/RC}$  at t = 0:  $U(t = 0) \equiv U_0 = \frac{Q_0^2}{2C}$   
set:  $U(t) = \frac{U_0}{2} = U_0 e^{-2t/\tau}$   
take log:  $\ln(\frac{1}{2}) = -2t/\tau$   $\therefore$  t = 0.69  $\tau/2 = 0.35 \tau$ 

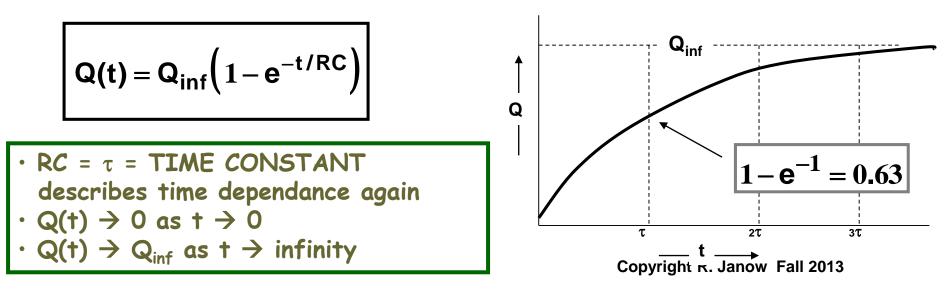
c) How does the power delivered to C vary with time?

## **RC Circuit: solution for charging**



- First order differential equation again: form is Q' = kQ + constant
- Same as discharge equation, but  $i_0 = \mathcal{E} I R$  is on right side
- At t = 0:  $Q = 0 \& i = i_0$ . Large current flows (C acts like a wire)
- As t  $\rightarrow$  infinity: Current  $\rightarrow 0$  (C acts like an open circuit) Q  $\rightarrow$  Q<sub>inf</sub> = C $\mathcal{E}$  = same as Q<sub>0</sub> for discharge

Solution: Charge starts from zero, grows as a saturating exponential.



## **RC Circuit: solution for charging, continued**

Voltage across C while charging:

$$\mathbf{Q} = \mathbf{CV}_{\mathbf{c}}$$
 and  $\mathbf{Q}_{inf} = \mathbf{C}\mathcal{E}$ 

$$V_{c}(t) = \mathcal{E} (1 - e^{-t/RC})$$

Voltage across C also starts from zero and saturates exponentially

**Current in the charging circuit:** 

$$i(t) \equiv \frac{dQ(t)}{dt} = Q_{inf} \frac{d}{dt} \left( 1 - e^{-t/RC} \right)$$
$$= Q_{inf} \frac{1}{RC} e^{-t/RC}$$

$$i(t) = i_0 e^{-t/RC}$$
$$i_0 \equiv \frac{\mathcal{E}}{R} = \frac{Q_{inf}}{RC}$$

Current decays exponentially just as in discharging case Growing potential  $V_c$  on C blocks current completely at t = infinity At t=0 C acts like a wire. At t=infinity C acts like a broken wire

Voltage drop  $V_R$  across the resistor:

$$V_{R}(t) = i(t)R = i_0 Re^{-t/RC}$$

$$V_R(t) = \mathcal{E} e^{-t/RC}$$

Voltage across R decays exponentially, reaches 0 as  $t \rightarrow$  infinity

Form factor:  $1 - \exp(-t/\tau)$ 

Factor	.63	.865	.95	.982	.993	.998	Aft
Time	τ	2τ	3τ	4τ	5τ	6τ	- con <sup>R.</sup> act

After 3-5 time constants the action is over

## **RC circuit – multiple resistors**

8-2: Consider the circuit shown, The battery has no internal resistance. The capacitor has zero charge.

Just after the switch is closed, what is the current through the battery?

A. 0.

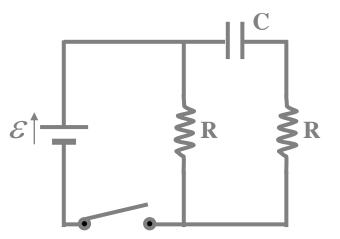
B. ɛ/2R.

C. 2ɛ/R.

D. ɛ/R.

E. impossible to determine





## **RC circuit – multiple resistors**

8-3: Consider the circuit shown. The battery has no internal resistance. After the switch has been closed for a very long time, what is the current through the battery?

A. 0.

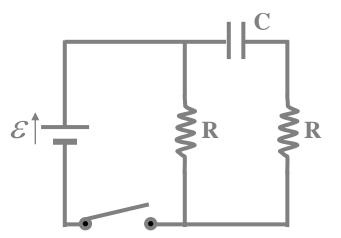
B. ɛ/2R.

C. 2ɛ/R.

D. ɛ/R.

E. impossible to determine





Discharging Example: A 2 mF capacitor is charged and then connected in series with a resistance R. The original potential across it drops to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of it's starting value in 2 seconds. What is the value of the resistance?

Use: 
$$V_c(t) = V_0 e^{-t/RC}$$
 Set:  $\frac{V_c(t)}{V_0} = \frac{1}{4} = e^{-t/RC}$ 

Take natural log of both sides:

$$ln(1) - ln(4) = ln[e^{-2/RC}] = \frac{-2}{RC}$$

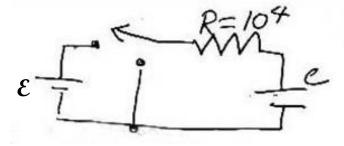
$$ln(4) = 1.39 \quad ln(1) = 0 \quad ln[e^{x}] = x$$

$$1.39 \ RC = 2 \quad \Rightarrow \quad R = \frac{2}{1.39} \frac{1}{2x10^{-6}}$$

$$R = 0.72 \ M\Omega$$
Define:  $1 \ M\Omega = 10^{6} \ \Omega$ 

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## Example: Discharging



$$C = 500 \text{ mF}$$
  $R = 10 \text{ KW}$   $V_0 = \mathcal{E} = 12 \text{ V}$ 

Capacitor C is charged for a long time, then discharged.

a) Find current at t = 0

$$i(t) \equiv \frac{dQ}{dt} = i_0 e^{-t/RC}$$
  $i_0 \equiv \frac{\mathcal{E}}{R} = \frac{Q_0}{RC}$   $i(t=0) = \frac{\mathcal{E}}{R} e^0 = \frac{12}{10^4} = 1.2 \text{ mA}$ 

b) When does  $V_{Cap}$  (voltage on C) reach 1 Volt?

$$V_{cap}(t) = \mathcal{E} e^{-t/RC} \qquad RC = 10^4 x \ 5 x \ 10^2 x \ 10^{-6} = 5 \text{ sec} \qquad V_0 = \mathcal{E} = 12 \text{ Volts}$$
  
$$\frac{V_{cap}}{V_0} = \frac{1}{12} = e^{-t/5} \qquad -\ln(12) = -t/5 \qquad \qquad t = 5 \ln(12) = 12.4 \text{ sec}$$

c) Find the current in the resistor at that time

$$i(t) = \frac{dQ}{dt} = i_0 e^{-t/RC}$$
   
 $i(t = 12.4 sec) = 1.2 mA \times e^{-12.4/5}$   
 $i(t = 12.4 sec) = 0.1 mA$ 

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## Charging Example: How many time constants does it take for an initially uncharged capacitor in an RC circuit to become 99% charged?

Use: 
$$Q(t) = Q_{\infty} (1 - e^{-t/\tau})$$

**Require:** 

$$\frac{Q(t)}{Q_{\infty}} = 0.99 = 1 - e^{-t/\tau}$$

**0.01** = 
$$e^{-t/\tau}$$

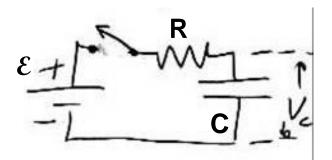
 $\tau \equiv \mathbf{RC} = \mathsf{time\,constant}$ 

Take natural log of both sides:

In (0.01) = -4.61 = -t/
$$\tau$$
  $\therefore$  t/ $\tau$  = 4.61 = # of time constants

Did not need specific values of RC

**Example:** Charging a 100  $\mu$ F capacitor in series with a 10,000  $\Omega$  resistor, using EMF  $\mathcal{E}$  = 5 V.



a) How long after voltage is applied does V<sub>cap</sub>(t) reach 4 volts?

$$V_{c}(t) = \mathcal{E} (1 - e^{-t/RC}) \qquad RC = 10^{4} \times 100 \times 10^{-6} = 1.0 \text{ sec}$$
  

$$\frac{V_{c}(t)}{\mathcal{E}} = \frac{4}{5} = 0.8 = 1 - e^{-t/RC} \qquad \therefore e^{-t/RC} = 0.2$$
  
Take natural log of both sides:  

$$In(0.2) = -1.61 = In[e^{-t/RC}] = \frac{-t}{RC} = -t \qquad \text{if } t = 1.61 \text{ sec}$$

b) What's the current through R at t = 2 sec?

i(t) = 
$$i_0 e^{-t/RC}$$
  $i_0 = \frac{\mathcal{E}}{R}$   
i(t = 2) =  $i_0 e^{-2.0/1.0} = \frac{\mathcal{E}}{R} e^{-2.0/1.0} = \frac{5}{10^4} (0.37)^2 = 6.77 \times 10^{-5}$   
i(t = 2) = 6.8 µA.

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### Example: Multiple loops and EMFs

- Switch S is initially open for a long time.
- Capacitor C charges to potential of battery 2
- S is then closed for a long time

#### What is the CHANGE in charge on C?

#### First: $\mathcal{E}_2$ charges C to have:

$$V_{c} = \mathcal{E}_{2} = 3 \text{ volts with current } \mathbf{i}_{1} = \mathbf{0}$$

$$Q_{0} = \text{final charge for first phase} = \mathbf{C}\mathcal{E}_{2} = 3.0 \text{ x } 10^{-5}$$

$$Q_{0} = \text{inital charge for second phase} = 30 \text{ } \mu\text{C}$$

#### Second: Close switch for a long time

At equilibrium, current  $i_3$  though capacitor  $\rightarrow$  zero Find outer loop current i =  $i_1 = 1_2$  using loop rule

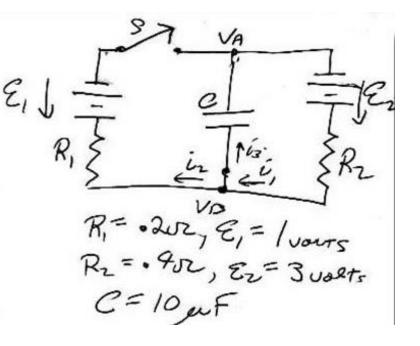
$$\mathcal{E}_2 - iR_2 - iR_1 - \mathcal{E}_1 = 0$$
  
 $3 - i(0.4 + 0.2) - 1 = 0$    
 $i = 2.0/0.6 = 3.33 \text{ A}.$ 

Now find Voltage across C, same as voltage across right hand branch

$$V_{b} - V_{a} = \mathcal{E}_{2} - iR_{2} = 3 - 3.33 \times 0.4 = 1.67 \text{ v}$$

Final charge on C:

$$Q_{final} = C(V_b - V_a) = 10 \times 10^{-6} \times 1.67$$
  
 $Q_{final} = 16.7 \,\mu C$ 
 $Q_{final} - Q_0 = -13.3 \,\mu C$  ht R. Janow Fall 2013



#### Lecture 8A Chapter 27 - Circuits, Part 1

EMF : ELECTROMOTIVE FORCE. SOUNCE OF POWER & POTENTIAL - DIFFERENCE · IDEMZ EXF: r=0, V=2 · REAL EXF: V=2-ir E= and P= Power SUNALEU) = 1.8 Bover Dissipated = 28-V BRANCH ROLE : SAME CORRENT IN ALL SERIES ELBRENTS. N BRANCHES => N GUNRENTS JONETION RULE: ZUS = ZUS AT EACH X U= 49 LOOP RULE '. TAV'S = O RROUND EVERY CLOSED LOOP · POTENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PAIR OF POINTS IS THE SAME FOREUERY PATH. USE RULES TO BET NEQUATIONS IN NUNKNOWNS - NAME HIDENTIFY CURRENTS - ASSUME DIRECTIDAS - USE JUNCTION RULG. EQUATIONS NOT ALL INDERSINDENT - USE LOOP RULE - TRAVERSE RACH ONE · FOR R'S: V= -OR WHEN FOLLOWING ASSUMED CUERGNT · FOR CHE'S : AV = + & WHEN TRAVERSING FROM ETS () AV=-P B(-) IGNORC CURRENT - SOLVE RESULTING SYSTEM OF EQUATIONS FOR ALL - CALOURATE POWER, OTHER QUAINTITIES NEEDED.

### Summary: Lecture 8B Chapter 27 – RC Circuits, Part 2

#### CHAPTER 26 SUMMARY

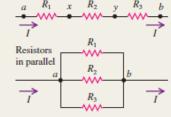
**Resistors in series and parallel:** When several resistors  $R_1, R_2, R_3, \ldots$  are connected in series, the equivalent resistance  $R_{eq}$  is the sum of the individual resistances. The same *current* flows through all the resistors in a series connection. When several resistors are connected in parallel, the reciprocal of the equivalent resistance  $R_{eq}$  is the sum of the reciprocals of the individual resistances. All resistors in a parallel connection have the same *potential difference* between their terminals. (See Examples 26.1 and 26.2.)

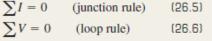
**Kirchhoff's rules:** Kirchhoff's junction rule is based on conservation of charge. It states that the algebraic sum of the currents into any junction must be zero. Kirchhoff's loop rule is based on conservation of energy and the conservative nature of electrostatic fields. It states that the algebraic sum of potential differences around any loop must be zero. Careful use of consistent sign rules is essential in applying Kirchhoff's rules. (See Examples 26.3–26.7.)  $R_{\rm eq} = R_1 + R_2 + R_3 + \cdots$ (resistors in series)

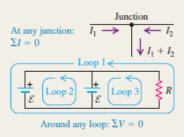
$$\frac{1}{R_{\rm eq}} = \frac{1}{R_1} + \frac{1}{R_2} + \frac{1}{R_3} + \cdots$$
 (26  
(resistors in parallel)

(26.1) Resistors in series

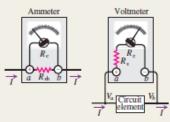
.2)



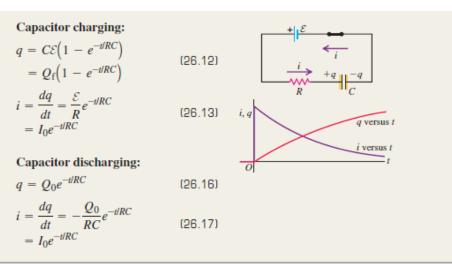




**Electrical measuring instruments:** In a d'Arsonval galvanometer, the deflection is proportional to the current in the coil. For a larger current range, a shunt resistor is added, so some of the current bypasses the meter coil. Such an instrument is called an ammeter. If the coil and any additional series resistance included obey Ohm's law, the meter can also be calibrated to read potential difference or voltage. The instrument is then called a voltmeter. A good ammeter has very low resistance; a good voltmeter has very high resistance. (See Examples 26.8–26.11.)



*R-C* **circuits:** When a capacitor is charged by a battery in series with a resistor, the current and capacitor charge are not constant. The charge approaches its final value asymptotically and the current approaches zero asymptotically. The charge and current in the circuit are given by Eqs. (26.12) and (26.13). After a time  $\tau = RC$ , the charge has approached within 1/e of its final value. This time is called the time constant or relaxation time of the circuit. When the capacitor discharges, the charge and current are given as functions of time by Eqs. (26.16) and (26.17). The time constant is the same for charging and discharging. (See Examples 26.12 and 26.13.)



**Household wiring:** In household wiring systems, the various electrical devices are connected in parallel across the power line, which consists of a pair of conductors, one "hot" and the other "neutral." An additional "ground" wire is included for safety. The maximum permissible current in a circuit is determined by the size of the wires and the maximum temperature they can tolerate. Protection against excessive current and the resulting fire hazard is provided by fuses or circuit breakers. (See Example 26.14.)

