

Chapter 3

Electronics Review

This chapter is a quick review of basic electronics. The previous chapter involved simple, linear passive two terminal elements, which are essential for building most electrical circuits. This chapter will focus on some essential non-linear, two/three terminal electronics components which form the basis for more useful electronics circuits such as amplifiers, oscillators, filters, power supplies, switches, etc. We will review three important electronic components and their circuits in this chapter: *diode*, *bipolar junction transistor (BJT)*, *metal oxide field effect transistor*, and *operational amplifiers*.

3.1 Basic semiconductor concepts

Conductivity of a material is proportional the concentration of free electrons.

$$\begin{aligned}\textbf{Conductor: } n_{cond} &\approx 10^{28} \text{electrons}/m^3 \\ \textbf{Insulator: } n_{ins} &\approx 10^7 \text{electrons}/m^3 \\ \textbf{Semiconductor: } n_{ins} &< n_{sem} < n_{cond}\end{aligned}\tag{3.1}$$

3.1.1 Intrinsic semiconductors

Silicon or Germanium have crystalline structure with four covalent bonds between neighbouring atoms. At $0^\circ K$ semiconductors all covalent bonds are in place tightly holding on

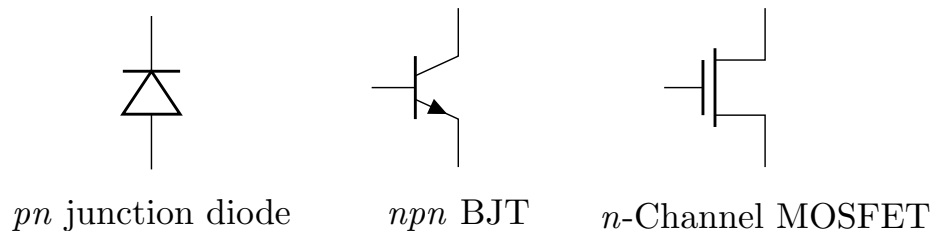


Fig. 3.1: Three most essential electronic components reviewed in this chapter.

to electrons in the bonds. Thus these behave as perfect insulators at low temperatures. With increase in temperature, covalent bonds are ruptured, releasing *free electrons* to roam around in the crystal and become available for conduction when there is an externally applied electric field. The missing electron in the ruptured covalent bond is called a hole, which too act as carrier of electricity. When an electric field is applied, electrons from neighbouring covalent bonds jump into a hole creating a hole in their previous bond. This results in the hole effectively moving the direction opposite to the jumping electrons from the covalent bonds. Thus, unlike conductors, semiconductors can have two types of charge carriers: *electrons* and *holes*. The concentration of free electrons and holes in a semiconductor determines its conductivity, which is controlled by temperature. In intrinsic semiconductors, the concentration of free electrons and holes is equal, i.e. $n_{e^-} = n_{h^+} = n_i$. This concentration is given by,

$$n_i = B T^{3/2} e^{-\frac{E_g}{k_B T}} \quad (3.2)$$

where B is a material constant ($7.3 \times 10^{15} \text{cm}^{-3} \text{K}^{-3/2}$ for Si), E_g is the band gap energy, k_B is the Boltzmann constant, and T is the absolute temperature in Kelvin. The band gap energy is the energy required to break a covalent bond and create a free electron-hole pair. It should be noted that the conductivity of semiconductors increases with temperature, making them suitable for thermometry.

3.1.2 Doped Semiconductors

With intrinsic semiconductors, the conductivity is still quite small at room temperature. Another precise and controlled way to change a semiconductor's conductivity is by adding impurities, called *doping*. The two types of doping are: ***n-type*** and ***p-type*** doping.

In a ***n-type*** semiconductor, a small amount of pentavalent atoms (e.g. Phosphorus, Arsenic) are added to the semiconductor. These atoms have five valence electrons, and when added to the silicon crystal, four of these electrons form covalent bonds with the neighbouring silicon atoms, while the fifth electron is free to roam around in the crystal. This results in an increase in the concentration of free electrons, making the semiconductor more conductive. The concentration of free electrons in an *n-type* semiconductor is given by,

$$n_{e^-} = n_i + N_D \quad n_{h^+} = n_i \quad (3.3)$$

where, N_D is concentration of the doping element.

In a ***p-type*** semiconductor, a small amount of trivalent atoms (e.g. Boron) is added to the silicon crystal structure. This leaves the doped elements with four covalent bonds with one of the bonds lacking an electron or a hole. This hole acts as a charge carrier. The concentration of the holes in a *p-type* semiconductor is given by,

$$n_{h^+} = n_i + N_A \quad n_{e^-} = n_i \quad (3.4)$$

where, N_A is concentration of the doping element in the p -type semiconductor.

The doped semiconductors will have higher conductivity than the intrinsic semiconductors depending on the concentration of the impurities added to the silicon crystal.

3.1.3 Flow of current in semiconductors

There are two types of current flow mechanisms in semiconductors unlike pure conductors – (a) **drift current** and (b) **diffusion current**. Both are important for understanding the operation of the basic electronic components.

Drift current. Drift current is established by an external electric field, for example when a semiconductor is connected to a battery. Holes will accelerate in the direction of the field, while the electrons accelerate in the opposite direction. Bumping into the atoms of the crystal structure, the holes and electrons acquire an average drift velocity given by,

$$\nu_{p-drift} = \mu_p E \quad \& \quad \nu_{n-drift} = -\mu_n E \quad (3.5)$$

This constitutes a drift current through the semiconductor given by the following,

$$I_{drift} \propto q (n_h \mu_p + n_e \mu_n) E \quad (3.6)$$

where, q is the magnitude of electron charge.

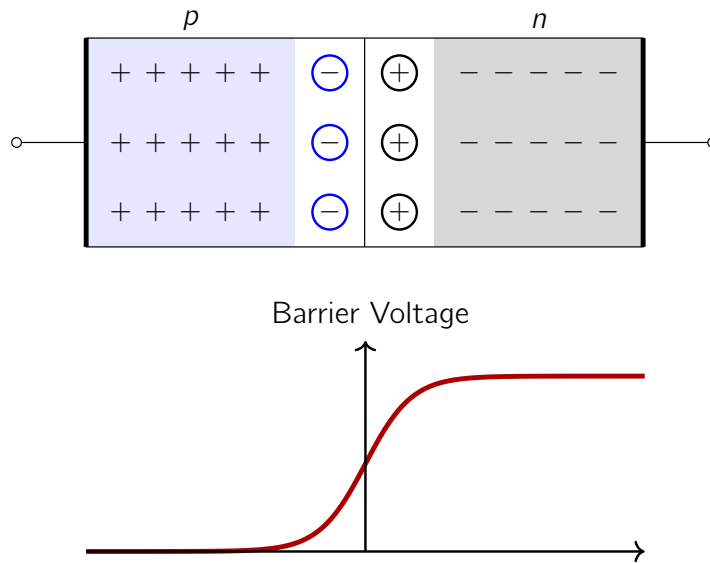
Diffusion current. Diffusion currents result when a concentration gradient exists across a semiconductor.

$$I_{diff} \propto -q D_q \frac{dp(x)}{dx} \quad (3.7)$$

where, $p(x)$ is the concentration of the charge carrier along the x direction. Diffusion currents play an important role in the functioning of the BJT.

3.2 Diode

When a p -type and n -type semiconductors are brought in close contact to each other, there is a big concentration difference between the charge carriers across the interface. A pn -junction diode made by bringing a n -type and p -type semiconductors together as shown in Figure 3.2. Due to the concentration difference, electrons from the n -type semiconductor diffuse into the p -type semiconductor, while holes from the p -type semiconductor will diffuse into the n -type semiconductor. Note that this is the diffusion current I_D , which flows even when the diode is open circuited. This diffusion current sets up the depletion region at the interface, where there are no free charge carriers. This region consists of fixed positive and negative charges, which creates an electric field across the junction. This electric field opposes further diffusion of charge carriers across the junction, and the potential or *barrier voltage* V_0 due to the electric field must

Fig. 3.2: *pn* junction diode

be overcome for the diffusion current to flow across the junction. Note that the diffusion current I_D is due to the majority charge carriers – holes from the *p* side and *electrons* from the *n*-side.

There is a drift current I_S that flows across the junction due to the minority charge carriers - the *electrons* from the *p*-side and the *holes* from the *n*-side. These thermally generated minority charge carriers, will be swept across and transported across the junction due to the electric field, which tends to reduce the barrier voltage V_0 . Thus, when the diode is open circuited, we have an equilibrium $I_D = I_S$.

Barrier voltage of a diode depends on several factors, the amount of doping of the *n* and *p* semiconductors, the temperature, etc. The exact relationship is given by,

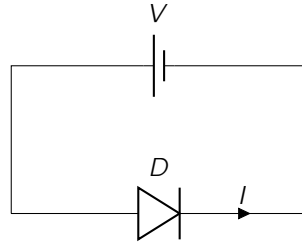
$$V_0 = V_T \ln \left(\frac{N_A N_D}{n_i^2} \right) \quad (3.8)$$

where, V_T is the thermal voltage given by $V_T = \frac{k_B T}{q}$, where k_B is the Boltzmann constant, T is the absolute temperature in Kelvin. For silicon diodes, this is approximately $V_T \approx 26\text{mV}$ at room temperature. The barrier voltage V_0 is typically around 0.7V for silicon diodes, and around 0.3V for germanium diodes.

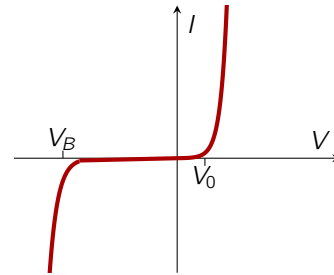
3.2.1 Applying a voltage across a diode

When we connect a voltage source across the diode (Figure 3.3), we can either apply a forward bias or a reverse bias. When the positive terminal of the voltage source is connected to the *p*-side and the negative terminal is connected to the *n*-side, we have a **forward bias**. This reduces the barrier voltage V_0 , and allows the diffusion current I_D to flow across the junction. The diode is said to be *on* in this case, and the current I

Diode with an external voltage source



Diode I-V Characteristic

**Fig. 3.3:** V-I characteristics of a diode

flowing through the diode is called the *forward current*. The voltage-current relationship between the forward current I and the voltage V across the diode is given by,

$$I = I_S \left(e^{\frac{V}{V_T}} - 1 \right) \quad (3.9)$$

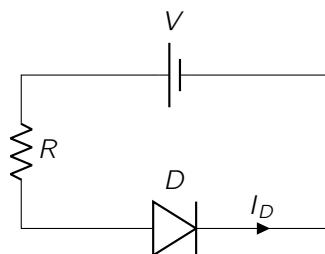
where, I_S is the saturation current, which is the reverse current that flows when the diode is reverse biased, and V_T is the thermal voltage, and q is the magnitude of electron charge.

When the negative terminal of the voltage source is connected to the p -side and the positive terminal is connected to the n -side, we have a **reverse bias**. This increases the barrier voltage V_0 , and prevents the diffusion current I_D from flowing across the junction. The diode is said to be *off* in this case, and only a small reverse saturation current I_S flows through the diode. When the reverse biased voltage is increased beyond a certain threshold, called the *breakdown voltage* V_B , the diode will start conducting in the reverse direction. This is called *avalanche breakdown*, and the diode can be damaged if the current is not limited by a resistor or some other means. The avalanche breakdown is the reason for the sharp rise in the current at the V_B .

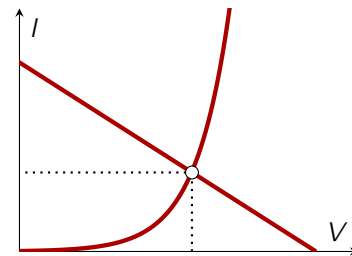
3.2.2 A simple diode circuit

In the circuit shown in Figure 3.3, the moment the forward bias-voltage gets close to 0.6, the current starts to rise dramatically. Slight changes in the voltage will lead to

Diode in series with a resistor and a voltage source



Diode I-V Characteristic

**Fig. 3.4:** Diode voltage and current in a simple diode circuit with a series resistor.

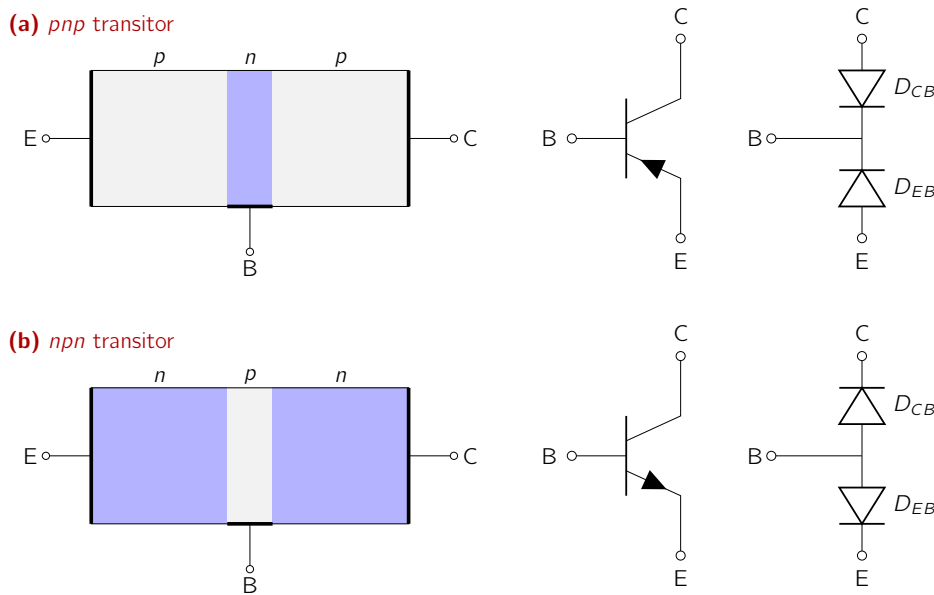


Fig. 3.5: Bipolar junction transistor structure and symbol

large changes in the current if it is not limited by a series resistor. Without a resistor, we can easily burn the diode due to large power dissipation across the diode. Consider a more practical circuit with a voltage source, resistor, and a diode, as shown in Figure 3.4. The voltage across the diode V_D and the current through the diode I_D by writing the Kirchoff voltage law (KVL) around the loop,

$$V - I_D R - V_D = 0 \quad (3.10)$$

The current I_D and V_D from Eq. 3.9 can be substituted into Eq. 3.10 to solve for V_D and I_D ,

$$V - R I_S \left(e^{\frac{V_D}{V_T}} - 1 \right) - V_D = 0 \quad (3.11)$$

Unfortunately, this is a non-linear solution will need to be solved to find the voltage across the diode V_D and the current through the diode I_D .

Let's assume that $V = 5V$ and $R = 1k\Omega$ in Figure 3.4. A first order approximation can be made by assuming that the diode is *switched off*, i.e. no current is flow through it and see if it leads to a contradiction. If we assume the diode is off and no current is flowing $I_D = 0mA$ through it, then $V_D = 5V$ The diode cannot be off if $V_D \geq 0.7V$. So, the diode must be switched on. We will assume that the diode is on and then find out the current flowing through it and check that it is not close to 0. In the current circuit, have

$$I_D \approx \frac{V - 0.7}{R} = 4.3mA \quad (3.12)$$

I_D is large enough for to flow through the diode when its switched on. Thus, $V_D = 0.7V$ and $I_D = 4.3mA$ is a reasonable first approximation of the diode's voltage and current in the current circuit.

3.3 Bipolar junction transistor (BJT)

The bipolar junction transistor (BJT) is the first of some of the three terminal devices we will come across in this course. There are two types of BJTs – *npn* and *pnp*. BJTs are formed by sandwiching a thin layer of *p*-type semiconductor between two *n*-type semiconductors or vice versa. This is depicted in Figure 3.5. Metal contacts are made with these three semiconductor regions to form the three terminals of the BJT. In an *npn* BJT, one of the *n* regions is the *emitter* which is heavily doped, and the other *n* region is the *collector*. The *p* region is the *base*, which is lightly doped and very thin compared to the widths of the emitter and collector regions. The collector is moderately doped. Three terminal devices like the BJT and MOSFET can be used as an amplifier or a switch, depending on how it is biased. We will only discuss *npn* transistors for the rest of the section; the *pnp* transistor is similar, but with the polarities of the voltages and currents reversed. A BJT is essentially two diodes connected back to back as shown in Figure 3.5.

A BJT can be operated in three different modes, depending on the biasing of the terminals. The three modes are: (a) **Cut-off mode**, (b) **Active mode**, and (c) **Saturation mode**. The difference between the three modes are summarized in Table 3.1.

3.3.1 Cut-off mode

In this mode, the emitter-base (EB) and the collector-base (CB) junctions are reverse biased, and no current flows through the transistor.

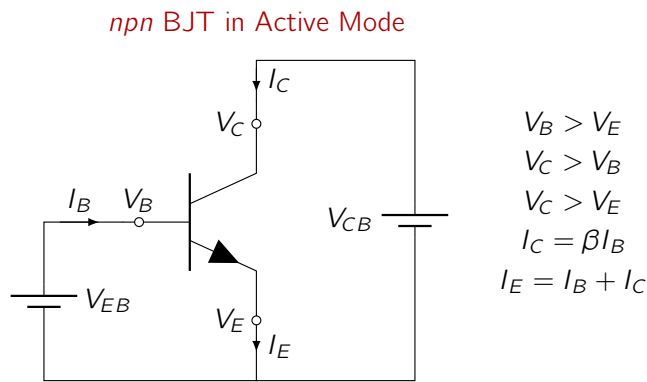
$$I_E = 0 \quad I_B = 0 \quad I_C = 0 \quad (3.13)$$

3.3.2 Active mode

In this mode, the EB junction is forward biased, while the CB junction is reverse biased. Consider the circuit in Fig. 3.6. When the *npn* BJT's EB junction is forward biased ($V_{BE} \approx 0.7V$), electrons (the majority carrier) from the highly doped emitter region are injected just across the EB junction. The electrons diffuse into the base region, which is lightly doped and very thin. Because $V_C > V_B$, the injected electrons are swept across the base region by the electric field created by the reverse biased CB junction. A small percentage of these injected electrons recombine with the holes in the base region, which contributes to the small base current. The collector current will be proportional to the base current; the current gain is given by the parameter β .

$$I_C = \beta I_B \quad \text{where, } \beta \approx 100 - 1000 \quad (3.14)$$

An equivalent circuit of the BJT in the active model is shown in the following figure (Fig. 3.7). In this circuit, assume that the supply voltages V_{BB} , V_{CC} , and the resistors

**Fig. 3.6:** *npn* BJT in active mode.

R_B and R_C are chosen appropriately to place the *npn* transistor in the active mode. The AC source v_s of sufficiently small in amplitude (in *mV*) will result in small changes in I_B , which lead to corresponding change in I_C . The voltage at the collector V_C have a larger amplitude variations riding on a DC voltage, given by the following,

$$V_C = V_{CC} - \beta \frac{R_C}{R_B} (V_{BB} - 0.7) - \beta \frac{R_C}{R_B} v_s \quad (3.15)$$

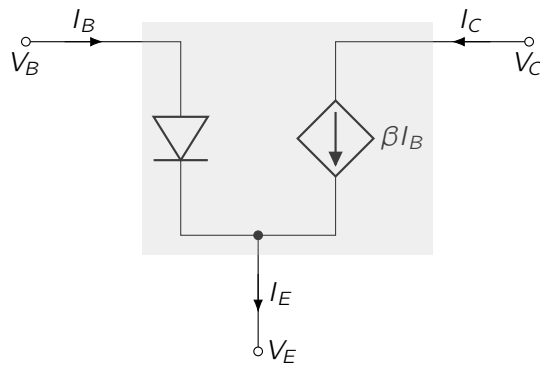
This is easy to derive and is left as an exercise for the reader. The input voltage v_s get amplified by a factor of $\beta \frac{R_C}{R_B}$, which is the voltage gain of this the common emitter amplifier circuit. We will no disucss such circuits any further in the course. This was just to illustrate the utility of the BJT in amplifying small AC signals when operated in the active mode.

Table 3.1: Modes of operation of a bipolar junction transistor (BJT)

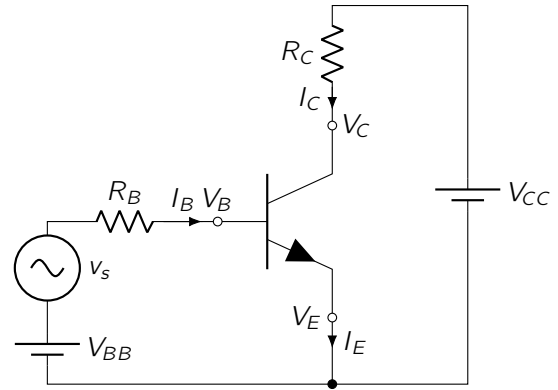
Mode	Emitter-Base Junction	Collector-Base Junction	Operation
Cut-off	Reverse biased	Reverse biased	Transistor is off; no current flows.
Active	Forward biased	Reverse biased	I_C is proportional to I_B
Saturation	Foward biased	Forward biased	I_C and V_{CE} saturate.

3.3.3 Saturation mode

Consider the circuit in Fig. 3.8. If for fixed V_{BB} , we reduce R_B , this will increase I_B , which would result in progressively increasing I_C . However, I_C cannot continue to increase forever. As I_C increases, $V_C = V_{CC} - I_C R_C$ decreases. Once its value falls sufficiently below the base voltage V_B , the collector-base (CB) junction becomes forward biased. This is called the **saturation mode** of operation of the BJT. In this mode, the BJT behaves like a closed switch, and the collector current I_C saturates at a value

(a) *npn* BJT Active Mode Equivalent Circuit

(b) A simple Common-Emitter Amplifier Circuit

**Fig. 3.7:** *npn* BJT active mode equivalent circuit, and a simple common emitter voltage amplifier circuit.

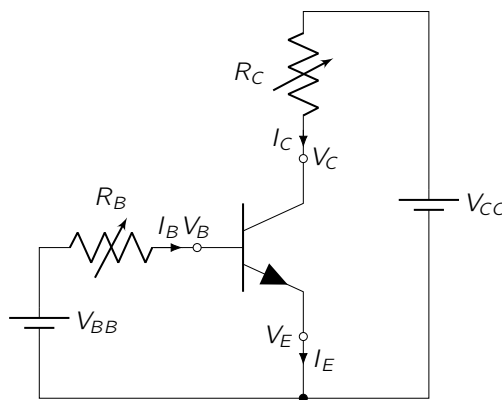
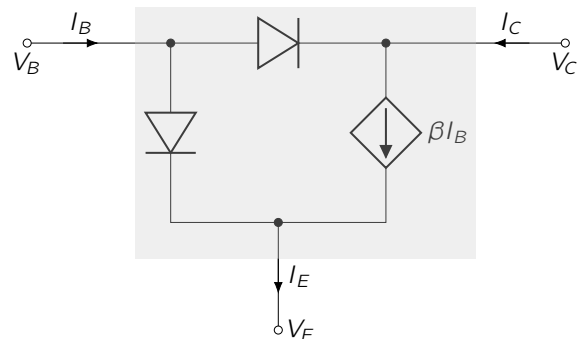
that is independent of the base current I_B . The collector-emitter voltage saturates at $V_{CE(sat)} \approx 0.2V$ for silicon BJTs, making the collector current independent of the base current.

$$I_C \approx \frac{V_{CC} - V_{CE(sat)}}{R_C} \quad \text{and} \quad V_{CE(sat)} \approx 0.2V \quad (3.16)$$

The saturation mode is used in switching applications, where the BJT is used as a switch to turn on or off a load connected to the collector; think of the collector resistor as the load. We will discuss some applications later in the chapter.

3.4 Metal oxide field effect transistor (MOSFET)

While the BJT might be a popular choice for many applications where circuits are made on a breadboard or a PCB. However, when it comes to integrated circuits, the MOSFET is the most popular choice. MOSFETS can be made quite small, are easier

Equivalent circuit of *npn* BJT in Saturation**Fig. 3.8:** *npn* BJT active mode equivalent circuit, and a simple common emitter voltage amplifier circuit.

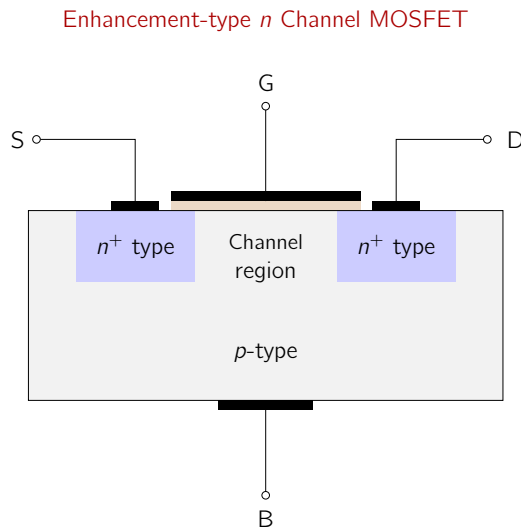
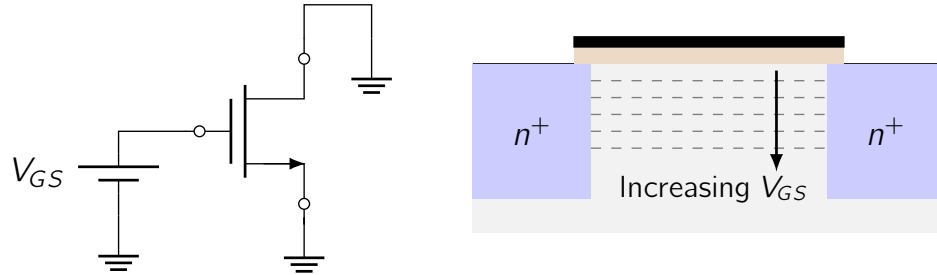


Fig. 3.9: n Channel Enhancement MOSFET.

to fabricate, and consume less power than BJTs. They can be used for both digital and analog integrated circuits. There are four types of MOSFETs, n -channel or p -channel enhancement or *depletion* type MOSFETs. In this section, we will only focus on the enhancement-type n -channel MOSFET to understand the fundamental principle of operation of the MOSFETs.

The physical structure of an enhancement-type n -channel MOSFET is shown in Figure 3.9. The MOSFET in this figure has four terminals - source (S), drain (D), gate (G), and body (B). The source and drain are heavily doped n -type regions, while the channel is lightly doped p -type region. The region between drain and the source is called the *channel region*. The gate is insulated from the channel by a thin layer of oxide, which acts as a dielectric. The gate terminal is used to control the formation of a conductive channel between the source and drain terminals. The body terminal is connected to the source terminal, and is usually shorted to the source in most applications. The MOSFET is a four terminal device, but it can be treated as a three terminal device by shorting the body and source terminals.

The drain is always kept at a higher potential than the source. The connection between the drain to the source is essentially two diodes connected back-to-back, implying that applying a voltage between the drain and source does not result in any current because one of the diodes is reverse biased. However, when a positive voltage is applied to the gate with respect to the body/source, things get interesting as shown in Figure 3.10. Applying a positive gate voltage V_{GS} with respect to the source terminal creates an electric field across the oxide layer, which penetrates into the channel region. This electric field attracts electrons into the channel region right below the gate oxide layer. As the voltage is increased beyond a threshold V_t , a conductive channel is formed between the source and drain terminals, which can now conduct current between the

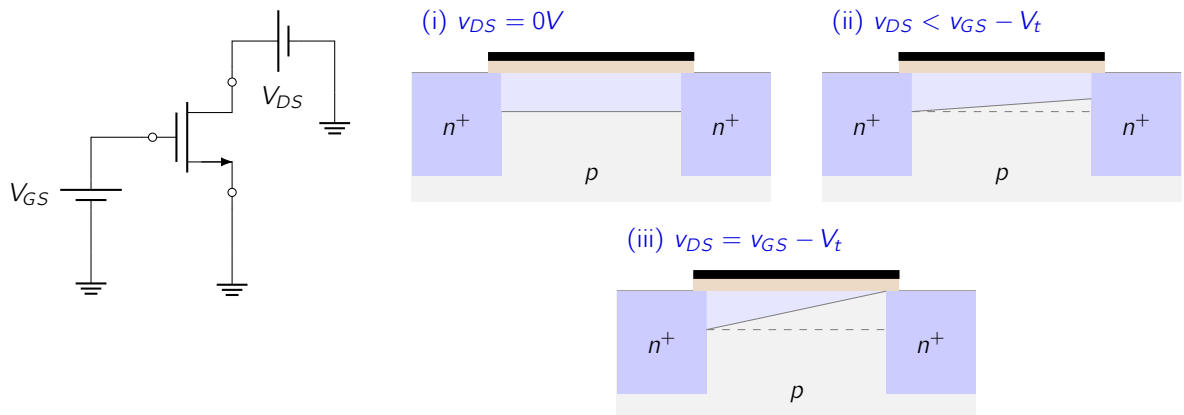
Effect varying V_{GS} on the MOSFET channel**Fig. 3.10:** n -Channel MOSFET V_{GS} - V_{DS} Characteristics.

source and the drain. The threshold voltage is typically between $0.3V - 1.0V$. Any v_{GS} applied beyond V_t is called the overdrive voltage or *effective voltage* v_{OV} .

In Figure 3.10 no current flows because both the source and drain are grounded. When a drain source voltage is applied, as shown in Figure ??, the MOSFET can be turned on by applying a positive gate voltage V_{GS} with respect to the source. The current flowing through the MOSFET is called the *drain current* I_D . The relationship between the drain current i_D , the gate-source voltage V_{GS} , and the drain-source voltage V_{DS} is given by,

$$i_D = k_n \left((v_{GS} - V_t) v_{DS} - \frac{1}{2} v_{DS}^2 \right) \quad (3.17)$$

where, k_n is the process transconductance parameter, and V_t is the threshold voltage. This expression holds only when $V_{GS} > V_t$ and $0 \leq V_{DS} < V_{GS} - V_t$. Something very interesting happens to the channel when a drain-source voltage is applied and its magnitude is increased, as shown in Figure 3.11. The channel becomes trapezoidal in shape as v_{DS} is increased due to different v_{GS} and v_{GD} . This causes the resistance of the channel to increase, tapering off the current flowing through it. When the v_{DS} is increased further, the channel gets pinched off and the current saturates.

Effect varying V_{DS} on the MOSFET channel for a fixed V_{GS} **Fig. 3.11:** n -Channel MOSFET V_{DS} Characteristics.

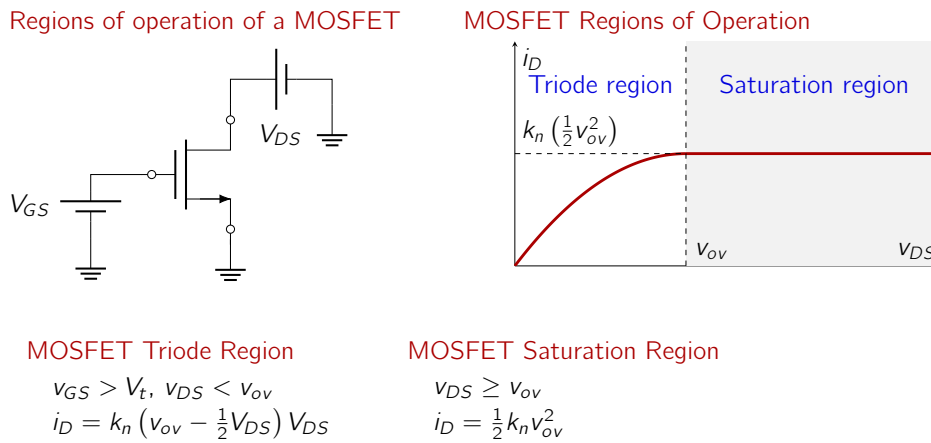


Fig. 3.12: Regions of operation of a MOSFET.

MOSFET regions of operation

The MOSFET can be operated in three different regions, depending on the values of V_{GS} and V_{DS} . The three regions are: (a) **Cut-off region**, (b) **Triode region**, and (c) **Saturation region**. The difference between the three regions are summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Modes of operation of a MOSFET

Mode	Gate-Source Voltage	Drain-Source Voltage	Operation
Cut-off	$V_{GS} < V_t$	$V_{DS} = 0$	Transistor is off; no current flows.
Triode	$V_{GS} > V_t$	$V_{DS} < V_{GS} - V_t$	I_D is proportional to V_{DS} .
Saturation	$V_{GS} > V_t$	$V_{DS} \geq V_{GS} - V_t$	I_D is constant.

Figure 3.12 shows i_D versus v_{DS} for a fixed value of $v_{GS} > V_t$. When v_{DS} is increased, the relationship is approximately linear for small values of v_{DS} , while increasing v_{DS} slowly constricts the channel, until it is pinched off, while i_D saturates. When $v_{DS} < V_{GS} - V_t$, the MOSFET is in the *triode region*, where the drain current I_D is proportional to the drain-source voltage V_{DS} . In this region, the MOSFET behaves like a variable resistor. When v_{DS} is increased beyond $V_{GS} - V_t$, the MOSFET enters the *saturation region*, where the drain current I_D becomes constant and independent of the drain-source voltage V_{DS} . In the saturation mode, the MOSFET behaves like a voltage controlled current source, where the drain current I_D is controlled by the gate-source voltage V_{GS} . When $V_{GS} < V_t$, the MOSFET is in the *cut-off region*, where no current flows through the MOSFET. The current versus voltage characteristics of a MOSFET is shown in Figure 3.13. When v_{DS} is large enough to keep the MOSFET in the saturation region, the drain current I_D

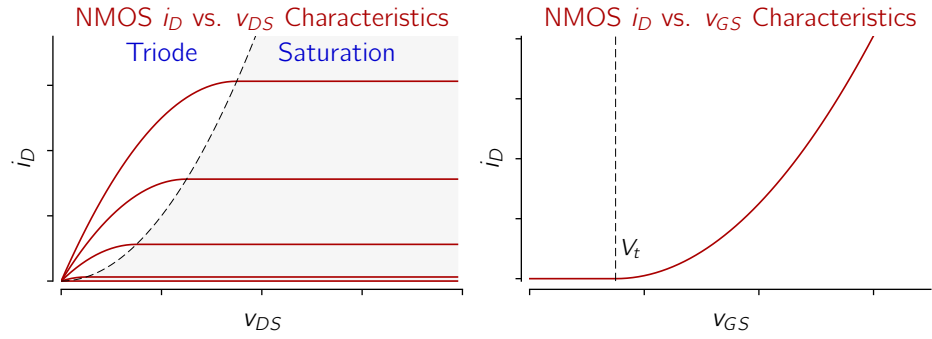


Fig. 3.13: Current vs. voltage characteristics of a MOSFET.

is given by,

$$i_D = \frac{1}{2} k_n (v_{GS} - V_t)^2 \quad (3.18)$$

3.5 Some Diode Circuits

The diode is used in many circuits, such as rectifiers, voltage regulators, clipper, clippers, etc. In this section, we will briefly presents some common and basic diode circuits. The analysis of these circuits are left as an exercise for the reader. The reader is encouraged to simulate these circuits using a circuit simulation software such as LTSpice to gain a better understanding of the operation of these circuits.

3.5.1 Rectifiers

Figure 3.14 shows a half-wave and full-wave rectifier circuit. Assume that the input signal $v_{in}(t)$ is sinusoidal, i.e., $v_{in}(t) = v_o \sin(\omega t)$. The output signal, i.e., the voltage across the load resistance R_L can be computed with different levels of accuracy based on the model we assume for the diode. The output of the half-wave rectifier circuit is

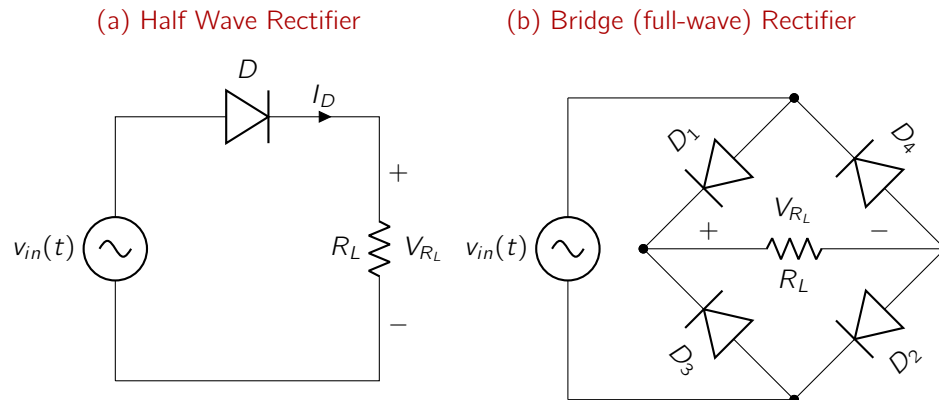


Fig. 3.14: Half-wave and full-wave rectifier circuits.

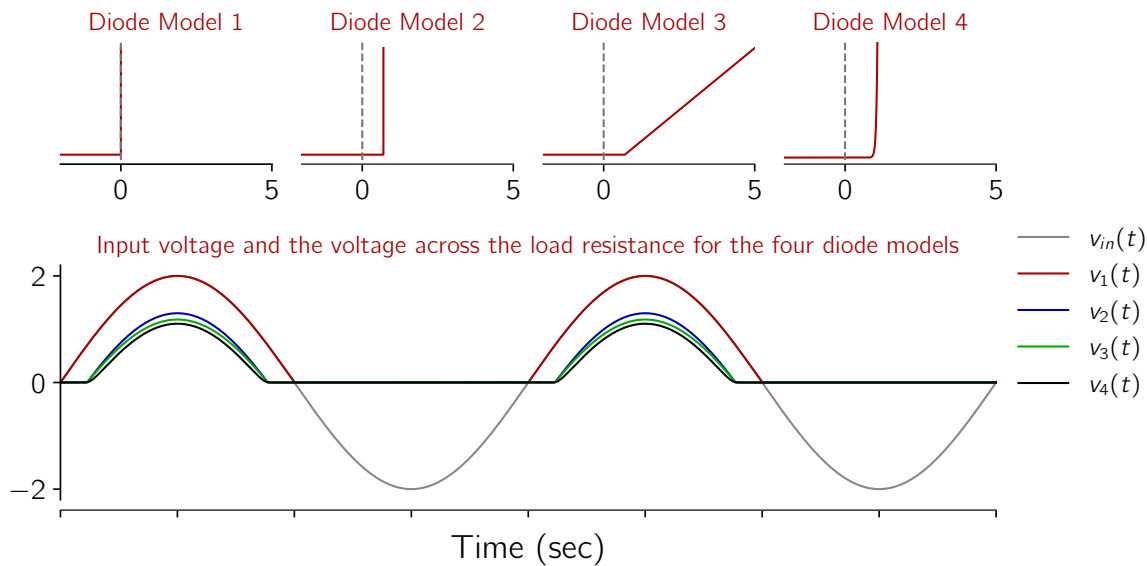


Fig. 3.15: The top row plots show the current-voltage relationship for the assumed diode model. Model 1 is an ideal diode model, while model 4 is a one described in Eq. 3.9. The plot in the bottom row shows the input voltage $v_{in}(t) = 2 \sin(2\pi t)$ in gray, and the voltage across the load resistance $R_L = 100\Omega$ for the different assumed model.

shown in Figure 3.15 for four different models, starting with the simplest idea model (model 1) to a more realistic model (model 4).

Problem 3.1. Can you explain the four output graphs in Figure 3.15 using the four models?

The problem of generating a similar output for the full-wave bridge rectifier is left as an exercise at the end of the chapter.

3.5.2 Voltage regulator

A voltage regulator is a circuit that maintains a constant voltage across its output terminals, even when the input voltage or load current changes. Voltage regulators are widely used in power supplies to provide a stable output voltage. Diodes can be used for building simple voltage regulators. Consider the simple circuit in Figure 3.16. Here, we want a stable 2.8V supply for a circuit and we have a voltage supply V_s that is higher than 2.8V. We can build a stable 2.8V using the arrangement shown in this figure ($R_1 = 1k\Omega$). The variation of V_{out} with variations in $V_{in} \in [5, 15]V$ are shown in the adjacent plots with ($R_L = \infty\Omega$) and without a load resistance (top plot; $R_L = 1k\Omega$). The bottom plot shows the change in the V_{out} as a function of the load resistance $R_L \in [0.1k, 10k]\Omega$. Both of these plots show that that V_{out} is fairly robust to large variations in V_{in} and R_L ; for very low values of V_{in} and R_L , the circuit fails as expected.

A simple voltage regulator

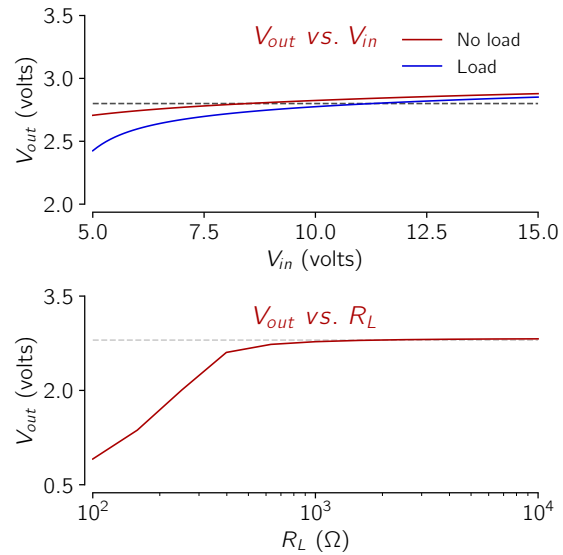
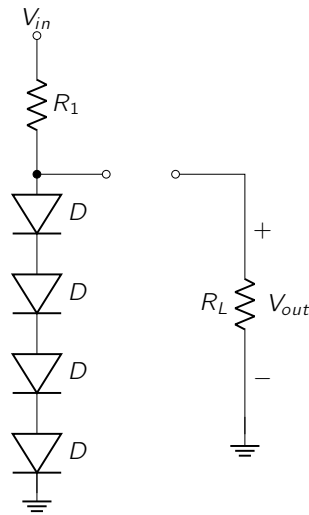
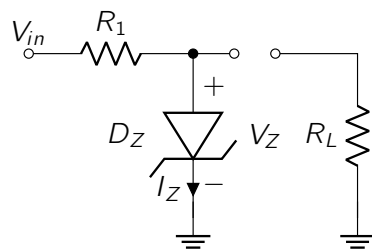


Fig. 3.16: A simple voltage regulator circuit using 4 diodes to obtain a stable voltage of 2.8V. The plots shown in the figure were obtained by simulating this circuit in LTSpice.

Zener diode voltage regulator. A Zener diode is a special type of diode that is designed to operate in the reverse breakdown region, with sufficient power dissipation capability. When a Zener diode is reverse biased, it allows current to flow in the reverse direction when the voltage across it exceeds a certain value, called the *Zener voltage* V_Z . This makes it useful for voltage regulation applications. The Zener diode can be used to build a simple voltage regulator circuit as shown in Figure 3.17. The Zener diode is connected in reverse bias in series with a resistor R_1 and the input voltage V_{in} is slowly increased. The current-voltage relationship of the Zener diode (V_Z vs. I_Z) is shown in the figure. For now assume that the load resistance R_L is not connected to the the circuit. In this case, the Zener breakdown voltage is 5.1V, when $V_Z < 5.1V$, hardly any current flows through the Zener diode and $V_Z = V_{in}$. But once V_{in} get closed to 5.1V, the Zener diode starts to conduct and V_Z clamps to 5.1V.

A simple Zener voltage regulator



Zener diode IV characteristics

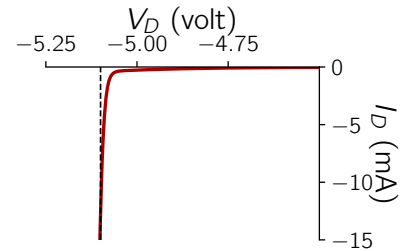


Fig. 3.17: A simple Zener voltage regulator circuit using a Zener diode.

The plot of V_{in} versus V_Z with and without the load resistance is shown in Figure 3.18.

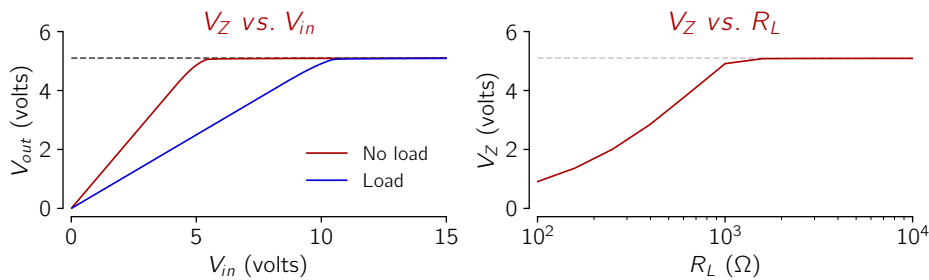


Fig. 3.18: The plot on the left shows the performance of the Zener diode voltage regulator with ($R_L = 1k\Omega$) and without ($R_L = \infty\Omega$) the load. The second plot shows the Zener diode's performance for varying load resistance.

3.6 Some BJT Circuits

These days the most common practical use of the BJT is as a switch. This is what we will focus on; we will also briefly talk about a simple voltage amplifier circuit using the BJT for the sake of demonstration.

3.6.1 BJT as a switch

The BJT can be used as a voltage controlled switch to control the flow of current through different types of loads such as resistors, inductors, LEDs, etc. To act as a switch the BJT is operated in the cut-off or the saturation modes, to turn it off or on, respectively, as shown in Figure 3.19. In the ideal case, it behave alike an open or closed switch between the collector and emitter terminals.

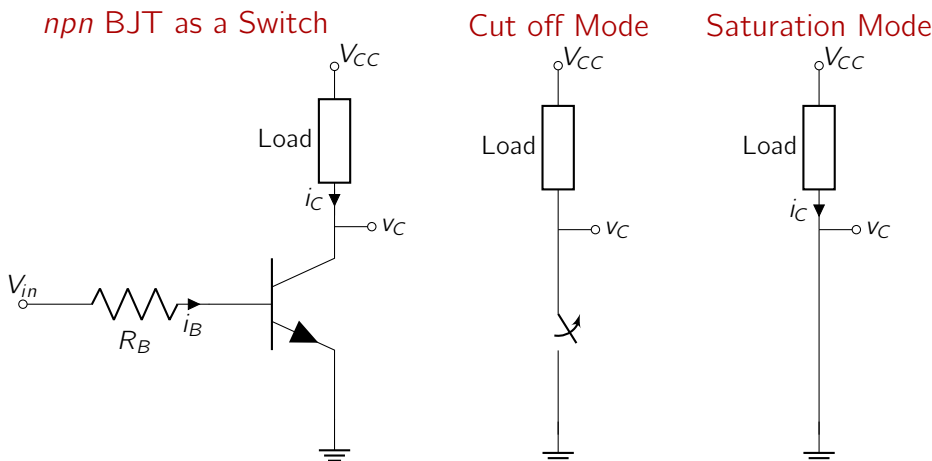


Fig. 3.19: Circuit of a typical *npn* BJT based switch.

Consider a resistive load in Figure 3.19 with load resistance R_L . In the cut-off mode, when the base-emitter junction is reverse biased, i.e. $V_{BE} < 0.7V$, the BJT is off. One way to achieve this is to set $V_{in} = 0V$ for a *npn* BJT. In the cut-off mode, $i_B = 0$, which

means that $i_C = 0$ and $i_E = 0$. The voltage at the collector of the BJT will be equal to the supply voltage V_{CC} , i.e. $v_C = V_{CC} - i_C R_L = V_{CC}$. In saturation mode, the base-emitter and collector-base junctions are both forward biased. In a real *npn* BJT circuit, the collector-emitter voltage is $v_{CE} \approx 0.2V$. Thus, we have, $i_C = \frac{V_{CC} - v_{CE}}{R_L} = \frac{V_{CC} - 0.2}{R_L}$. For this collector current, the base current must be at least $i_B = \frac{i_C}{\beta}$. Thus, we have $i_B = \frac{V_{in} - 0.7}{R_B}$. This can be achieved by choosing a sufficiently large V_{in} or sufficiently small R_B .

For non-resistive loads, the analysis is similar, but we must consider the load's voltage-current characteristics and appropriately design the circuit. Let's look at a couple of examples.

npn BJT to switch on/off an LED

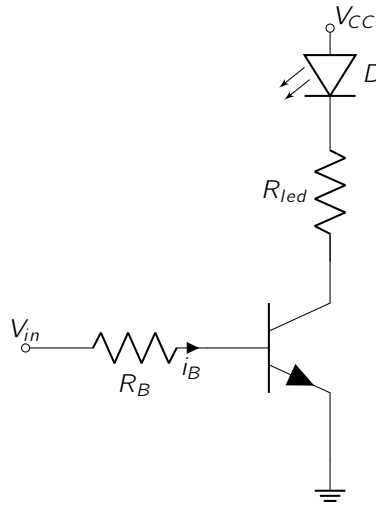


Fig. 3.20: BJT LED control circuit

Example 3.1 (Switch on an LED). We have an LED with a forward voltage drop of $2.0V$ and a forward current of $20mA$. We want to control the LED through a transistor, such that when $3.3V$ is applied to the base of the transistor, the LED switches ON, else it is OFF (Figure 3.20). Assume that the *npn* transistor has a current gain in the range $\beta = 100 - 200$. We need to choose R_{led} and R_B for this circuit.

We need i_C must be $20mA$ when the LED is turned on, and it has a drop of $2V$. When the transistor is in saturation, we have,

$$V_{CC} - 2V - i_C R_L = 0 \implies R_L = \frac{V_{CC} - 2V}{i_C} = \frac{3.3V - 2V}{20mA} = 65\Omega$$

To get an collector current of $20mA$, we need a base current of $i_B = \frac{i_C}{\beta} = \frac{20mA}{\beta}$. Since we do not have the exact value of β , we will assume the worst case, i.e. lowest possible value for β , which in this case is 100. Thus, we have $i_B = \frac{20mA}{100} = 0.2mA$.

The base current is given by $i_B = \frac{V_{in}-0.7}{R_B}$, where $V_{in} = 3.3V$. Thus, we have, $R_B = \frac{3.3V-0.7V}{i_B} = \frac{2.6V}{0.2mA} = 13k\Omega$.

npn BJT to switch on/off a solenoid

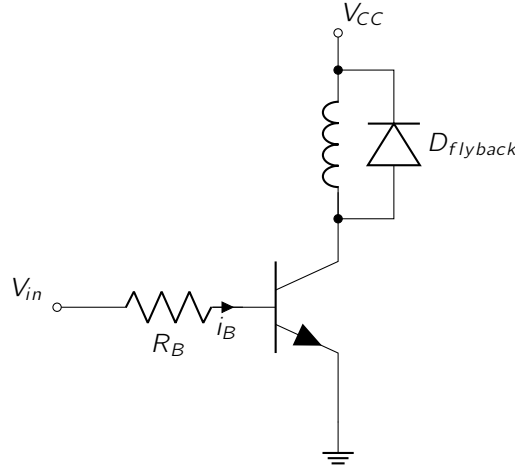


Fig. 3.21: BJT solenoid control circuit

Example 3.2 (Switch on/off a solenoid). Consider a tiny solenoid that switches on at 5V across it coil and a current of 0.8A. We wish to use a *npn* BJT to switch the the solenoid ON and OFF by controlling the BJT's base voltage. The circuit for switching the solenoid ON and OFF is shown in Figure 3.21. We will assume that the BJT has a current gain of $\beta = 500$. We need to choose R_B for this circuit assuming that V_{in} is 0V or 3.3V.

The solenoid has a voltage drop of 5V and a current of 0.8A. When the transistor is in saturation the voltage across the solenoid will be 4.8V, i.e. close to 5V (the solenoid should still work as per the specification). To ensure 0.8A flows through the solenoid, we need to ensure that the base current must be at least $i_B = \frac{i_C}{\beta} = \frac{0.8A}{500} = 1.6mA$. The base current is given by $i_B = \frac{V_{in}-0.7}{R_B}$, where $V_{in} = 3.3V$. Thus, we have, $R_B = \frac{3.3V-0.7V}{1.6mA} = 1.625k\Omega$.

You are probably wondering about the purpose of the $D_{flyback}$ diode. Let's assume that we apply a square pulse as the input V_{in} to the base.

$$V_{in} = \begin{cases} 5V & 0.25s \leq t < 1.25s \\ 0V & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

When the BJT is suddenly turned OFF at time $t = 1.25s$ with 0.8A flowing through it, the current is forced to stop suddenly, which causes a large voltage spike across the solenoid, which will result in a large voltage spike across the BJT, which can

damage it. The flyback diode $D_{flyback}$ is used to suppress this voltage spike by allowing the current to flow through it, and decay down slowly (relatively), thus avoiding a voltage spike across the inductor and the BJT. You will see this in action in the lab exercise, when you are deliberately asked to remove the flyback diode and see what happens to the BJT.

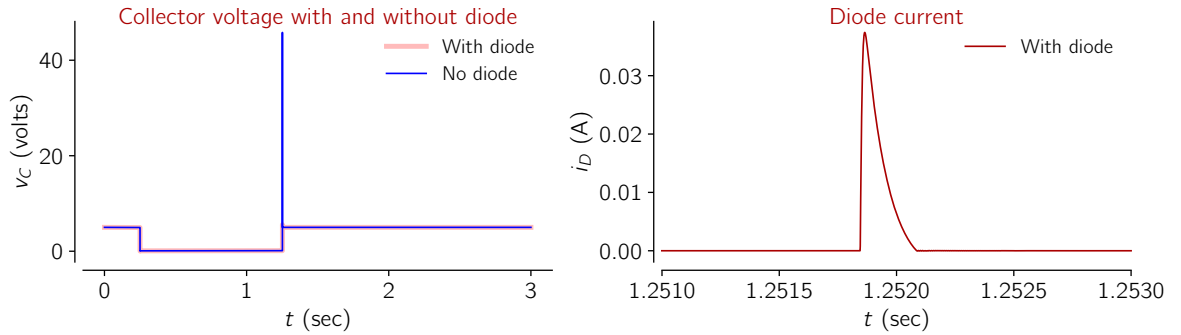


Fig. 3.22: Effect of the flyback diode on the solenoid switching circuit. The left plot shows the collector voltage for a input pulse voltage V_{in} of 5V amplitude over $0.25s \leq t \leq 1.25s$. Without the flyback diode we find a large voltage spike when the collector current is suddenly reduced to zero. With the flyback diode suppressed the voltage spike by allowing the current to flow through it when the BJT is turned off. The right plot shows the transient diode current when the BJT is switched off at $t = 1.25sec$.

3.7 Some MOSFET Circuits

We now look at using MOSFETs as switches. A MOSFET operated in the cut-off mode will act like an open switch, while a MOSFET operated in the triode region with sufficient gate overvoltage for it to act like a closed switch (low drain-source resistance). The MOSFET switching circuit design is simpler than the BJT where we needed to ensure that the base current is sufficient to turn on the BJT. In the case of MOSFETs, we only need to ensure that the gate-source voltage V_{GS} is greater than the threshold voltage V_t to turn it on. We demonstrate the MOSFET switch design in the following example.

Example 3.3 (MOSFET switch). Consider a n -channel MOSFET with a threshold voltage of $V_t = 2.5V$. We want to use it to switch on an LED with a forward voltage of 2V and current of 50mA. The drain-source resistance of the MOSFET is $10m\Omega$ at $v_{GS} = 3.3V$. This circuit is shown in Figure 3.23. The supply voltage $V_{DD} = 3.3V$.

Let's assume that $V_{GS} = 3.3V$, which results in the following equation for the

drain to source loop, assuming the LED is switched on.

$$V_{DD} - i_D r_{led} - 2 - i_D r_{DS} = 0$$

$$R_{led} = \frac{V_{DD} - 2}{i_D} - r_{DS} = \frac{3.3V - 2V}{50mA} - 10m\Omega \approx 26.0\Omega$$

The voltage divider circuit at the gate in Figure 3.23 is used to control the gate-source voltage V_{GS} . The gate-source voltage is given by,

$$V_{GS} = \frac{R_2}{R_1 + R_2} V_{in}$$

where $V_{in} = 3.3V$. To ensure that the MOSFET is turned on, we need $V_{GS} > V_t = 2.5V$. Thus, we have,

$$\frac{R_2}{R_1 + R_2} V_{in} > 2.5V \implies \frac{R_2}{R_1 + R_2} > \frac{2.5V}{3.3V} \approx 0.7576$$

$$\implies R_2 > 2.5R_1$$

Typically, R_1 is chosen to be small to prevent current rush when 3.3V is applied to the gate, due to the charging of the gate capacitance. And R_2 is chosen to be a large value to ensure $v_{GS} \approx 3.3V$.

MOSFET switch to control an LED

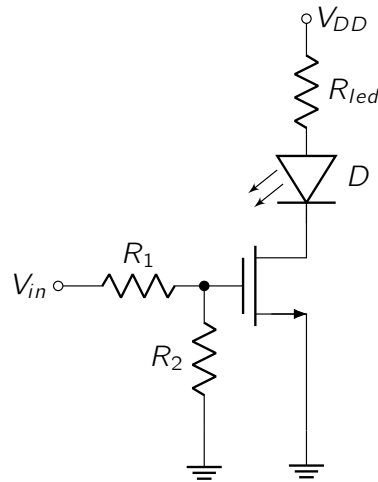


Fig. 3.23: MOSFET switch for controlling an LED. The MOSFET is turned on when $V_{in} = 3.3V$.

3.8 Operational Amplifiers

The electronic components and circuits we have seen so far have been for non-linear applications. The later switching circuits are used most in digital circuits. In this

section, we will look at a vital component in analog circuits, the *operational amplifier* or (op-amp). The op-amp is a versatile component that can be used for a wide range of applications such as amplifiers, filters, oscillators, etc. The op-amp is a differential amplifier with two inputs and one output. The two inputs are called the inverting input ($-$) and the non-inverting input ($+$). The output is the amplified difference between the two inputs. The circuit symbol for an op-amp is shown in Figure 3.24. The output

Operation Amplifier

Equivalent circuit of an opamp

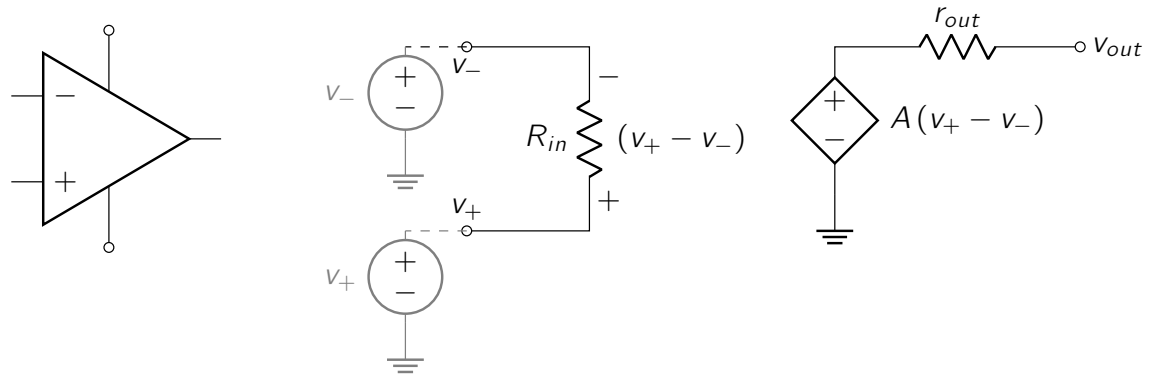


Fig. 3.24: Operational amplifier symbol and equivalent circuit.

v_{out} of the op-amp is the amplified version of the difference in the voltages at the two input terminals, $v_{out} = A \cdot (v_+ - v_-)$, where A is the open-loop gain of the op-amp.

An **ideal op-amp** has the following characteristics, and for most practical applications we can assume that the op-amp behaves like an ideal op-amp.

- The input impedance is infinite $R_{in} = \infty\Omega$, i.e., no current flows into the input terminals
- The output impedance is zero $r_{out} = 0\Omega$, i.e., the output can drive any load without affecting the output voltage.
- The open-loop gain is infinite $A = \infty$, i.e., the output voltage is always equal to the amplified difference between the two input voltages.
- The bandwidth of the op-amp is infinite, i.e., it can amplify signals of any frequency without distortion.
- The common mode rejection ratio is infinite, i.e. if the same input is applied to the op-amp, the output will be zero.
- The output voltage is limited to the supply voltage, i.e., the output cannot exceed the positive and negative supply voltages.

For any op-amp, any difference between v_+ and v_- is amplified and results in the voltage output of the op-amp saturating either to positive or negative supply voltage. Interesting

circuits with op-amps are obtained by operating with feedback, i.e. when the output voltage is fed back to the input terminals using a circuit element.

3.9 Some useful Op-Amp circuits

In this section we will present the following useful op-amp circuits: (a) inverting amplifier; (b) non-inverting amplifier; (c) Summing amplifier; (d) Difference amplifier; (e) Instrumentation amplifier; (f) Integrator circuit; (g) Differentiator circuit; and (h) Precision rectifier. We will simply show the circuit diagrams and present the input-output relationships. The derivation of these are left as an exercise for the reader.

3.9.1 Inverting amplifier

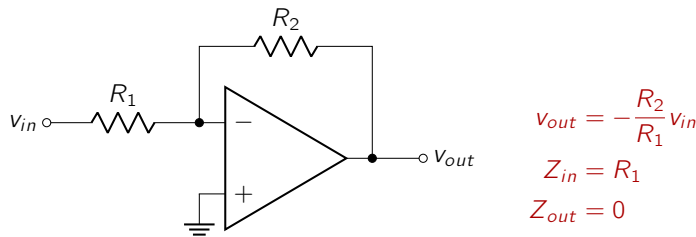


Fig. 3.25: Opamp inverting amplifier.

3.9.2 Non-inverting amplifier

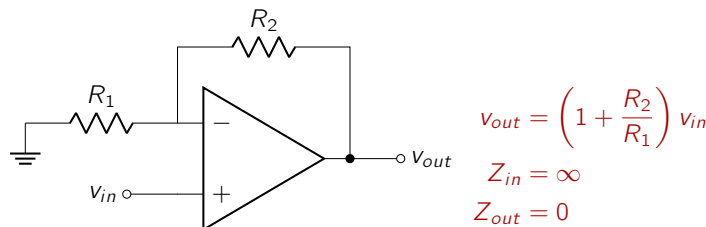


Fig. 3.26: Opamp non-inverting amplifier.

The op-amp buffer is a special case of the non-inverting amplifier, where $R_1 = 0\Omega$ and $R_2 = \infty\Omega$. The output voltage is equal to the input voltage, i.e., $v_{out} = v_{in}$.

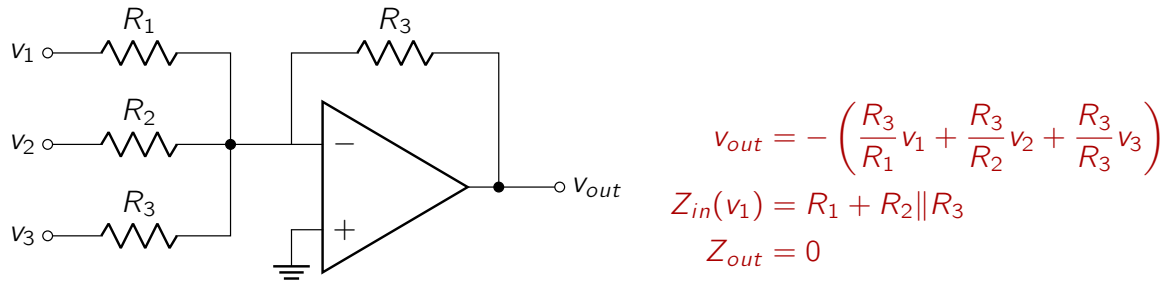


Fig. 3.27: Opamp summing amplifier.

3.9.3 Summing amplifier

The input impedance of this circuit will need to be computed with respect to each input. The input impedance of the v_1 is given by,

$$Z_{in}(v_1) = R_1 + \frac{R_2 R_3}{R_2 + R_3} \quad (3.19)$$

3.9.4 Difference amplifier

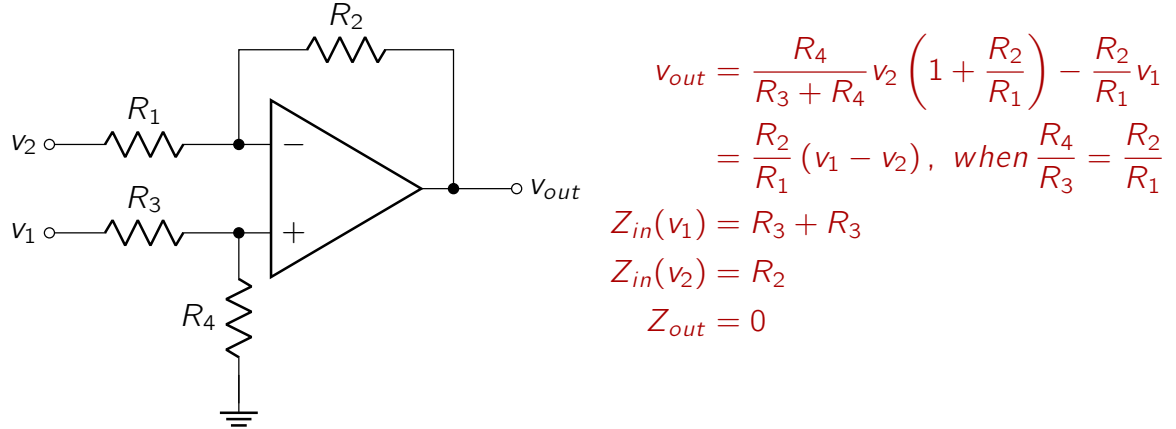


Fig. 3.28: Opamp difference amplifier.

3.9.5 Instrumentation amplifier

The three op-amp instrumentation amplifier is a special case of the difference amplifier, where the input impedance with respect to the two inputs is very high. The circuit diagram is shown in Figure 3.29. Note that if $R_2 = 0$ or $R_1 = \infty$, it is equivalent to a difference amplifier circuit where the inputs are connected to the difference amplifier through an op-amp buffer.

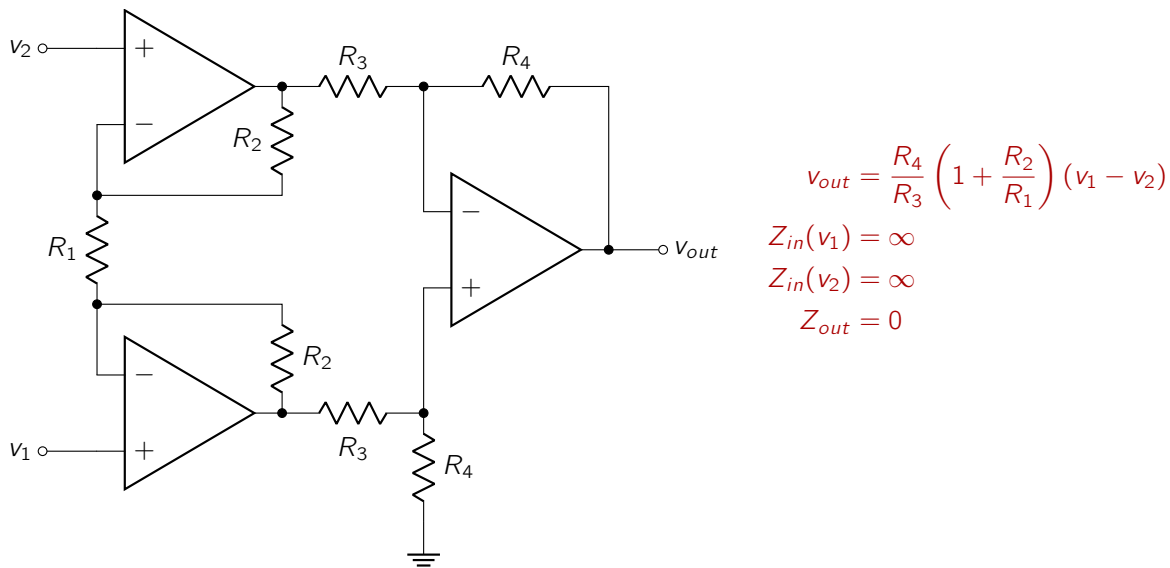


Fig. 3.29: Opamp instrumentation amplifier.

3.9.6 Integrator and differentiator circuits

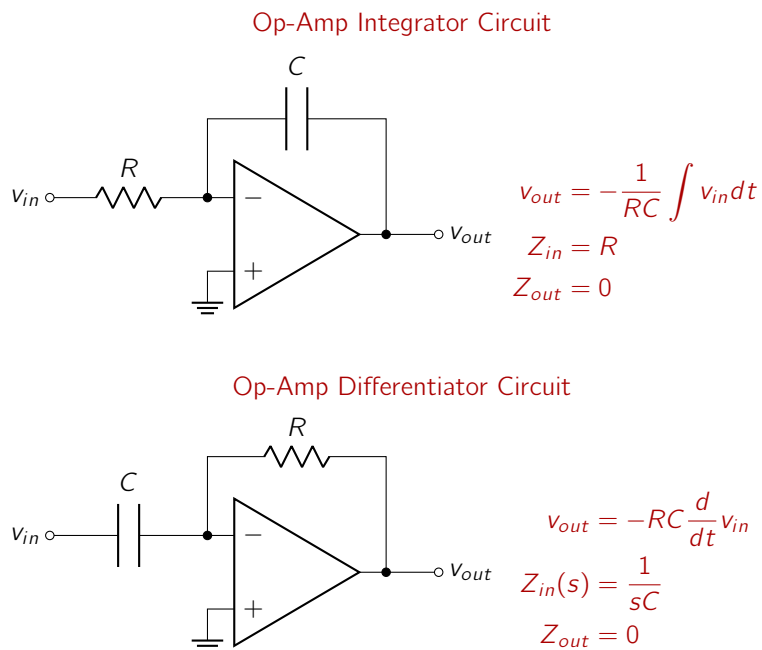


Fig. 3.30: Opamp integrator and differentiator.

While RC circuits can approximate the integrator and differentiator behavior, the op-amp integrator and differentiator circuits behave more like the ideal integrator or differentiator. The output, however, is clamped by the op-amp supply voltages.

3.9.7 Precision rectifier

The rectifier circuits we saw earlier have the diode drop in their output voltage. This is due to the diode forward voltage drop. Although this is not a problem when the peak-to-peak voltage of the input signal is large, it can be significant for small signals. For examples, if want to do analog processing of EMG signal to estimate it envelope, the 0.7V diode drop is a significant problem. Op-amps are quite useful in building precision rectifiers where the output voltage accurately follows the input voltage without the diode drop. A simple half-wave precision rectifier is shown in Figure 3.31.

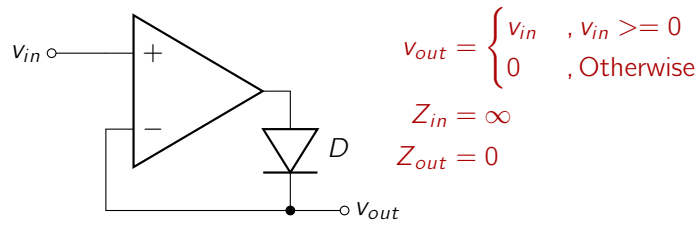


Fig. 3.31: Opamp half wave precision rectifier.

3.10 Exercise

1. Compute the voltage and current across the load resistor R_L in Figure 3.32 for the following: (a) $V_{in} = 1.0V$; (b) $V_{in} = -1.5V$. Assume the following parameters for the diodes: $I_s = 10^{-12}A$, $n = 1$, $V_T = 25.85mV$, and $R_I = 1k\Omega$.

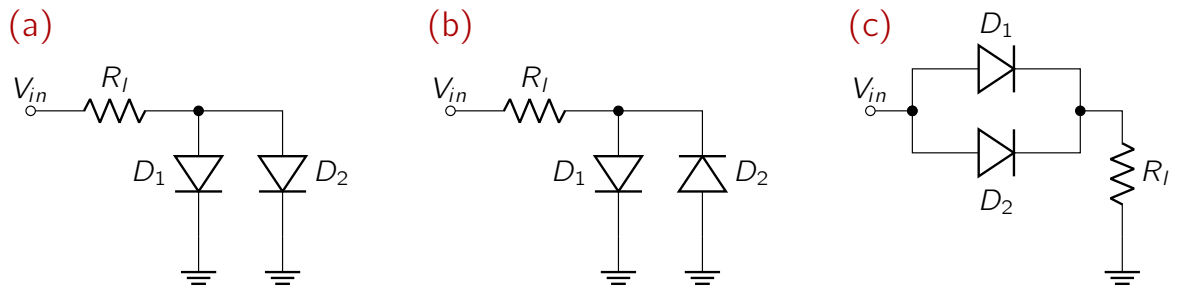


Fig. 3.32: [Exercise 01] Different diode circuits.

2. If the input signal $v_{in} = 2\sin(3\pi t)$, plot the current flowing through the load resistance R_L . You must use Matlab/Python/Julia or any scientific computing software for generating these plots. You are required to generate these plots for the four diode models shown in Figure 3.15. Assume the following parameters for the models:

- (a) Model 2: Diode forward voltage = $0.7V$.
- (b) Model 3: Diode forward voltage = $0.7V$, Diode on resistance $r_d = 1\Omega$.
- (c) Model 4: $I_s = 10^{-12}A$, $n = 1$, $V_T = 25.85mV$, and $R_I = 1k\Omega$.

Hand drawn plots will not be accepted.

3. Similar to the plot of the in Figure 3.15 for the half wave rectifier, using a computer program generate the output plot of the full wave bridge rectifier circuit in Figure 3.14.

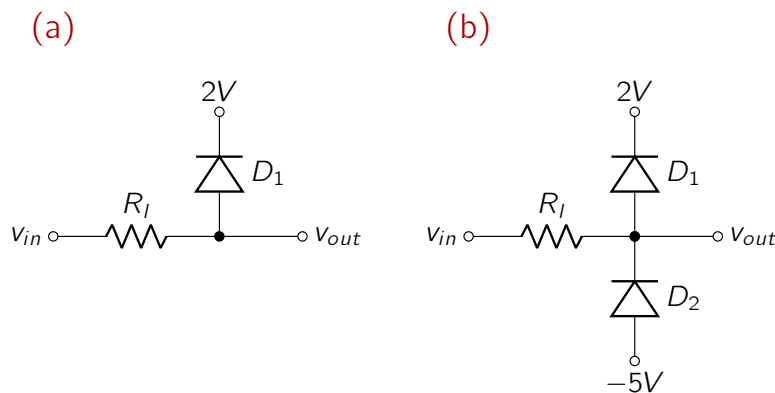


Fig. 3.33: [Exercise 02]More diode circuits.

4. For the following diode circuits, plot the outputs v_{out} for the following input signal,

$$v_{in} = \begin{cases} -10V & , t \leq -10s \\ t & , -10s < t \leq 5s \\ 5 & , t > 5s \end{cases}$$

Generate the plots for the four diode models used in the previous questions. What do think is the purpose of such circuits?

5. Consider the following BJT circuit (Figurer 3.34). If the input is a square wave of amplitude $3V$ with a time period of $2s$, plot the output of the circuit v_C . What does this circuit do? Can you design a similar circuit with a n-channel MOSFET?
6. We have seen an LED switching circuit using a BJT/MOSFET, were the LED swtiches on when the input is high $v_{in} = 3.3V$ and it turns off when the input is low $v_{in} = 0V$. Can you design a circuit using a BJT and a MOSFET to control an LED with forward voltage of $1.8V$ and current of $30mA$, where we want the LED to turn on when $v_{in} = 0V$ and turn off when $v_{in} = 3.3V$. Draw the circuit diagram, explain how it works,and your design.
7. Draw the circuit diagram for a full-wave precision rectifier and explain its operation.

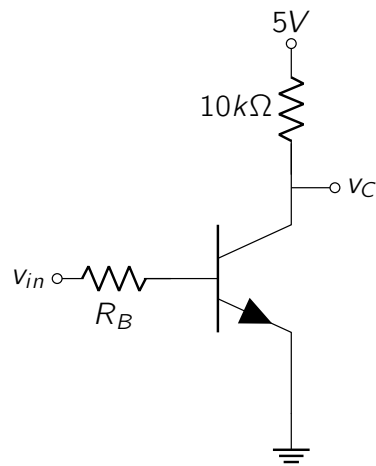


Fig. 3.34: [Exercise 05] BJT switch circuit.

8. Derive the input-output relationship for all the op-amp circuits (except for the precision amplifier) shown in the section on operational amplifiers in the chapter? Assume ideal op-amp characteristics.