

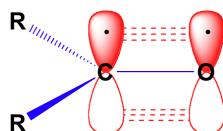
19.9: Introduction

A carbonyl group is a chemically organic functional group composed of a carbon atom double-bonded to an oxygen atom --> [C=O] The simplest carbonyl groups are [aldehydes and ketones](#) usually attached to another carbon compound. These structures can be found in many aromatic compounds contributing to smell and taste.

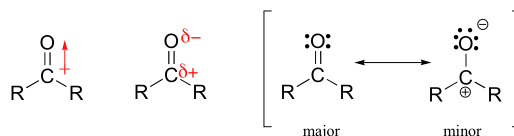
The Carbonyl Group

C=O is prone to additions and nucleophilic attack because of carbon's positive charge and oxygen's negative charge. The resonance of the carbon partial positive charge allows the negative charge on the nucleophile to attack the Carbonyl group and become a part of the structure and a positive charge (usually a proton hydrogen) attacks the oxygen. Just a reminder, the nucleophile is a good acid therefore "likes protons" so it will attack the side with a positive charge.

Before we consider in detail the reactivity of aldehydes and ketones, we need to look back and remind ourselves of what the bonding picture looks like in a carbonyl. Carbonyl carbons are sp^2 hybridized, with the three sp^2 orbitals forming overlaps with orbitals on the oxygen and on the two carbon or hydrogen atoms. These three bonds adopt trigonal planar geometry. The remaining unhybridized 2p orbital on the central carbonyl carbon is perpendicular to this plane, and forms a 'side-by-side' p bond with a 2p orbital on the oxygen.



The carbon-oxygen double bond is polar: oxygen is more electronegative than carbon, so electron density is higher on the oxygen side of the bond and lower on the carbon side. Recall that bond polarity can be depicted with a dipole arrow, or by showing the oxygen as holding a partial negative charge and the carbonyl carbon a partial positive charge.



A third way to illustrate the carbon-oxygen dipole is to consider the two main resonance contributors of a carbonyl group: the major form, which is what you typically see drawn in Lewis structures, and a minor but very important contributor in which both electrons in the p bond are localized on the oxygen, giving it a full negative charge. The latter depiction shows the carbon with an empty 2p orbital and a full positive charge.

Organic Chemistry With a Biological Emphasis by [Tim Soderberg](#) (University of Minnesota, Morris)

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