

4.3: Gibbs Energy Determines the Direction of Spontaneity at Constant Pressure and Temperature

The Helmholtz energy A is developed for isochoric changes and as we have often said before it is much easier to deal with isobaric ones where $P = \text{constant}$. We can therefore repeat the above treatment for the enthalpy and introduce another state function the Gibbs energy

$$\begin{aligned} G &\equiv H - TS \\ &= U + PV - TS \\ &= A + PV \end{aligned}$$

If we take both T and P constant we get

$$\begin{aligned} dU - TdS + PdV &\leq 0 \\ dG &\leq 0 \end{aligned}$$

G either decreases (spontaneously) or is constant (at equilibrium). Calculating the state function between two end points we get:

$$\Delta G = \Delta H - T\Delta S \leq 0 (T, P \text{ constant})$$

This quantity is key to the question of spontaneity under the conditions we usually work under. If for a process ΔG is positive it does not occur spontaneous and can only be made to occur if it is 'pumped', i.e. coupled with a process that has a negative ΔG . The latter is spontaneous.

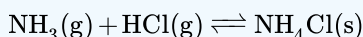
If $\Delta G = 0$ then the system is as **equilibrium**.

4.3.1: Direction of the spontaneous change

Because the ΔS term contains the temperature T as coefficient the spontaneous direction of a process, e.g. a chemical reaction can **change** with temperature depending on the values of the enthalpy and the entropy change ΔH and ΔS . This is true for the melting process, e.g. for water below 0°C we get water \Rightarrow ice, above this temperature ice melts to water, but it also goes for chemical reactions.

✓ Example

Consider



$\Delta_r H$ at 298K / 1 bar is -176.2 kJ. The change in entropy is -0.285 kJ/K so that at 298K ΔG is -91.21 kJ. Clearly this is a reaction that will proceed to the depletion of whatever is the limiting reagent on the left.

However at 618 K this is a different story. Above this temperature ΔG is positive! (assuming enthalpy and entropy have remained the same, which is almost but not completely true) The reaction will not proceed. Instead the *reverse* reaction would proceed spontaneously. The salt on the right would decompose in the two gases -base and acid- on the left.

4.3.2: Meaning of the ΔG term

As we have seen, ΔA can be related to the maximal amount of work that a system can perform at constant V and T . We can hold an analogous argument for ΔG except that V is not constant so that we have to consider volume work (zero at constant volume).

$$dG = d(U + PV - TS) = dU - TdS - SdT - PdV + VdP$$

As $dU = TdS + \delta w_{rev}$

$$dG = \delta w_{rev} - SdT + VdP + PdV$$

As the later term is $-\delta w_{volume}$

$$dG = \delta w_{rev} - SdT + VdP - \delta w_{volume}$$

At constant T and P the two middle terms drop out

$$dG = \delta w_{rev} - \delta w_{volume} = \delta w_{otherusefulwork}$$

Note

ΔG stands for the (maximal) reversible, isobaric isothermal non- PV work that a certain spontaneous change can perform. The volume work may not be zero, but is corrected for.

4.3.3: Natural variables of G

Because $G \equiv H - TS$, we can write

$$\begin{aligned} dG &= dH - TdS - SdT \\ &= TdS + VdP - TdS - SdT = VdP - SdT \end{aligned}$$

The natural variables of G are pressure P and temperature T . This is what makes this function the most useful of the four U , H , A , and G : these are the natural variables of most of your laboratory experiments!

4.3.4: Summary

We now have developed the basic set of concepts and functions that together form the framework of thermodynamics. Let's summarize four very basic state functions:

state function	natural variables
$dU = -PdV + TdS$	$U(V, S)$
$dH = +VdP + TdS$	$H(P, S)$
$dA = -PdV - SdT$	$A(V, T)$
$dG = +VdP - SdT$	$G(P, T)$

Note:

1. The replacement of δq by TdS was based on *reversible* heat. This means that in the irreversible case the expressions for dU and dH become inequalities
2. We only include *volume* work in the above expressions. If other work (elastic, electrical e.g.) is involved extra terms need to be added: $dU = TdS - PdV + xdx$ etc.

We are now ready to begin applying thermodynamics to a number of very diverse situations, but we will first develop some useful partial differential machinery.

4.3: Gibbs Energy Determines the Direction of Spontaneity at Constant Pressure and Temperature is shared under a [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- [22.2: Gibbs Energy Determines the Direction of Spontaneity at Constant Pressure and Temperature](#) is licensed [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#).