

6.S: Quantities in Chemical Reactions (Summary)

To ensure that you understand the material in this chapter, you should review the meanings of the following bold terms in the following summary and ask yourself how they relate to the topics in the chapter.

Chemical reactions relate quantities of reactants and products. Chemists use the **mole** unit to represent 6.022×10^{23} things, whether the things are atoms of elements or molecules of compounds. This number, called **Avogadro's number**, is important because this number of atoms or molecules has the same mass in grams as one atom or molecule has in atomic mass units. **Molar masses** of substances can be determined by summing the appropriate masses from the periodic table; the final molar mass will have units of grams.

Because one mole of a substance will have a certain mass, we can use that relationship to construct conversion factors that will convert a mole amount into a mass amount, or vice versa. Such **mole-mass conversions** typically take one algebraic step.

Chemical reactions list reactants and products in molar amounts, not just molecular amounts. We can use the coefficients of a balanced chemical equation to relate moles of one substance in the reaction to moles of other substances (stoichiometry). Chemical reactions obey the Law of Conservation of Mass. To balance a chemical reaction, the coefficients in front of each compound can be adjusted until the total number of atoms of each elements is equal on both sides of the reaction arrow.

Collision Theory can be used to describe the energetic aspects of chemical reactions. The reactants and products of a chemical reaction store potential energy in the form of chemical bonds and intermolecular forces. The energy difference in the bond energies of the reactants and products is called "Enthalpy". When the products are lower in potential energy than the reactants, then this excess energy is released as heat and the reaction is described as exothermic. When the products are higher in potential energy than the reactants, then energy must be added to the reaction as heat for it to occur and the reaction is described as endothermic.

The rate of a chemical reaction is influenced by its activation energy. The larger the activation energy, the slower the reaction rate. Catalysts can be added to reactions to lower the activation energy and increase the reaction rate.

Not all reactions go to completion. For some reactions, both the forward and reverse reaction can occur simultaneously. When the forward and reverse reaction rates are equal, the reaction is described as being "at equilibrium". Another way to recognize when a system is at equilibrium is when the concentration of reactants and products remain constant. Le Chatlier's principle states that the direction of an equilibrium reaction will shift to reduce the stress.

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