BASICS OF THERMAL ANALYSIS

Prabha Shetty
Sophia College for Women

Basics of Thermal Analysis

Developed under OE4BW-2025, UNESCO

This book is designed for self paced learning for visually challenged readers and has interactive activities designed to assess readers understanding of the topic.

Prabha G. Shetty

Sophia College for Women (Empowered Autonomous)

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About the Author

Dr. Prabha G. Shetty is a renowned academician and Head of the department of Chemistry at Sophia College for Women (Empowered Autonomous), Mumbai.

With over 27 years of undergraduate and 14 years of postgraduate teaching experience, she has made exceptional contributions to education, research and curriculum development. She is a certified Master trainer for MS DEED (Maharashtra State Development of Educators and Enhancement in Delivery). Dr. Prabha is a recipient of Indian Academy of Science Summer Research Fellowship Programme (SRFP-2023) and has developed an open textbook on “Thermal Methods of Analysis” under UNESCO's Open Education for a Better World initiative (OE4BW-2024). Dr. Shetty employs modern teaching methods such as flipped classrooms, POGIL, RBPT, industrial visits, and hands-on workshops, while leveraging digital tools like Jam board, Canva, Testmoz, simulations and H5P to create interactive learning environments. She has guided students in publishing Open Educational Resources (OER), ensuring widespread access to quality educational content.

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1: Thermal Analysis

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- List the different thermal methods of analysis.
- Define the major methods of thermal analysis.
- Identify endothermic and exothermic transitions.

Thermal analysis refers to the group of methods in which some physical property of the sample is continuously measured as a function of temperature, whilst the sample is subjected to a controlled temperature change.The effect of heat can be wide ranging and cause changes in many properties of a sample. In thermal analysis, changes in weight form the basis of Thermogravimetry (TG) while measurement of energy changes form the basis of Differential Thermal Analysis (DTA) and of Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC). These techniques are the most important in thermal analysis. Thus, for example, TG tells us when a sample is losing weight (and how much) while DTA or DSC will tell us if that reaction is exothermic or endothermic (and often capable of measuring heat change). These important techniques can be applied to the study of almost any substance. Apart from these, there are some other thermal methods which are listed below:-

Thermomechanical Analysis (TMA): Dimensional changes as a function of temperature.

Thermoacoustimetry: Characteristics of imposed sound waves produced as the material being heated.

Thermoptometry: Study of an optical characteristic of a sample as it undergoes a thermal programme.

Electrothermal analysis: Study of electrical conductivity as a function of temperature.

Thermomagnetometry: Study of variation in a magnetic property of a material with temperature.

Activity 1.1: It is said that **'immediate recall, aids retention'**, so

We have briefly discussed about eight kinds of thermal effects which can occur when a sample is subjected to a controlled temperature programme. Write down as many of these eight effects as you can in the left hand column opposite the name of the corresponding thermal method given in the right hand column.

Following table contains names of thermal methods listed in the second column. Fill in the thermal effect/change that is measured in the methods mentioned in the first column.

Table 1.1: Different thermal methods

Relating thermal methods to the thermal effects observed

Thermal effect/change	Name of the thermal method
	TG
	TMA
	DTA
	Thermoacoustimery
	Thermopotometry
	Electrothermal Analysis
	Thermomagnetometry

(Dodd &Tonge, 2008)

Activity 1.2: Match the thermal techniques listed in the table given below with the quantity measured

Table 1.2: Match the following

Match thermal techniques with the parameter measured

Thermal Technique	Quantity Measured
1)DSC	a) Weight change
2)DTA	b) Heat and temperature of transition and reactions.
3)EGA	c)Temperature of transitions and reactions.
4)TG	d) Amount of gaseous products of thermally induced reactions.

Answers: 1)____ 2)____ 3)_____ 4) _____

(Dodd &Tonge, 2008)

Let us now learn in detail about some of the frequently used thermal methods. These are listed below:

Thermogravimetry (TG/TGA): TG or TGA is a technique in which the weight of a sample is measured as a function of temperature, whilst it is subjected to a controlled heating programme.

Derivative Thermogravimetry (DTG): DTG is a method of expressing the results of TG by giving the first derivative curve as a function of temperature or time.

Differential Thermal Analysis (DTA): DTA is a technique in which the difference in temperature (ΔT) between the sample and an inert reference material, is measured as a function of temperature under controlled heating.

Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC): DSC is very similar to DTA and gives much the same sort of information but DSC is more often used for quantitative measurement of energy changes.

Evolved Gas Detection (EGD): EGD is a technique in which the evolution of gas from a sample is detected, as a function of temperature, whilst the sample is subjected to controlled thermal programme.

Evolved Gas Analysis (EGA): EGA is a technique whereby the volatile products, released by a sample on decomposition, may be analysed as the sample is heated according to controlled thermal programme. (Dodd & Tonge, 2008)

Pre-requisite: Before we deep dive into some thermal methods it is essential to check our understanding about the concept of exothermic/endothermic and different transitions accompanied by weight loss or weight gain.

Let us consider an example of different states of water and their inter-conversion,

$Ice_{(s)} \leftrightarrow Water_{(l)} \leftrightarrow Steam_{(g)}$

In each of the above transitions can you tell which one is an endo/exothermic transition? And is there any change in weight during these transitions?

For further explanation please see Introductory Chemistry in *Libretexts:* *3.9: Energy and Chemical and Physical Change*

Now that you have some idea about endothermic and exothermic transitions, try activity 1.3

Activity 1.3: Following table has a list of physical and chemical transitions. Can you assign which of these processes will be endothermic/exothermic?

Table 1.3: Physical and chemical transitions

Identify the nature of transition

Phenomenon	Exothermic	Endothermic
Adsorption		
Desorption		
Fusion (melting)		
Vaporization		
Decomposition		
Dehydration		

(Dodd & Tonge, 2008)

Activity 1.4: Following table has a list of physical and chemical transitions. Can you assign which of these processes will be endothermic/exothermic and accompanied by weight loss or weight gain.

Table 1.4: Understanding nature of physical and chemical transitions

Identify transitions accompanied by weight change

Phenomenon	Weight gain	Weight loss	Endothermic	Exothermic
Melting				
Adsorption of gas				
Desorption of gas				
Vaporisation				
Dehydration				
Decomposition				
Sublimation				

(Dodd & Tonge, 2008)

Now that we have an idea about the exothermic, endothermic, weight gain and weight loss process it is important to note that these transitions can be either physical or chemical transitions.

Brain Teaser: How might you study a sample which, on heating, first melts and then at a later stage decomposes with weight loss?

2: Thermogravimetry

Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Describe the effect of heat on materials.
- Identify physical and chemical transitions.
- Describe the essential features of a thermobalance.
- Draw and interpret thermogravimetric and derivative thermogravimetric curve for a known system.
- Illustrate the range of applications of thermogravimetry.
- Calculate % weight loss at every stage of decomposition and predict stoichiometry.

Thermogravimetry is a technique used to detect any physical or chemical transitions which are accompanied by a weight loss or weight gain as the sample is heated in a controlled manner.

2.1 Effect of heat on matter

We need to first understand the effects of heat on a matter. And for further explanation please see Introductory Chemistry in *Libretexts: 1.9: Heat and changes in physical states of matter*

We have now understood the effects of heat on a matter and also able to identify the processes involving change in weight on heating through Activity 1D. It is important to keep in mind that the change in weight could be due to physical or chemical transitions. To be able to distinguish between physical and chemical transition, let us go through the next sub-topic.

2.2 Changes in matter: Physical and Chemical Changes

For further explanation please go through the Introductory Chemistry in *Libretexts: 3.6: Changes in Matter - Physical and Chemical Changes*

Activity 2.1: The following table contains a list of transitions. Can you categorize them as physical transitions /chemical transitions?

The following table contains a list of transitions

Phenomenon	Physical	Chemical
Adsorption		
Dehydration		
Desorption		
Fusion (melting)		
Chemisorption		
Vaporization		
Decomposition		
Redox reactions		
Reduction in gaseous atmosphere		

(Dodd & Tonge, 2008)

2.3 Principle and Instrumentation of TGA

The instrument used to carry out thermogravimetric analysis is known as “thermobalance”.

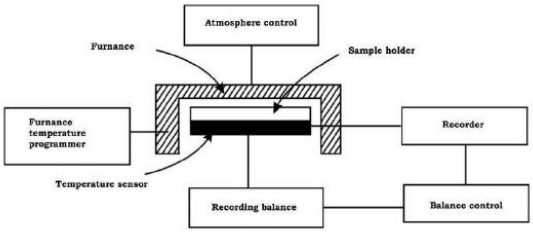


Figure 2.3 Schematic diagram of a thermobalance.

Working: Please go through the *Chemlibre* link (31.1) to understand the principle and working of a thermobalance.

31.1: Thermogravimetry

2.4 Interpretation of thermogravimetric curve

The graphical information obtained from thermogravimetric analysis is known as thermogram/pyrolysis curve. TG curve is a plot of weight (W) decreasing downwards on the y-axis (ordinate), and temperature (T) increasing to the right on the x-axis (abscissa). A typical thermogram for a single step decomposition is shown in Fig. 2.4.

The plateau 'AB' indicates no change in weight or the temperature range over which the sample is thermally stable. At point 'B' the sample starts decomposing which is indicated by an inflexion.

Please go through the following link for interpretation of thermogram and then attempt the Activity 2.2

Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA)

Activity 2.2: A typical thermogram is given below

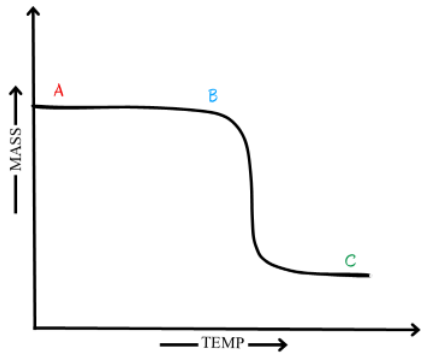


Figure 2.4 Typical TG curve

Fill in the blanks:

a. The part of the TG curve where the mass is essentially constant_____

b. The temperature at which cumulative mass change reaches a magnitude that the thermobalance can detect _____

c. The temperature at which the cumulative mass change reaches a maximum_____

Choose from the following options.

1. the initial temperature (B)

2. the record of weight from temperature B to C

3. the final temperature C

4. the plateau (AB)

(Dodd & Tonge, 2008)

Activity 2.3: For the processes given in the following table, predict if there will be loss in mass or gain in mass

Predict weight change in the following processes

Phenomenon	Mass loss/Mass gain
Melting	
Adsorption of gas	
Desorption of gas	
Vaporisation	
Dehydration	
Decomposition	
Sublimation	

2.5 Need for Derivative Thermogravimetry (DTG)

In the above example (Fig. 2.4), we have considered the thermogravimetric curve which represents a single stage decomposition. Figures '2.5a' and '2.5b' show two-stage and three-stage decompositions respectively. In both these figures (2.5a and 2.5b) there is an overlay of TGA and DTG thermograms, clearly depicting advantages of DTG over TGA thermogram in locating the exact decomposition temperature.

Fig 2.5a is a plot showing weight (%) vs. temperature (°C) for a sample. The black curve represents TGA data, indicating a significant weight loss starting around 300°C and ending around 500°C, with key temperature points labeled at approximately 84°C and 434°C. The blue curve represents the DTG data, showing the rate of weight change (dw/dt) with a major peak at the point of maximum decomposition rate. The x-axis ranges from 0°C to 1000°C, while the y-axis on the left indicates weight percentage, and the right y-axis shows the derivative (dw/dt in %/min).

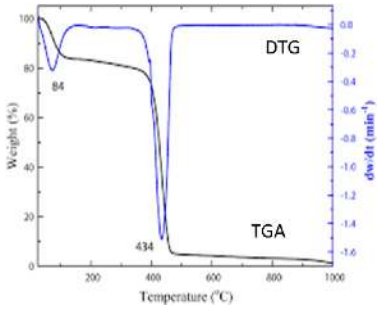


Figure 2.5a. TG and DTG curves for PVP at a heating rate of 10°C/min.

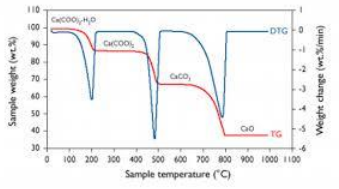
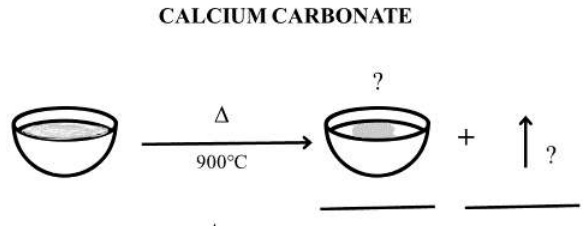


Figure 2.5b. TGA test result of calcium oxalate monohydrate

Figure '2.5b' is for the decomposition of calcium oxalate monohydrate, the weight loss commences just above 100°C and continues up to 200°C. Between about 400 °C and 500°C further decomposition occurs, to give a product which is stable up to 700°C before decomposing to give another stable compound at 800°C. Every process of decomposition continues over a range of temperature hence the DTG curve is useful in providing information regarding precise decomposition temperature at every stage.

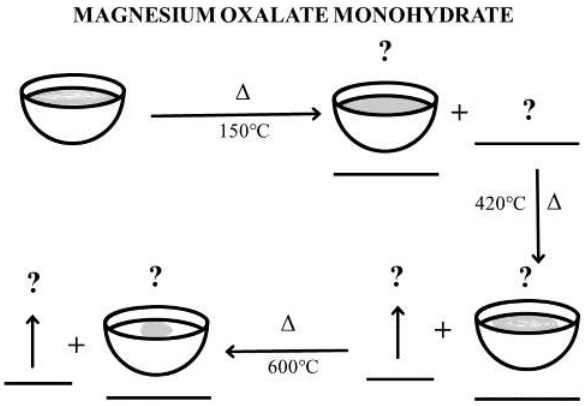
(James & Tonge, 2008)

- Calcium carbonate on heating undergoes one step decomposition. Identify the volatile and stable compound/s remaining in the crucible post decomposition and indicate these on a thermogram.



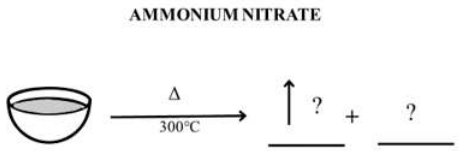
Activity 2.5: Magnesium oxalate monohydrate ($MgC_2O_4.H_2O$) undergoes three step decomposition on heating.

1. Identify the volatile product and the residue remaining in the crucible at each stage of decomposition.
2. Write the decomposition reaction taking place at each stage.
3. Predict nature of thermogram for the decomposition of magnesium oxalate monohydrate.



Activity 2.6: Ammonium nitrate (NH_4NO_3) undergoes one step decomposition on heating to give two volatile products.

1. Identify the volatile product/s and the residue remaining (if any) in the crucible after decomposition.
2. Write the decomposition reaction.
3. Predict nature of the thermogram for the decomposition of ammonium nitrate.



2.6 Applications of Thermogravimetric analysis

Thermogravimetric analysis of plaster for safety screening:

Graph depicting the thermal gravimetric (TG) analysis of plaster, showing weight loss versus temperature with chemical reactions.

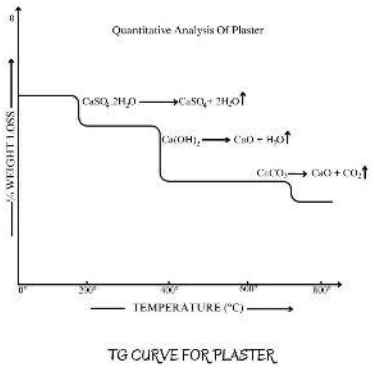


Figure 2.6b. TG curve for plaster

The curve has three distinct steps, each corresponding to a chemical decomposition reaction:

1. $CaSO_4 \cdot 2H_2O \rightarrow CaSO_4 + 2H_2O\uparrow$ around ~100–200°C
2. $Ca(OH)_2 \rightarrow CaO + H_2O\uparrow$ around ~400–500°C
3. $CaCO_3 \rightarrow CaO + CO_2\uparrow$ around ~600–800°C

Each step corresponds to a weight loss due to the release of water or carbon dioxide.

Plaster contains following ingredients,

Gypsum--- $CaSO_4.2H_2O$

Lime--- $Ca(OH)_2$

Chalk--- $CaCO_3$

From the weight loss at each step on the curve, the quantity of each ingredient can be determined in the original sample. In the manufacture of Portland cement, 5% gypsum is added to reduce the rate of setting. The gypsum is added to the fused clinker during processing, and the two components are subsequently milled to obtain uniform mixing and the required particle size. During milling, the thermal energy generated may cause partial dehydration of gypsum to hemihydrate $CaSO_4 .1/2\ H_2O$ which adversely affects (increases) the rate of setting of the cement. Hence it is important to monitor the presence of each hydrate in the final cement. In order to provide quantitation at the required levels, this problem can be solved by TGA and DTA or DSC.

The dehydration of gypsum occurs as a two-stage endothermic process.

$CaSO_4.2H_2O \rightarrow CaSO_4.1/2\ H_2O \rightarrow CaSO_4$

So, if there is conversion of gypsum to hemihydrate, the TG curve in Fig. 2.6b will show two step decomposition for gypsum instead of one.

Activity 2.7: (James &Tonge, 2008)

A manufacturer wishes to incorporate a plastic coating on the inside of a utensil. One factor to be evaluated is the stability of the following polymer.

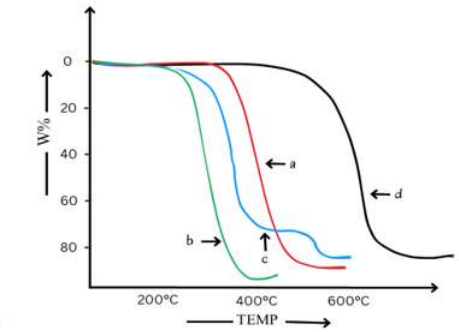
a. Polyethylene

b. Polypropylene

c. PVC

d. Polytetrafluoroethylene

Figure below gives TG curves for the above polymers.



Predict the following:

1. Which is the most stable polymer?
2. Which is the least stable polymer?
3. Which polymer/s would be stable below 200°C ?

So far, we learnt about qualitative applications of TGA. Some quantitative applications of thermogravimetric measurements are given below:

Activity 2.8: Solve the following numerical problems.

1) Calculate the percent weight changes W% for each of the following reactions which occur on heating the parent material.

a) $Ca(OH)_{2^{(S)}} \rightarrow CaO_{(s)} + H_2O_{(g)}$

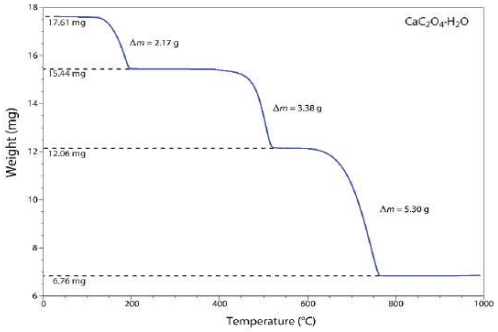
b) $6PbO_{(s)} + O_{2(g)} \rightarrow 2Pb_3O_{4(s)}$

[Ca=40.1, H=1.0, O=16.0, Pb=207.2]

2) A mixture of calcium oxide and calcium carbonate is analysed by thermogravimetry. The resultant curve indicates one decomposition only between 600-900° C during which the weight of sample decreases from 250.6 mg to 190.8 mg. What is the percentage of calcium carbonate in mixture by weight?

[Atomic mass: H=1.0, Pb=207.2, C=12.0, O=16.0, Ca= 40.1]

3) The thermogram given below shows the mass of a sample of calcium oxalate monohydrate, $CaC_2O_4.H_2O$, as a function of temperature. The original sample of 17.61 mg was heated from room temperature to 1000°C at a rate of 20°C per minute. Calculate the % weight loss at each step.



Activity 2.9: Solve the puzzle

3: Differential Thermal Analysis

Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain the principle and working of a differential thermal analyser.
- Draw and interpret DTA thermogram.
- Compare and contrast TG and DTA results.
- Explain the applications of DTA and simultaneous TG-DTA analysis.

When a molecule undergoes a physical or chemical transition, heat is either absorbed or liberated. Two thermal methods, DTA and DSC are particularly useful for investigating these physical and chemical changes.

3.1 Principle and Instrumentation:

In DTA, difference in temperature between the sample and an inert reference (ΔT) is measured as the sample and the reference are heated or cooled in a controlled manner.

$$\Delta T = T_S - T_R \tag{3.1}$$

with T_S as the temperature of sample and T_R is temperature of reference which is thermally stable.

Please go through the *Chemlibre* link to understand the principle and working of DTA.

31.2: Differential Thermal Analysis and Differential Scanning Calorimetry

Instrumentation and working: A typical DTA set up is shown in the figure given below.

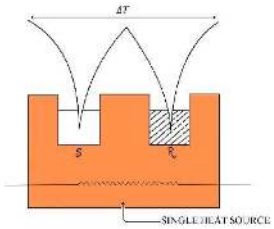


Figure 3.1 DTA set up

In differential thermal analysis (DTA), the difference in temperature between the sample and a thermally inert reference material is measured as a function of temperature (usually the sample temperature). Any transition that the sample undergoes results in the liberation or absorption of energy by the sample with a corresponding deviation of its temperature from that of the reference. A plot of the differential temperature, ΔT, versus the programmed temperature, T, indicates the transition temperature(s) and whether the transition is exothermic or endothermic. DTA and thermogravimetric analyses (measurement of the change in weight as a function of temperature) are often run simultaneously on a single sample.

3.2 DTA curve and its interpretation

$$\Delta T = T_S - T_R \tag{3.2}$$

T_S= temperature of sample

T_R = temperature of thermally stable reference

A typical DTA curve is represented below

A typical DTA grpah is given below (Fig 3.2) where, the y-axis is marked with "+" and "−" signs representing the direction of ΔT (temperature difference between sample and reference).

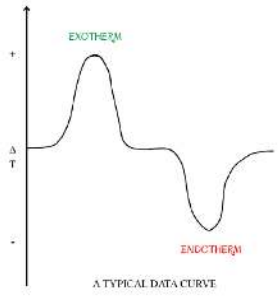


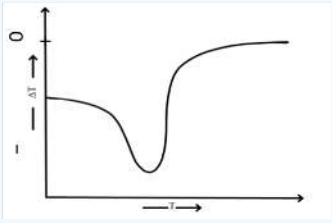
Figure 3.2 DTA curve

Brain Teaser:

Can you suggest why we adopt $\Delta T > 0$ for exothermic and $\Delta T < 0$ for endothermic transition?

Activity 3: The following figure represents thermal investigation. A DTA with downward (negative) peak for endothermic event, where the sample absorbs heat. After the peak, the curve rises and levels off, suggesting stabilization pots thermal event.

Fill in the blanks by choosing the correct option. (James & Tonge, 2008)



The record shown is that of a_____ experiment since the_____ plot ΔT which is a _____temperature. The _____direction of the peak indicates that a _____reaction has occurred. This in turn implies that the corresponding _____ change ΔH must have been _____ ie the value of enthalpy _____the thermal effect was _____ than its value _____.This means that the sample _____ heat during the reaction. Furthermore, there is evidence of a change _____in the temperature is increased beyond the thermal transition. This is shown by the _____of the just beyond the end.

Answer
Select from the following list

[upward/downward, free energy/heat capacity, greater/less, DTG/DTA, base-line/background, derivative/differential, took in/gave out, negative/positive, enthalpy/entropy, before/after/during, exothermic/endothermic/isothermal, abscissa/ordinate, distortion/displacement.]

3.3 Comparison of DTA with TGA

Comparison of two thermal methods

	TGA	DTA
1	It measures change (loss or gain) in weight as the sample is subjected to controlled heating program	It is a technique in which the difference in temperature between the sample and an inert reference material, is measured as a function of temperature
2	It will detect only those physical and chemical transitions which are accompanied by change in weight.	It can detect all physical and chemical transitions.
3	This does not require an inert reference.	This requires an inert reference material.
4	It is a quantitative method	It is a semi-qualitative method.
5	This technique is generally used to study decomposition reactions.	This technique is used to study phase transitions

4: Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC)

Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain the principle and working of DSC.
- Draw and interpret DSC curves.
- Compare and contrast DSC with TG and DTA.
- Calculate heat of any reaction from the given data.
- Explain the applications of DSC to polymeric materials and pharmaceuticals.
- Explain the applications of simultaneous TG-DTA-DSC analysis.

Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) has become the most widely used thermal analysis technique. In this technique, the sample and the reference materials are subjected to a precisely programmed temperature change. DSC is very similar to DTA and gives much the same sort of information but DSC is more often used for quantitative measurement of energy changes.

Principle

In DSC, the difference in temperature (ΔT) between the sample and an inert reference is maintained at zero as they are subjected to controlled heating or cooling. The instrument is provided with a separate heater for the sample and the reference. When a thermal transition occurs in the sample, thermal energy is added to either the sample or the reference container in order to maintain both the sample and the reference at the same temperature. Because the energy transferred is exactly equivalent in magnitude to the energy absorbed or evolved in the transition, the balancing energy yields a direct calorimetric measurement of the transition energy. Since DSC can measure directly both temperature and the enthalpy of a transition or the heat of a reaction, it is often substituted for differential thermal analysis as a means of determining these quantities except in certain high temperature applications.

4.1 Instrumentation and working

A typical DSC cell uses a constantan (Cu-Ni) disk as the primary means of transferring heat to the sample and the reference positions and also as one element of the temperature-sensing thermoelectric junction. The sample and a reference are placed in separate pans that sit on raised platforms on the disk. Heat is transferred to the sample and reference through the disk. The differential heat flow to the sample and reference is monitored by the chromel/constantan thermocouples formed by the junction of the constantan disk and the chromel wafer covering the underside of each platform. Chromel and alumel wires connected to the underside of the wafers form a chromel/alumel thermocouple, which is used to directly monitor the sample temperature.

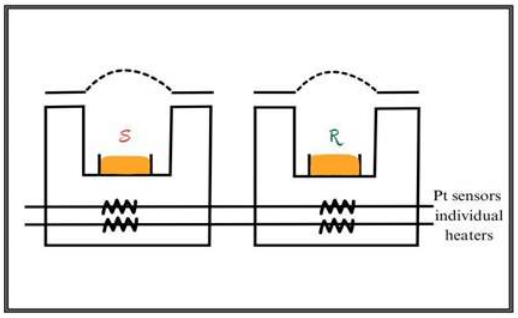


Figure 4.1a. DSC set up

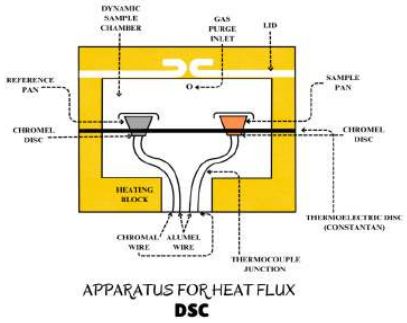


Figure 4.1b. DSC cell cross sectionThe diagram shown above is of a Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC) heat flux apparatus. The setup features a dynamic sample chamber enclosed in a block with a gas purge inlet and lid at the top.Inside the chamber:· A reference pan (gray) and a sample pan (orange) are placed side-by-side.· Both pans sit on chromel discs, which are positioned on a thermoelectric disc (constantan).· These are connected to a heating block that provides uniform heating.Below the pans:· Chromel and alumel wires lead to a thermocouple junction, which detects temperature differences.The setup allows simultaneous heating of both pans and comparison of their thermal responses using the heat flux method.

Activity 4.1: Read each of the statements and mark them as **True or False**

(i) In DSC the sample and reference positions are provided with their own separate

heating sources, so that the assembly may be operated on a ‘null balance’ basis.

(ii) In DTA the equipment is so designed that the temperature of the sample is equal

to that of the reference material at every point in the heating programme.

(iii) Chemical decompositions which give rise to weight changes may be detected by

DTA and DSC.

(iv) The main components of a conventional differential thermal analyser consist of following

1. The sample/reference holder
2. The thermocouple
3. The furnace
4. The amplifier
5. The recorder

4.2 DSC curves and its interpretation

The enthalpy of a sample refers to its heat content. Exothermic/Endothermic changes in a sample give rise to enthalpy changes. Enthalpy changes may be taken to correspond to a heat of reaction are usually written as ΔH.

ΔH= Hp – HR

Hp = Enthalpy of products

HR = Enthalpy of Reactants

A typical DSC curve of a polymer (PET) is shown in Figure 4.2 given below

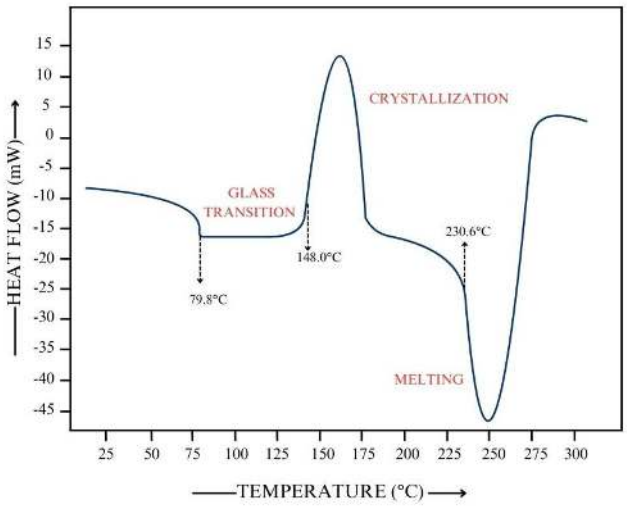


Figure 4.2. DSC curve of PET

Description of the Fig 4.2:

Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC) curve displaying heat flow (mW) on the y-axis and temperature (°C) on the x-axis. The graph shows three key thermal transitions:

1. Glass Transition at 79.8°C – marked by a step-like change in baseline.

2. Crystallization Peak at 148.0°C – represented by a sharp exothermic peak (upward).

3. Melting Point at 230.6°C – represented by a sharp endothermic peak (downward).

Each event is labelled in red: “Glass Transition,” “Crystallization,” and “Melting.” The heat flow becomes more negative with melting, indicating energy absorption, and more positive during crystallization, indicating energy release.

Activity 4.2: Choose the correct option (James and Tonge, 2008)

1. If ΔH < 0, the system has undergone an endothermic/ exothermic change which means

   Ts __ TR [Choose the correct option: =, <, >]

2. Conversely ΔH > 0, means _____change and Ts ___ TR [Choose the correct option: =, <, >]

3. In order to keep ΔT = 0 [ΔT = Ts – TR],

- In case of an endothermic reaction we must provide heat to sample/reference.
- In case of an exothermic reaction we must provide heat to sample/reference

Activity 4.3: Based on the DSC curve given in figure **4.2** answer the following questions.

- How many transitions are recorded?
- Are there any endotherm/s or exotherm/s? If yes, how many?
- What does an endo or exothermic nature tell you about the transition or ΔH value?
- Do you think DSC curve of PET is useful in predicting its stability? Justify your answer.

Let us learn more about heat capacity, glass transition temperature and the role of DSC in characterization of polymeric materials.

Definition: Heat Capacity

What does change in Heat capacity (**Cp**) means?

Heat Capacity (specific heat) is denoted as C_P. It is the energy required to raise the temperature of one mole of material through one degree kelvin.

4.3 Applications of DSC

I. Characterisation of polymeric materials: The 'glass transition temperature' (Tg) is an important parameter for many polymeric, ceramics and glasses. On cooling the material from the liquid state, there is (at the Tg) a change from the liquid state to amorphous state or glassy state. At this point there is discontinuity in the rate of change of the volume. There is also a change in the specific heat which allows study by DSC. Both these effects are illustrated in the figure 4.4a and 4.4b respectively.

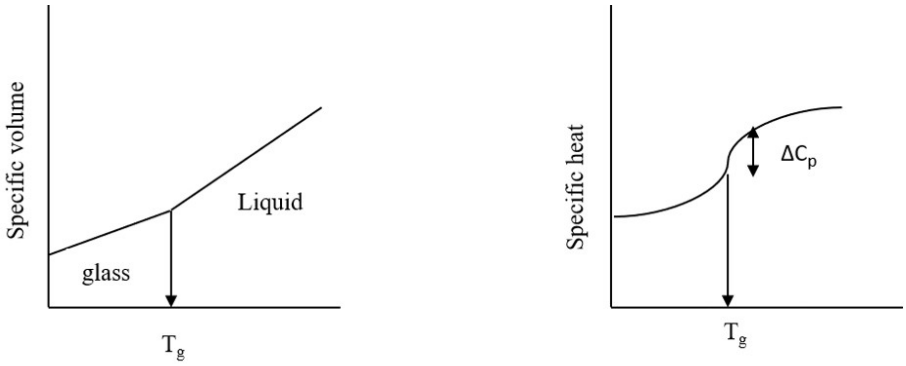


Figure 4.3a. Figure 4.3b. [Graphs depicting specific volume and specific heat changes at the glass transition temperature (Tg) of a material.]

Two diagrams illustrating thermal behaviour at the glass transition temperature (Tg):

1. Left Graph – Specific Volume vs. Temperature:

a. Y-axis: Specific volume

b. X-axis: Temperature

c. A kink in the curve marks **Tg**, separating two linear regions:

i. Below Tg: Glassy state

ii. Above Tg: Liquid state

d. An arrow at Tg indicates the transition point from glass to liquid.

2. Right Graph – Specific Heat vs. Temperature:

a. Y-axis: Specific heat

b. X-axis: Temperature

c. At **Tg**, there is a step increase in specific heat (Cp), indicated by a vertical arrow labelled **ΔCp**.

d. The graph shows a gradual increase before Tg, then a sudden rise, followed by a slower increase above Tg.

II. Drug analysis for purity assessment: DSC analysis can be used to assess purity of drug. Fig 4.3c shows comparative melting points of 98%, 99% and 100 mole % phenacetin. Since melting is an endothermic process but does not involve change in weight, it cannot be detected by TGA. DTA or DSC is the most suitable technique in such cases.

Pure compounds give sharp endothermic peak in DSC, which is evident from the peaks observed for 98% and 100% mole phenacetin. Impure compounds will melt at a temperature lower than the corresponding pure compounds. Hence, melting point and nature of peak can be used to comment on the purity of any drug.

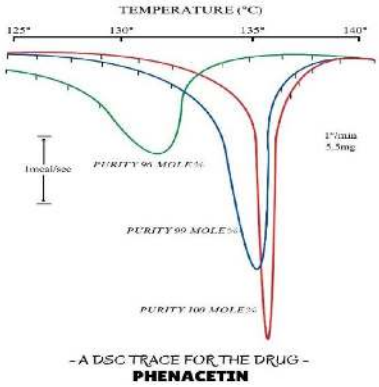


Figure 4.3c. DSC of Phenacetin

Key points:

· The x-axis represents temperature in degrees Celsius (°C), ranging roughly from 125°C to 140°C.

· The y-axis represents heat flow in mcal/sec, with a scale marker showing 1 mcal/sec.

· The traces show endothermic peaks indicating melting points or phase transitions.

· As purity increases from 96% to 100%, the melting point peak becomes sharper and shifts slightly.

· The heating rate is 1° per minute, and the sample size is 5.5 mg.This DSC analysis helps characterize the purity and thermal properties of Phenacetin.

4.4 Comparison of DSC with DTA

comparing two thermal methods

	DSC	DTA
1	It involves measurement of energy changes whilst the sample is subjected to controlled heating.	It is a technique in which the difference in temperature between the sample and inert reference material, is measured as a function of temperature.
2	It can detect all chemical and physical transitions including change in heat capacity.	It can detect all physical and chemical transitions.
3	It is a quantitative method.	It is a semi-quantitative method.
4	This technique is used to study purity of compounds, heat of reaction and characterization of polymers.	This technique is used to study phase transitions.

5: Summary

You must have realized that thermal methods are extremely versatile as far as their applications are concerned. It is applied in industries as diverse as aerospace and pharmaceuticals. It can be used to investigate samples of all kinds of materials-inorganic, organic, plastics, metallic, ceramic and glass.

We have illustrated the application of thermal methods to some, but not all, of these kinds of materials. Summarize this by entering the reference number of the appropriate figure in the text against the corresponding type of material. Where there is no Figure to illustrate the application of thermal methods to a particular material enter a dash (-)

Activity 5:

Applications of Thermal Methods

Sr. No	Material	Figure
1	Biological material eg Kidney stones	
2	Inorganic compounds	
3	Plastics	
4	Textiles and fibre	
5	Pharmaceuticals	
6	Metals and alloys	
7	Building materials eg. Cement	

6: Self Assessment Activities- Answer Key

Activity 1.1:

Identifying thermal effect

Thermal effect/change	Name of thermal method
Weight	TG
Dimension	TMA
Energy (difference in temperature)	DTA
Acoustic property	Thermoacoustimery
Optical property	Thermoptometry
Electrical conductivity	Electrothermal Analysis
Magnetic property	Thermomagnetometry

Activity 1.2:

Revising thermal methods

Technique	Quantity Measured
1)DSC	Heat and temperature of transition and reactions
2)DTA	Temperature of transitions and reactions.
3)EGA	Amount of gaseous products of thermally induced reactions.
4)TG	Weight change

Activity 1.4:

Types of transitions

Phenomenon	Exothermic	Endothermic
Adsorption	✔	
Desorption		✔
Fusion (melting)		✔
Vaporization		✔
Decomposition	✔	✔
Dehydration		✔

Activity 1.5:

Transitions accompanied by weight change

Phenomenon	Weight gain	Weight loss	Endothermic	Exothermic
Melting			✔	
Adsorption of gas	✔			✔
Desorption of gas		✔	✔	
Vaporisation		✔	✔	
Dehydration		✔	✔	
Decomposition		✔	✔	✔
Sublimation		✔	✔	

Activity 2.1:

Classifying transitions

Phenomenon	Physical	Chemical
Adsorption	✔	
Dehydration		✔
Desorption	✔	
Fusion (melting)	✔	
Chemisorption		✔
Vaporization	✔	
Decomposition		✔
Redox reactions		✔
Reduction in gaseous atmosphere		✔

Activity 2.2:

a. The part of the TG curve where the mass is essentially constant – Plateau AB

b. The temperature at which cumulative mass change reaches a magnitude that the thermobalance can detect -Point B

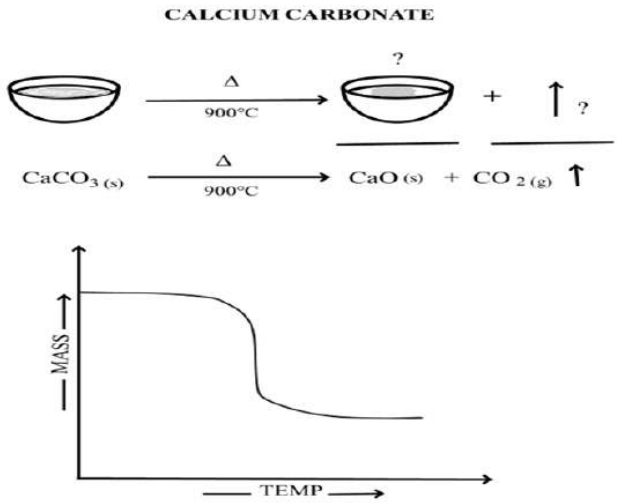
c. The temperature at which the cumulative mass change reaches a maximum-Point C

Activity 2.3:

Identifying weight change

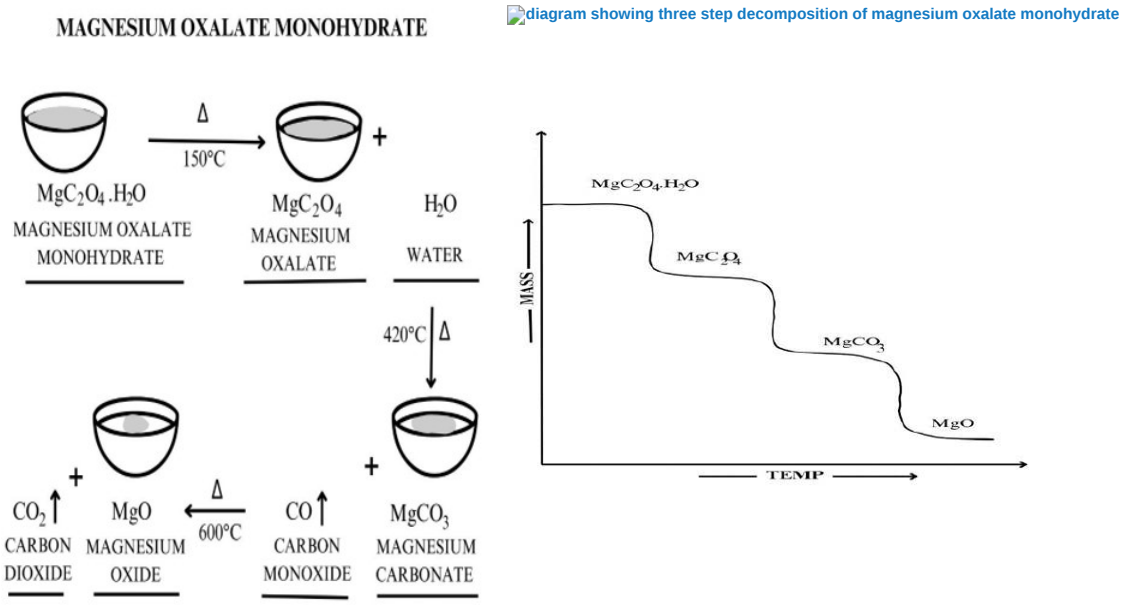
Phenomenon	Weight change
Sublimation	weight loss
Adsorption of gas	weight gain
Desorption of gas	weight loss
Vaporisation	weight loss
Dehydration	weight loss
Decomposition	weight loss
Melting	no change in weight

Activity 2.4:



The illustration demonstrates that heating calcium carbonate results in a solid calcium oxide residue in the crucible and the release of carbon dioxide gas. The graph represents the mass loss during the decomposition reaction as temperature increases.

Activity 2.5:



Step 1: Dehydration at 150°C

· A crucible containing magnesium oxalate monohydrate ($MgC_2O_4 \cdot H_2O$) is heated to 150°C.

· The reaction: **$MgC_2O_4 \cdot H_2O \rightarrow MgC_2O_4 + H_2O$**

· Products: magnesium oxalate (solid remains in the crucible) and water (released as vapor).

Step 2: Partial Decomposition at 420°C

· Magnesium oxalate (MgC_2O_4) is further heated to 420°C.

· The reaction: **$MgC_2O_4 \rightarrow MgCO_3 + CO$ (carbon monoxide)**

· Products: magnesium carbonate ($MgCO_3$, solid) and carbon monoxide gas (CO, indicated by an upward arrow).

Step 3: Final Decomposition at 600°C

· Magnesium carbonate ($MgCO_3$) is heated to 600°C.

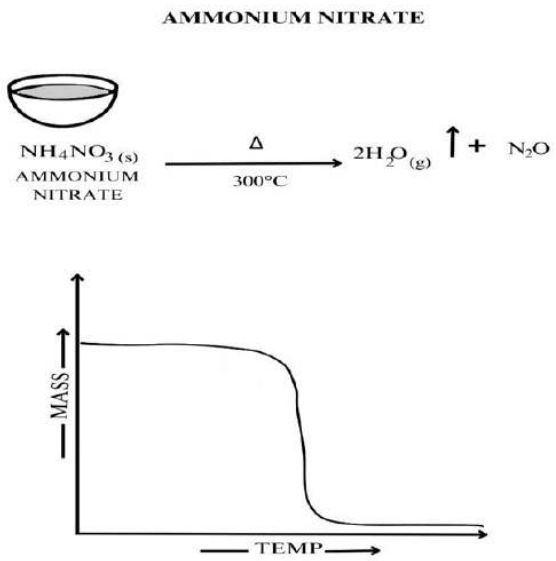
· The reaction: **$MgCO_3 \rightarrow MgO + CO_2$**

· Products: magnesium oxide (MgO, solid) and carbon dioxide gas (CO_2, shown with an upward arrow).

Overall Purpose of the Diagram:

The image illustrates the stepwise thermal decomposition of magnesium oxalate monohydrate, showing how heat drives off water, produces carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide, and leaves behind solid magnesium oxide.

Activity 2.6:



A labeled diagram shows a crucible containing solid ammonium nitrate (NH_4NO_3). An arrow indicates heating to 300°C, leading to the decomposition reaction:

NH_4NO_3 (s) → $2H_2O$ (g) + N_2O (g). Water vapor and nitrous oxide gases are shown escaping upward.

Activity: 2.8

1. Ans: a

$Ca(OH)_{2(s)} \rightarrow CaO_{(S)} + H_2O_{(g)}$

74.1g 56.1g 18g

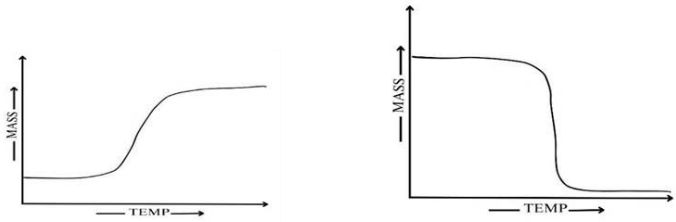
% weight loss = $\frac{74.1 - 56.1}{74.1}$ x 100 = **24.3%**

Ans: b

$6PbO_{(s)} + O_{2(g)} \rightarrow 2Pb_3O_{4(S)}$

1339.2 g 1371.2 g

% weight gain = $\frac{1371.2 - 1339.2}{1339.2}$ x 100 = **2.4%**



TG for 'b' TG for 'a'

2. Ans

The decrease in weight corresponds to the amount of carbon dioxide lost due to the decomposition of calcium carbonate present in the mixture as per the following reaction:

$CaCO_{3(s)} \rightarrow CaO_{(s)} + CO_{2(g)}\uparrow$

Weight loss = 250.6-190.8 = 59.8 mg

1mol of $CaCO_3$ ≡ 1 mol of CO_2

100.1mg of $CaCO_3$≡ 44mg of CO_2

? ≡ 59.8 mg of CO_2

= $\frac{100.1 \times 59.8}{44}$ = 136.05 mg of $CaCO_3$

Weight of the sample = 250.6 mg = mixture of $CaCO_3$ &CaO

250.6 mg of mixture = 136.05 mg of $CaCO_3$

100 mg of mixture = $\frac{136.05\ x\ 100}{250.6}$

= **54.29%** of $CaCO_3$

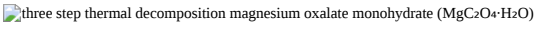
3.Ans

$CaC_2O_4.H_2O_{(s)} \rightarrow CaC_2O_{4(s)} + H_2O \uparrow$

$CaC_2O_{4(s)} \rightarrow CaCO_{3(s)} + CO_{(g)} \uparrow$

$CaCO_{3(s)} \rightarrow CaO_{(s)} + CO_{2(g)} \uparrow$

ii. Calculate the % weight loss at each step.

% weight loss = 

$\frac{\text{initial weight} - \text{final weight}}{\text{initial weight}}$ x 100

% weight loss at step 1 = $\frac{17.61 - 15.44}{17.61} x\ 100$ = **12.32**

% weight loss at step 2 = $\frac{15.44 - 12.06}{15.44} x\ 100$ = **21.89**

% weight loss at step 3 = $\frac{12.06 - 6.76}{12.06} x\ 100$ = **43.95**

Activity 3:

The record shown is that of a **DTA** experiment since the **ordinate** plot ΔT which is a **differential** temperature. The **downward** direction of the peak indicates that a **endothermic** reaction has occurred. This in turn implies that the corresponding **enthalpy** change (ΔH) must have been **positive** ie the value of enthalpy **after** the thermal effect was **greater** than its value **before**. This means that the sample **took in** heat during the reaction. Furthermore, there is evidence of a change in the **heat capacity** as the temperature is increased beyond the thermal transition. This is shown by the **displacement** of the **baseline** just beyond the end.

Answers: Select from the following list

[upward/**downward**, free energy/**heat capacity**, **greater**/less, DTG/**DTA**, **base-line**/background, derivative/**differential**, **took in**/gave out, negative/**positive**, **enthalpy**/entropy, **before/after**/during, exothermic/**endothermic**/isothermal, abscissa/**ordinate**, distortion/**displacement**.]

Activity 4.1: Read each of the statements and mark them as **True or False**

(i) In DSC the sample and reference positions are provided with their own separate heating sources, so that the assembly may be operated on a 'null balance' basis. **T**

(ii) In DTA the equipment is so designed that the temperature of the sample is equal to that of the reference material at every point in the heating programme. **F**

(iii) Chemical decompositions which give rise to weight changes may be detected by DTA and DSC. **T**

(iv) The main components of a conventional differential thermal analyser consist of following: **F (programmer missing)**

a) The sample/reference holder

b) The thermocouple

c) The furnace

d) The amplifier

e) The recorder

Activity 4.2:

If ΔH < 0, the system has undergone an endothermic/ **exothermic** change which means

$T_s > T_R$ [Choose the correct option: =, <, >]

Conversely ΔH > 0 means **endothermic** change and $T_s < T_R$ [Choose the correct option: =, <, >]

In order to keep ΔT = 0 [$\Delta T = T_s - T_R$]

- In case of an endothermic reaction we must provide heat to **sample**/reference.
- In case of an exothermic reaction we must provide heat to sample/**reference**

Activity 4.3: Observe the DSC curve given in 'figure **4.3a**.' and answer the following questions.

➢ How many transitions are seen in the above diagram?

Ans: Two

➢ Do you see any endotherm or exotherm? If yes, how many?

Ans: One endotherm and one exotherm.

➢ What does the endo or exothermic nature of the transition tell you about transition or ΔH value?

Ans: Endotherm: + ve ΔH (heat is absorbed) Exotherm: -ve ΔH (heat is given out)

➢ Is the DSC curve of PET useful in predicting stability of the polymer? Justify your answer.

Ans: Yes, the melting point of any polymer is an important characteristic. It is the minimum temperature for processing the polymer and maximum temperature for using it. In addition, the glass transition temperature is useful since beyond this there is change in some of the physical properties of the polymer.

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Glossary

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