19.6: The Temperature of a Gas Decreases in a Reversible Adiabatic Expansion

We can make the same argument for the heat along C. If we do the three processes A and B+C only to a tiny extent we can write:

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And now we can integrate from V_1 to V_2 over the reversible adiabatic work along B and from T_1 to T_2 for the reversible isochoric heat along C. To separate the variables we do need to bring the temperature to the right side of the equation.:

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The latter expression is valid for a reversible adiabatic expansion of a monatomic ideal gas (say Argon) because we used the C_v expression for such a system. We can use the gas law $PV = nRT$ to translate this expression in one that relates pressure and volume see Eq 19.23

We can mathematically show that the temperature of a gas decreases during an adiabatic expansion. Assuming an ideal gas, the internal energy along an adiabatic path is:

$$\begin{aligned} d\bar{U} &= \delta q + \delta w \\ &= 0 - P d\bar{V} \\ &= -P d\bar{V} \end{aligned}$$

The constant volume heat capacity is defined as:

$$\bar{C}_V = \left(\frac{\partial \bar{U}}{\partial T}\right)_V$$

We can rewrite this for internal energy:

$$d\bar{U} = \bar{C}_V dT$$

Combining these two expressions for internal energy, we obtain:

$$\bar{C}_V dT = -P d\bar{V}$$

Using the ideal gas law for pressure of an ideal gas:

$$\bar{C}_V dT = -\frac{RT}{\bar{V}} d\bar{V}$$

Separating variables:

$$\frac{\bar{C}_V}{T} dT = -\frac{R}{\bar{V}} d\bar{V}$$

This is an expression for an ideal path along a reversible, adiabatic path that relates temperature to volume. To find our path along a PV surface for an ideal gas, we can start in TV surface and convert to a PV surface. Let's go from (T_1, V_1) to (T_2, V_2).

$$\int_{T1}^{T_2} \frac{\bar{C}_V}{T} dT = -\int_{\bar{V}_1}^{\bar{V}_2} \frac{R}{\bar{V}} d\bar{V}$$

$$\bar{C}_V \ln\left(\frac{T_2}{T_1}\right) = -R \ln\left(\frac{\bar{V}_2}{\bar{V}_1}\right) = R \ln\left(\frac{\bar{V}_1}{\bar{V}_2}\right)$$

$$\ln\left(\frac{T_2}{T_1}\right) = \frac{R}{\bar{C}_V} \ln\left(\frac{\bar{V}_1}{\bar{V}_2}\right)$$

$$\left(\frac{T_2}{T_1}\right) = \left(\frac{\bar{V}_1}{\bar{V}_2}\right)^{\frac{R}{\bar{C}_V}}$$

We know that:

$$R = \bar{C}_P - \bar{C}_V$$

$$\frac{R}{\bar{C}_V} = \frac{\bar{C}_P - \bar{C}_V}{\bar{C}_V} = \frac{\bar{C}_P}{\bar{C}_V} - 1$$

$$\frac{R}{\bar{C}_V} = \gamma - 1$$

Therefore:

$$\left(\frac{T_2}{T_1}\right) = \left(\frac{\bar{V}_1}{\bar{V}_2}\right)^{\gamma - 1}$$

This expression shows that volume and temperature are inversely related. That is, as the volume increase from V_1 to V_2, the temperature must decrease from T_1 to T_2.