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ELECTRONIC DEVICES

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Electronic Devices

Conventional Current Version

Tenth Edition

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Preface

This tenth edition of *Electronic Devices* reflects changes recommended by users and reviewers. As in the previous edition, Chapters 1 through 11 are essentially devoted to discrete devices and circuits. Chapters 12 through 17 primarily cover linear integrated circuits. Chapter 18, covers electronic communication devices and methods. Multisim® circuit files in version 14 and LT Spice circuit files are available at the website: [www](www.pearsonhighered.com/careersresources/) [.pearsonhighered.com/careersresources/](www.pearsonhighered.com/careersresources/)

New Features

- ◆ Chapter covering an introduction to communication devices and methods.
- ◆◆ LT Spice circuit simulation.
- ◆◆ Mutlisim files upgraded to Version 14 and new files added.
- ◆ Several new examples.
- ◆◆ Expanded coverage of FETs including JFET limiting parameters, FINFET, UMOSFET, Current source biasing, Cascode dual-gate MOSFET, and tunneling MOSFET.
- ◆◆ Expanded coverage of thyristors including SSRs using SCRs, motor speed control.
- ◆◆ Expanded coverage of switching circuits including interfacing with logic circuits.
- ◆ Expanded PLL coverage.
- ◆◆ Many new problems.

Standard Features

- ◆◆ Full-color format.
- ◆◆ Chapter openers include a chapter outline, chapter objectives, introduction, key terms list, Device Application preview, and website reference.
- ◆◆ Introduction and objectives for each section within a chapter.
- ◆◆ Large selection of worked-out examples set off in a graphic box. Each example has a related problem for which the answer can be found at: [www.pearsonhighered.com/](www.pearsonhighered.com/careersresources/) [careersresources/](www.pearsonhighered.com/careersresources/)
- ◆ Multisim® circuit files for selected examples, troubleshooting, and selected problems are on the companion website.
- ◆◆ LT Spice circuit files for selected examples and problems are on the companion website.
- ◆ Section checkup questions are at the end of each section within a chapter. Answers can be found at: www.pearsonhighered.com/careersresources/
- ◆ Troubleshooting sections in many chapters.
- ◆◆ A Device Application is at the end of most chapters.
- ◆ A Programmable Analog Technology feature is at the end of selected chapters.
- ◆ A sectionalized chapter summary, key term glossary, and formula list at the end of each chapter.
- ◆◆ True/false quiz, circuit-action quiz, self-test, and categorized problem set with basic and advanced problems at the end of each chapter.
- ◆ Appendix with answers to odd-numbered problems, glossary, and index are at the end of the book.
- ◆ Updated PowerPoint[®] slides, developed by Dave Buchla, are available online. These innovative, interactive slides are coordinated with each text chapter and are an excellent tool to supplement classroom presentations.
- ◆◆ A laboratory manual by Dave Buchla and Steve Wetterling coordinated with this textbook is available.

Student Resources

Digital Resources (*www.pearsonhighered.com/careersresources/***)** This section offers students an online study guide that they can check for conceptual understanding of key topics. Also included on the website are tutorials for Multisim® and LT Spice. Answers to Section Checkups, Related Problems for Examples, True/False Quizzes, Circuit-Action Quizzes, and Self-Tests are found on this website.

Circut Simulation (*www.pearsonhighered.com/careersresources***/)** These online files include simulation circuits in Multisim® 14 and LT Spice for selected examples, troubleshooting sections, and selected problems in the text. These circuits were created for use with Multisim[®] or LT Spice software. These circuit simulation programs are widely regarded as excellent for classroom and laboratory learning. However, no part of your textbook is dependent upon the Multisim® or LT Spice software or provided files.

Laboratory Exercises for Electronic Devices, Tenth Edition, by Dave Buchla and Steve Wetterling. ISBN: 0-13-442031-4.

Instructor Resources

To access supplementary materials online, instructors need to request an instructor access code. Go to www.pearsonhighered.com/irc to register for an instructor access code. Within 48 hours of registering, you will receive a confirming e-mail including an instructor access code. Once you have received your code, locate your text in the online catalog and click on the Instructor Resources button on the left side of the catalog product page. Select a supplement, and a login page will appear. Once you have logged in, you can access instructor material for all Pearson textbooks. If you have any difficulties accessing the site or downloading a supplement, please contact Customer Service at: [http://support.pearson](http://support.pearson.com/getsupport) [.com/getsupport](http://support.pearson.com/getsupport)

Online Instructor's Resource Manual Includes solutions to chapter problems, Device Application results, summary of Multisim® and LT Spice circuit files, and a test item file. Solutions to the lab manual are also included.

Online Course Support If your program is offering your electronics course in a distance learning format, please contact your local Pearson sales representative for a list of product solutions.

Online PowerPoint® Slides This innovative, interactive PowerPoint slide presentation for each chapter in the book provides an effective supplement to classroom lectures.

Online TestGen This is a test bank of over 800 questions.

Chapter Features

Chapter Opener Each chapter begins with an opening page, as shown in Figure P–1. The chapter opener includes a chapter introduction, a list of chapter sections, chapter objectives, key terms, an Device Application preview, and a website reference for associated study aids.

A typical chapter opener.

Section Opener Each section in a chapter begins with a brief introduction and section objectives. An example is shown in Figure P–2.

Section Checkup Each section in a chapter ends with a list of questions that focus on the main concepts presented in the section. This feature is also illustrated in Figure P–2. The answers to the Section Checkups can be found at: [www.pearsonhighered.com/](www.pearsonhighered.com/careersresources/) [careersresources/](www.pearsonhighered.com/careersresources/)

Troubleshooting Sections Many chapters include a troubleshooting section that relates to the topics covered in the chapter and that illustrates troubleshooting procedures and techniques. The Troubleshooting section also provides Multisim® Troubleshooting exercises.

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▶ **FIGURE P–2**

A typical section opener and section review.

Worked Examples, Related Problems, and Circuit Simulation Exercises Numerous worked-out examples throughout each chapter illustrate and clarify basic concepts or specific procedures. Each example ends with a Related Problem that reinforces or expands on the example by requiring the student to work through a problem similar to the example. Selected examples feature a Multisim[®] or LT Spice exercise keyed to a file on the companion website that contains the circuit illustrated in the example. A typical example with a Related Problem and a Multisim® or LT Spice exercise are shown in Figure P–3. Answers to Related Problems can be found at: www.pearsonhighered.com/careersresources/

Device Application This feature follows the last section in most chapters and is identified by a special graphic design. A practical application of devices or circuits covered in the chapter is presented. The student learns how the specific device or circuit is used and is taken through the steps of design specification, simulation, prototyping, circuit board implementation, and testing. A typical Device Application is shown in Figure P–4. Device Applications are optional. Results are provided in the Online Instructor's Resource Manual.

▲ **FIGURE P-4**

Portion of a typical Device Application section.

Chapter End Matter The following pedagogical features are found at the end of most chapters:

- ◆ Summary
- ◆ Key Term Glossary
- ◆ Key Formulas
- ◆ True/False Quiz
- ◆ Circuit-Action Quiz
- ◆ Self-Test
- ◆ Basic Problems
- ◆ Advanced Problems
- ◆ Datasheet Problems (selected chapters)
- ◆ Device Application Problems (many chapters)
- ◆ Multisim[®] Troubleshooting Problems (most chapters)

Suggestions for Using This Textbook

As mentioned, this book covers discrete devices and circuits in Chapters 1 through 11 and linear integrated circuits in Chapters 12 through 17. Chapter 18 introduces programming concepts for device testing and is linked to Troubleshooting sections.

Option 1 (two terms) Chapters 1 through 11 can be covered in the first term. Depending on individual preferences and program emphasis, selective coverage may be necessary. Chapters 12 through 17 can be covered in the second term. Again, selective coverage may be necessary.

Option 2 (one term) By omitting certain topics and by maintaining a rigorous schedule, this book can be used in one-term courses. For example, a course covering only discrete devices and circuits would use Chapters 1 through 11 with, perhaps, some selectivity.

Similarly, a course requiring only linear integrated circuit coverage would use Chapters 12 through 17. Another approach is a very selective coverage of discrete devices and circuits topics followed by a limited coverage of integrated circuits (only op-amps, for example). Also, elements such as the Multisim® and LT Spice exercises, and Device Application can be omitted or selectively used.

To the Student

When studying a particular chapter, study one section until you understand it and only then move on to the next one. Read each section and study the related illustrations carefully; think about the material; work through each example step-by-step, work its Related Problem and check the answer; then answer each question in the Section Checkup, and check your answers. Don't expect each concept to be completely clear after a single reading; you may have to read the material two or even three times. Once you think that you understand the material, review the chapter summary, key formula list, and key term definitions at the end of the chapter. Take the true/false quiz, the circuit-action quiz, and the self-test. Finally, work the assigned problems at the end of the chapter. Working through these problems is perhaps the most important way to check and reinforce your comprehension of the chapter. By working problems, you acquire an additional level of insight and understanding and develop logical thinking that reading or classroom lectures alone do not provide.

Generally, you cannot fully understand a concept or procedure by simply watching or listening to someone else. Only hard work and critical thinking will produce the results you expect and deserve.

Acknowledgments

Many capable people have contributed to the tenth edition of *Electronic Devices.* It has been thoroughly reviewed and checked for both content and accuracy. Those at Pearson who have contributed greatly to this project throughout the many phases of development and production include Faraz Sharique Ali and Rex Davidson. Thanks to Jyotsna Ojha at Cenveo for her management of the art and text programs. Dave Buchla contributed extensively to the content of the book, helping to make this edition the best one yet. Gary Snyder created the circuit files for the Multisim® and LT Spice features in this edition. I wish to express my appreciation to those already mentioned as well as the reviewers who provided many valuable suggestions and constructive criticism that greatly influenced this edition. These reviewers are David Beach, Indiana State University; Mahmoud Chitsazzadeh, Community College of Allegheny County; Wang Ng, Sacramento City College; Almasy Edward, Pennsylvania College of Technology; and Moser Randall, Pennsylvania College of Technology.

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Electronic Devices

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1 Introduction to Semiconductors

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- **1–1** The Atom
- **1–2** Materials Used in Electronic Devices
- **1–3** Current in Semiconductors
- **1–4** *N*-Type and *P*-Type Semiconductors
- **1–5** The *PN* Junction

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Describe the structure of an atom
- ◆ Discuss insulators, conductors, and semiconductors and how they differ
- ◆ Describe how current is produced in a semiconductor
- ◆◆ Describe the properties of *n*-type and *p*-type semiconductors
- ◆ Describe how a *pn* junction is formed

KEY TERMS

◆ Atom

- ◆ Conductor
- ◆ Semiconductor
- **Proton Electron**
- **Shell**
- ◆◆ Valence
- **Ionization**
- **Free electron**
- **Orbital**
- **Insulator**
-
- ◆◆ Silicon
- ◆ Crystal
- ◆◆ Hole
- ◆ Metallic bond
- ◆ Doping
- ◆◆ *PN* junction
- ◆ Barrier potential

VISIT THE WEBSITE

Study aids for this chapter are available at <https://www.pearsonhighered.com/careersresources/>

Introduction

Electronic devices such as diodes, transistors, and integrated circuits are made of a semiconductive material. To understand how these devices work, you should have a basic knowledge of the structure of atoms and the interaction of atomic particles. An important concept introduced in this chapter is that of the *pn* junction that is formed when two different types of semiconductive material are joined. The *pn* junction is fundamental to the operation of devices such as the solar cell, the diode, and certain types of transistors.

1–1 **The Atom**

All matter is composed of atoms; all atoms consist of electrons, protons, and neutrons except normal hydrogen, which does not have a neutron. Each element in the periodic table has a unique atomic structure, and all atoms for a given element have the same number of protons. At first, the atom was thought to be a tiny indivisible sphere. Later it was shown that the atom was not a single particle but was made up of a small, dense nucleus around which electrons orbit at great distances from the nucleus, similar to the way planets orbit the sun. Niels Bohr proposed that the electrons in an atom circle the nucleus in different obits, similar to the way planets orbit the sun in our solar system. The Bohr model is often referred to as the planetary model. Another view of the atom called the *quantum model* is considered a more accurate representation, but it is difficult to visualize. For most practical purposes in electronics, the Bohr model suffices and is commonly used because it is easy to visualize.

After completing this section, you should be able to

- ❑ **Describe the structure of an atom**
	- ◆ Discuss the Bohr model of an atom ◆ Define *electron, proton, neutron,* and *nucleus*
- ❑ Define *atomic number*
- ❑ Discuss electron shells and orbits
	- ◆ Explain energy levels
- ❑ Define *valence electron*
- ❑ Discuss ionization
	- ◆ Define *free electron* and *ion*
- Discuss the basic concept of the quantum model of the atom

The Bohr Model

An **atom*** is the smallest particle of an element that retains the characteristics of that element. Each of the known 118 elements has atoms that are different from the atoms of all other elements. This gives each element a unique atomic structure. According to the classical Bohr model, atoms have a planetary type of structure that consists of a central nucleus surrounded by orbiting electrons, as illustrated in Figure 1–1. The **nucleus** consists of positively charged particles called **protons** and uncharged particles called **neutrons.** The basic particles of negative charge are called **electrons**.

Each type of atom has a certain number of electrons and protons that distinguishes it from the atoms of all other elements. For example, the simplest atom is that of hydrogen, which has one proton and one electron, as shown in Figure $1-2(a)$. As another example, the helium atom, shown in Figure $1-2(b)$, has two protons and two neutrons in the nucleus and two electrons orbiting the nucleus.

Atomic Number

All elements are arranged in the periodic table of the elements in order according to their atomic number. The **atomic number** equals the number of protons in the nucleus, which is the same as the number of electrons in an electrically balanced (neutral) atom. For example, hydrogen has an atomic number of 1 and helium has an atomic number of 2. In their normal (or neutral) state, all atoms of a given element have the same number of electrons as protons; the positive charges cancel the negative charges, and the atom has a net charge of zero.

HISTORY NOTE

Niels Henrik David Bohr (October 7, 1885–November 18, 1962) was a Danish physicist, who made important contributions to understanding the structure of the atom and quantum mechanics by postulating the "planetary" model of the atom. He received the Nobel Prize in physics in 1922. Bohr drew upon the work or collaborated with scientists such as Dalton, Thomson, and Rutherford, among others and has been described as one of the most influential physicists of the 20th century.

^{*}All bold terms are in the end-of-book glossary. The bold terms in color are key terms and are also defined at the end of the chapter.

▲ **FIGURE 1–1**

The Bohr model of an atom showing electrons in orbits around the nucleus, which consists of protons and neutrons. The "tails" on the electrons indicate motion.

Two simple atoms, hydrogen and helium.

Atomic numbers of all the elements are shown on the periodic table of the elements in Figure 1–3.

Electrons and Shells

Energy Levels Electrons orbit the nucleus of an atom at certain distances from the nucleus. Electrons near the nucleus have less energy than those in more distant orbits. Only discrete (separate and distinct) values of electron energies exist within atomic structures. Therefore, electrons must orbit only at discrete distances from the nucleus.

Each discrete distance (**orbit**) from the nucleus corresponds to a certain energy level. In an atom, the orbits are grouped into energy levels known as **shells**. A given atom has a fixed number of shells. Each shell has a fixed maximum number of electrons. The shells (energy levels) are designated 1, 2, 3, and so on, with 1 being closest to the nucleus. The Bohr model of the silicon atom is shown in Figure 1–4. Notice that there are 14 electrons surrounding the nucleus with exactly 14 protons, and usually 14 neutrons in the nucleus.

▲ **FIGURE 1–3**

The periodic table of the elements. Some tables also show atomic mass.

▶ **FIGURE 1–4**

Illustration of the Bohr model of the silicon atom.

The Maximum Number of Electrons in Each Shell The maximum number of electrons (*Ne*) that can exist in each shell of an atom is a fact of nature and can be calculated by the formula,

$$
N_{\rm e}=2n^2
$$

where *n* is the number of the shell. The maximum number of electrons that can exist in the innermost shell (shell 1) is

$$
N_e = 2n^2 = 2(1)^2 = 2
$$

Equation 1–1

The maximum number of electrons that can exist in shell 2 is

$$
N_e = 2n^2 = 2(2)^2 = 2(4) = 8
$$

The maximum number of electrons that can exist in shell 3 is

$$
N_e = 2n^2 = 2(3)^2 = 2(9) = 18
$$

The maximum number of electrons that can exist in shell 4 is

$$
N_e = 2n^2 = 2(4)^2 = 2(16) = 32
$$

Valence Electrons

Electrons that are in orbits farther from the nucleus have higher energy and are less tightly bound to the atom than those closer to the nucleus. This is because the force of attraction between the positively charged nucleus and the negatively charged electron decreases with increasing distance from the nucleus. Electrons with the highest energy exist in the outermost shell of an atom and are relatively loosely bound to the atom. This outermost shell is known as the **valence** shell, and electrons in this shell are called *valence electrons.* These valence electrons contribute to chemical reactions and bonding within the structure of a material and determine its electrical properties. When a valence electron gains sufficient energy from an external source, it can break free from its atom. This is the basis for conduction in materials.

Ionization

When an atom absorbs energy, the valence electrons can easily jump to higher energy shells. If a valence electron acquires a sufficient amount of energy, called *ionization energy,* it can actually escape from the outer shell and the atom's influence. The departure of a valence electron leaves a previously neutral atom with an excess of positive charge (more protons than electrons). The process of losing a valence electron is known as **ionization**, and the resulting positively charged atom is called a *positive ion.* For example, the chemical symbol for hydrogen is H. When a neutral hydrogen atom loses its valence electron and becomes a positive ion, it is designated H+. The escaped valence electron is called a **free electron**.

The reverse process can occur in certain atoms when a free electron collides with the atom and is captured, releasing energy. The atom that has acquired the extra electron is called a *negative ion*. The ionization process is not restricted to single atoms. In many chemical reactions, a group of atoms that are bonded together can lose or acquire one or more electrons.

For some nonmetallic materials such as chlorine, a free electron can be captured by the neutral atom, forming a negative ion. In the case of chlorine, the ion is more stable than the neutral atom because it has a filled outer shell. The chlorine ion is designated as Cl⁻.

The Quantum Model

Although the Bohr model of an atom is widely used because of its simplicity and ease of visualization, it is not a complete model. The quantum model is considered to be more accurate. The quantum model is a statistical model and very difficult to understand or visualize. Like the Bohr model, the quantum model has a nucleus of protons and neutrons surrounded by electrons. Unlike the Bohr model, the electrons in the quantum model do not exist in precise circular orbits as particles. Three important principles underlie the quantum model: the wave-particle duality principle, the uncertainty principle, and the superposition principle.

- ◆ *Wave-particle duality.* Just as light can be thought of as exhibiting both a wave and a particle **(photon),** electrons are thought to exhibit a wave-particle duality. The velocity of an orbiting electron is related to its wavelength, which interferes with neighboring electron wavelengths by amplifying or canceling each other.
- ◆ *Uncertainly principle.* As you know, a wave is characterized by peaks and valleys; therefore, electrons acting as waves cannot be precisely identified in terms of their position. According to a principle ascribed to Heisenberg, it is impossible to determine simultaneously both the position and velocity of an electron with any degree

FYI

Atoms are extremely small and cannot be seen even with the strongest optical microscopes; however, a scanning tunneling microscope can detect a single atom. The nucleus is so small and the electrons orbit at such distances that the atom is mostly empty space. To put it in perspective, if the proton in a hydrogen atom were the size of a golf ball, the electron orbit would be approximately one mile away.

Protons and neutrons are approximately the same mass. The mass of an electron is $1/1836$ of a proton. Within protons and neutrons there are even smaller particles called quarks. Quarks are the subject of intense study by particle physicists as they help explain the existence of more than 100 subatomic particles.

of accuracy or certainty. The result of this principle produces a concept of the atom with *probability clouds,* which are mathematical descriptions of where electrons in an atom are most likely to be located.

◆ *Superposition.* A principle of quantum theory that describes a challenging concept about the behavior of matter and forces at the subatomic level. Basically, the principle states that although the state of any object is unknown, it is actually in all possible states simultaneously as long as an observation is not attempted. An analogy known as Schrodinger's cat is often used to illustrate in an oversimplified way quantum superposition. The analogy goes as follows: A living cat is placed in a metal box with a vial of hydrocyanic acid and a very small amount of a radioactive substance. Should even a single atom of the radioactive substance decay during a test period, a relay mechanism will be activated and will cause a hammer to break the vial and kill the cat. An observer cannot know whether or not this sequence has occurred. According to quantum theory, the cat exists in a superposition of both the alive and dead states simultaneously.

In the quantum model, each shell or energy level consists of up to four subshells called **orbitals**, which are designated *s*, *p*, *d*, and *f*. Orbital *s* can hold a maximum of two electrons, orbital *p* can hold six electrons, orbital *d* can hold 10 electrons, and orbital *f* can hold 14 electrons. Each atom can be described by an electron configuration table that shows the shells or energy levels, the orbitals, and the number of electrons in each orbital. For example, the electron configuration table for the nitrogen atom is given in Table 1–1. The first full-size number is the shell or energy level, the letter is the orbital, and the exponent is the number of electrons in the orbital.

In a three-dimensional representation of the quantum model of an atom, the *s-*orbitals are shaped like spheres with the nucleus in the center. For energy level 1, the sphere is a single sphere, but for energy levels 2 or more, each single *s*-orbital is composed of nested spherical shells. A *p-*orbital for shell 2 has the form of two ellipsoidal lobes with a point of tangency at the nucleus (sometimes referred to as a dumbbell shape.) The three *p*-orbitals in each energy level are oriented at right angles to each other. One is oriented on the *x-*axis, one on the *y-*axis, and one on the *z-*axis. For example, a view of the quantum model of a sodium atom (Na) that has 11 electrons as shown in Figure 1–5. The three axes are shown to give you a 3-D perspective.

◀ **FIGURE 1–5**

Three-dimensional quantum model of the sodium atom, showing the orbitals and number of electrons in each orbital.

1–2 **Materials Used in Electronic Devices**

In terms of their electrical properties, materials can be classified into three groups: conductors, semiconductors, and insulators. When atoms combine to form a solid, crystalline material, they arrange themselves in a symmetrical pattern. The atoms within a semiconductor crystal structure are held together by covalent bonds, which are created by the interaction of the valence electrons of the atoms. Silicon is a crystalline material.

After completing this section, you should be able to

- ❑ **Discuss insulators, conductors, and semiconductors and how they differ**
	- ◆ Define the *core* of an atom ◆ Describe the carbon atom ◆ Name two types each of semiconductors, conductors, and insulators
- ❑ Explain the band gap
	- ◆ Define *valence band* and *conduction band* ◆ Compare a semiconductor atom to a conductor atom
- ❑ Discuss silicon and gemanium atoms
- ❑ Explain covalent bonds
	- ◆ Define *crystal*

Diagram of a carbon atom.

Insulators, Conductors, and Semiconductors

All materials are made up of atoms. These atoms contribute to the electrical properties of a material, including its ability to conduct electrical current.

For purposes of discussing electrical properties, an atom can be represented by the valence shell and a **core** that consists of all the inner shells and the nucleus. This concept is illustrated in Figure 1–6 for a carbon atom. Carbon is used in some types of electrical resistors. Notice that the carbon atom has four electrons in the valence shell and two electrons in the inner shell. The nucleus consists of six protons and six neutrons, so the $+6$ indicates the positive charge of the six protons. The core has a net charge of $+4$ ($+6$ for the nucleus and -2 for the two inner-shell electrons).

Insulators An **insulator** is a material that does not conduct electrical current under normal conditions. Most good insulators are compounds rather than single-element materials and have very high resistivities. Valence electrons are tightly bound to the atoms; therefore, there are very few free electrons in an insulator. Examples of insulators are rubber, plastics, glass, mica, and quartz.

Conductors A **conductor** is a material that easily conducts electrical current. Most metals are good conductors. The best conductors are single-element materials, such as copper (Cu), silver (Ag), gold (Au), and aluminum (Al), which are characterized by atoms with only one valence electron very loosely bound to the atom. These loosely bound valence electrons can become free electrons with the addition of a small amount of energy to free them from the atom. Therefore, in a conductive material the free electrons are available to carry current.

Semiconductors A **semiconductor** is a material that is between conductors and insulators in its ability to conduct electrical current. A semiconductor in its pure (intrinsic) state is neither a good conductor nor a good insulator. Single-element semiconductors are antimony (Sb), arsenic (As), astatine (At), boron (B), polonium (Po), tellurium (Te), silicon (Si), and germanium (Ge). Compound semiconductors such as gallium arsenide, indium phosphide, gallium nitride, silicon carbide, and silicon germanium are also commonly used. The single-element semiconductors are characterized by atoms with four valence electrons. Silicon is the most commonly used semiconductor.

Band Gap

In solid materials, interactions between atoms "smear" the valence shell into a band of energy levels called the *valence band*. Valence electrons are confined to that band. When an electron acquires enough additional energy, it can leave the valence shell, become a *free electron,* and exist in what is known as the *conduction band.*

The difference in energy between the valence band and the conduction band is called an *energy gap* or **band gap.** This is the amount of energy that a valence electron must have in order to jump from the valence band to the conduction band. Once in the conduction band, the electron is free to move throughout the material and is not tied to any given atom.

Figure 1–7 shows energy diagrams for insulators, semiconductors, and conductors. The energy gap or band gap is the difference between two energy levels and electrons are "not allowed" in this energy gap based on quantum theory. Although an electron may not exist in this region, it can "jump" across it under certain conditions. For insulators, the gap can be crossed only when breakdown conditions occur—as when a very high voltage is applied across the material. The band gap is illustrated in Figure $1-7(a)$ for insulators. In semiconductors the band gap is smaller, allowing an electron in the valence band to jump into the conduction band if it absorbs a photon. The band gap depends on the semiconductor material. This is illustrated in Figure $1-7(b)$. In conductors, the conduction band and valence band overlap, so there is no gap, as shown in Figure $1-7(c)$. This means that electrons in the valence band move freely into the conduction band, so there are always electrons available as free electrons.

FYI

Next to silicon, the second most common semiconductive material is gallium arsenide, GaAs. This is a crystalline compound, not an element. Its properties can be controlled by varying the relative amount of gallium and arsenic.

GaAs has the advantage of making semiconductor devices that respond very quickly to electrical signals. It is widely used in high-frequency applications and in light-emitting diodes and solar cells.

Comparison of a Semiconductor Atom to a Conductor Atom

Silicon is a semiconductor and copper is a conductor. Bohr diagrams of the silicon atom and the copper atom are shown in Figure 1–8. Notice that the core of the silicon atom has a net charge of $+4$ (14 protons – 10 electrons) and the core of the copper atom has a net charge of $+1$ (29 protons – 28 electrons). Recall that the core includes everything except the valence electrons.

◀ **FIGURE 1–8**

Bohr diagrams of the silicon and copper atoms.

The valence electron in the copper atom "feels" an attractive force of $+1$ compared to a valence electron in the silicon atom which "feels" an attractive force of +4. Therefore, there is more force trying to hold a valence electron to the atom in silicon than in copper. The copper's valence electron is in the fourth shell, which is a greater distance from its nucleus than the silicon's valence electron in the third shell. Recall that, electrons farthest from the nucleus have the most energy. The valence electron in copper has more energy than the valence electron in silicon. This means that it is easier for valence electrons in copper to acquire enough additional energy to escape from their atoms and become free electrons than it is in silicon. In fact, large numbers of valence electrons in copper already have sufficient energy to be free electrons at normal room temperature.

Silicon and Germanium

The atomic structures of silicon and germanium are compared in Figure 1–9. **Silicon** is used in diodes, transistors, integrated circuits, and other semiconductor devices. Notice that both silicon and **germanium** have the characteristic four valence electrons.