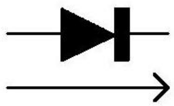
# Lecture 5: Diodes and Transistors

## Diodes:

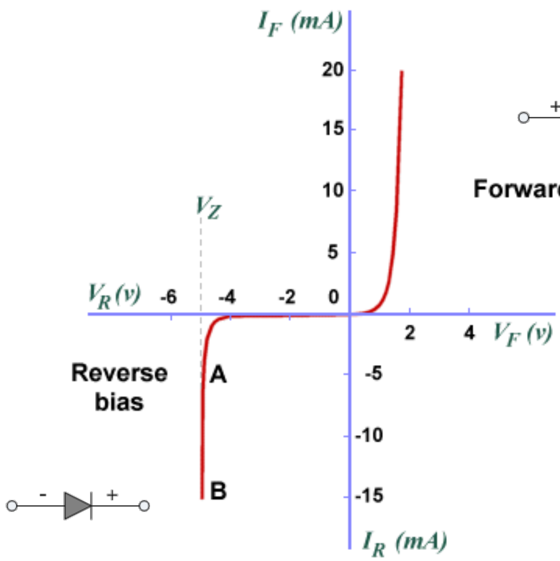
- What do we use diodes for?
  - protect circuits by limiting the voltage (clipping and clamping)
  - turn AC into DC (voltage rectifier)
  - voltage multipliers (e.g. double input voltage)
  - non-linear mixing of two voltages (e.g. amplitude modulation)

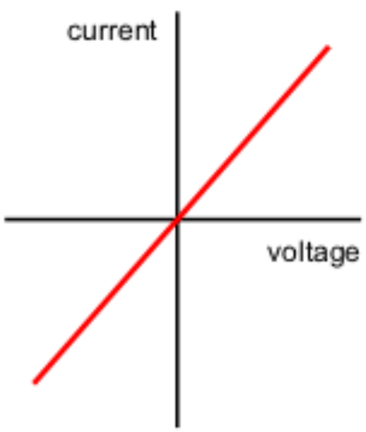
anode  cathode

Positive current flow

Diode conducts when $V_{anode} > V_{cathode}$

- Diodes (and transistors) are non-linear device: $V \neq IR$!



- Diode is forward biased when $V_{anode} > V_{cathode}$.
  - Diode conducts current strongly
  - Voltage drop across diode is (almost) independent of diode current
  - Effective resistance (impedance) of diode is small

- Diode is reverse biased when $V_{anode} < V_{cathode}$.
  - Diode conducts current very weakly (typically < μA)
  - Diode current is (almost) independent of voltage, until breakdown
  - Effective resistance (impedance) of diode is very large

- Current-voltage relationship for a diode:

  $$I = I_s(e^{eV/kT} - 1)$$

  - "diode", "rectifier", or "Ebers-Moll" equation
  - $I_s$ = reverse saturation current (typically < μA)
  - $k$ = Boltzmann's constant, $e$ = electron charge, $T$ = temperature
  - At room temperature, $kT/e = 25.3$ mV,

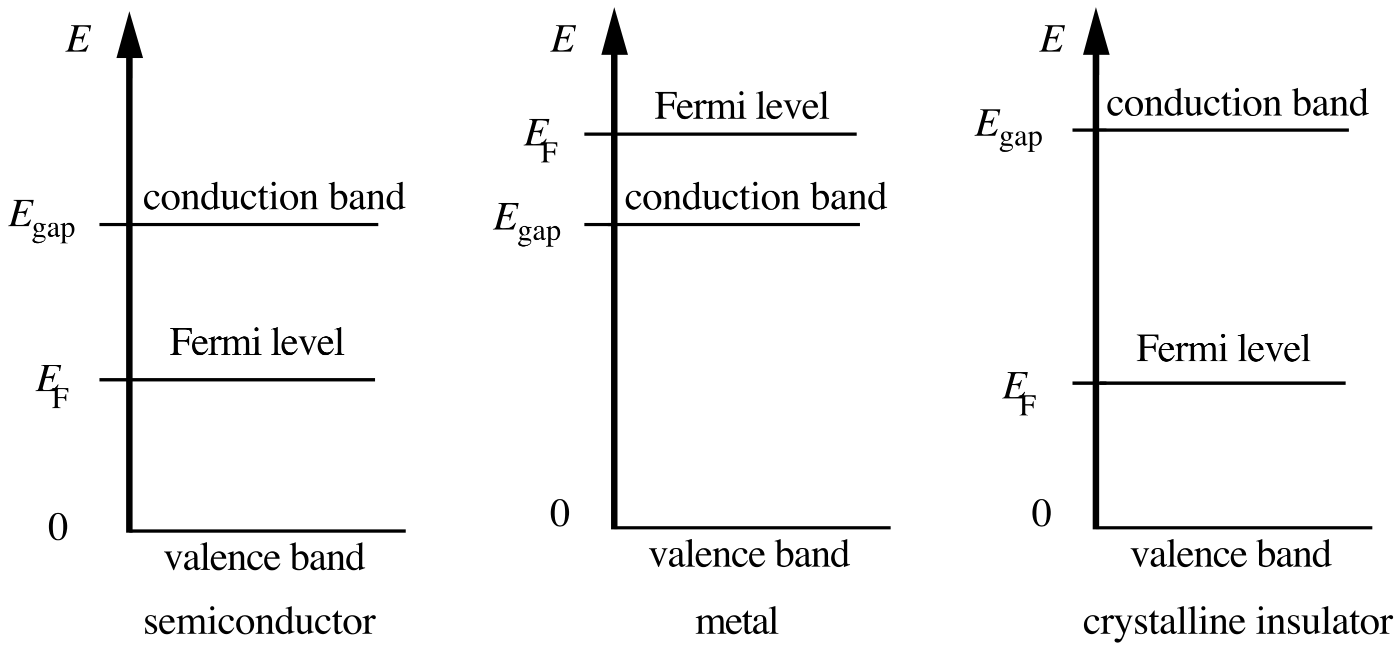
    $I = I_s e^{39V}$ if $V > 0$

    $I = -I_s$ if $V < 0$.

- Effective resistance of forward biased diode ($V > 0$):

  $dV/dI = (kT/e)/I \approx 25\ \Omega/I$, $I$ in mA

- What's a diode made out of?
  - Semiconductors!
  - The energy levels of a semiconductor can be modified
    - ☞ a material (e.g. silicon or germanium) that is normally an insulator will conduct electricity.
  - Energy level structure of a semiconductor is complicated, requires quantum mechanical treatment.

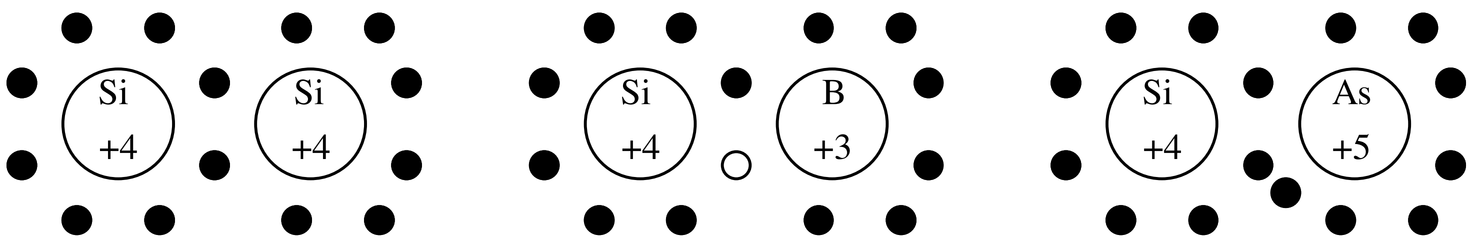



| **Material** | **Example** | **Resistivity (Ω-cm)** |
|---|---|---|
| Conductor | Copper | $1.56\times10^{-6}$ |
| Semiconductor | Silicon | $10^{3}$-$10^{6}$ |
| Insulator | Ceramics | $10^{11}$-$10^{14}$ |

- How do we turn a semiconductor into a conductor?
  - *Dope it!*
  - Doping is a process where impurities are added to the semiconductor to lower its resistivity
  - Silicon has 4 electrons in its valence level
  - We add atoms with 3 or 5 valence shell electrons to a piece of silicon.
    - Phosphorous, Arsenic, Antimony have 5 valence electrons
    - Boron, Aluminum, Indium have 3 valence electrons

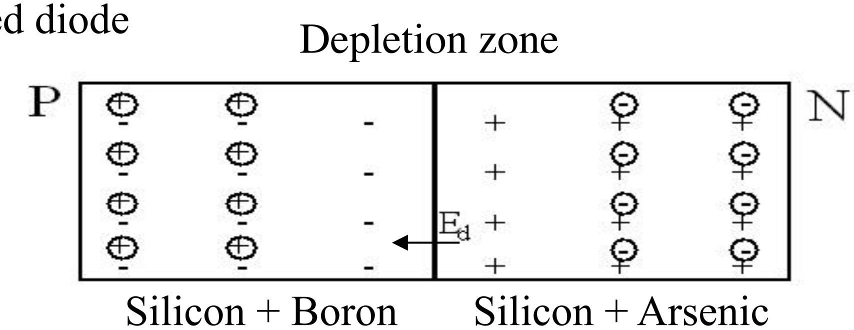
- **N** type silicon:
  - Adding atoms which have 5 valence electrons makes the silicon more negative.
  - The majority carriers are the excess electrons.

- **P** type silicon
  - Adding atoms which have 3 valence electrons makes the silicon more positive.
  - The majority carriers are "holes".
    - A hole is the lack of an electron in the valence shell.




Normal Silicon    P Type Silicon    N Type Silicon

- How do we make a diode?
  - Put a piece of N type silicon next to a piece of P type silicon.
- Unbiased diode

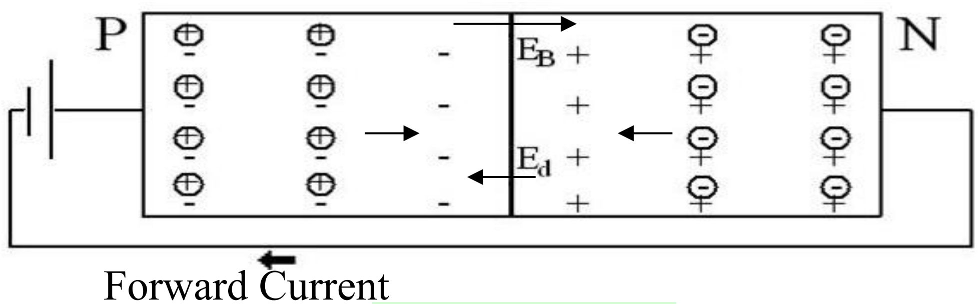



Very small leakage current

⊖ mobile electron
⊕ mobile hole
\- fixed ionized acceptor atom
\+ fixed ionized doner atom

- Forward biased diode

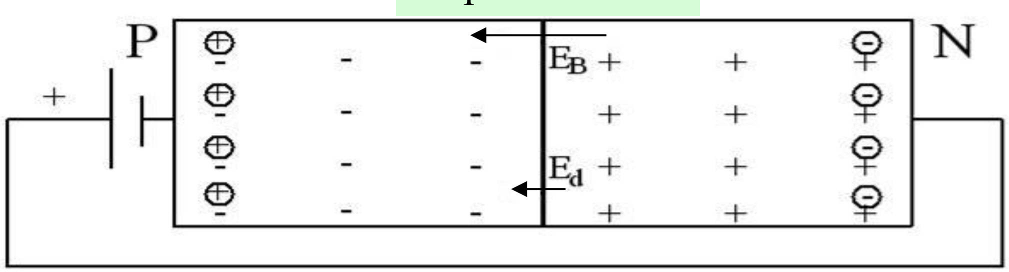
Very small depletion zone




Barrier due to depletion region very small
➔ large current can flow

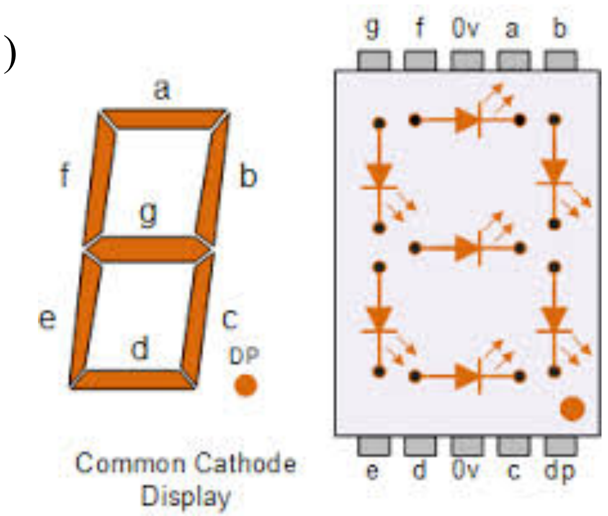
- Reversed biased diode

Very large depletion zone

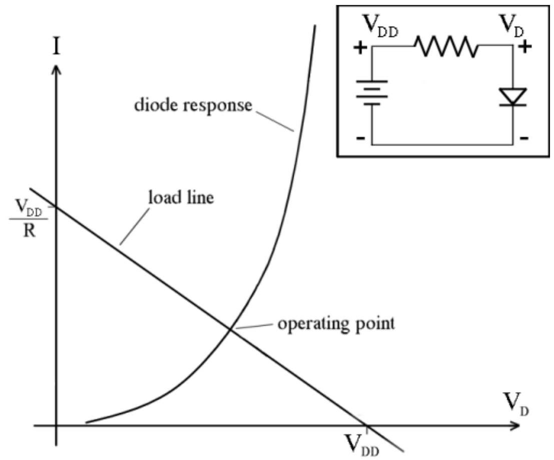



Barrier due to depletion region very large
➔ small leakage current

- diode characteristics
    - reverse voltage and current
    - peak current and voltage
    - capacitance
    - recovery time
    - sensitivity to temperature
- types of diodes
    - junction diode (ordinary type)
    - light emitting (LED)
        - "direct band gap" material: both holes and electrons have the same momentum
            - electron falls into a lower energy level when it meets a hole
            - energy is released in the form of a photon (light)
    - photodiodes (absorbs light, gives current)
    - Schottky (high speed switch, low turn on voltage,  Al. on Silicon)
    - zener (special junction diode, use reversed biased)
    - tunnel ($I$ vs. $V$ slightly different than jd's, negative resistance!)
    - veractor (junction capacitance varies with voltage)



- Examples of Diode Circuits
  - Simplest Circuit: What's voltage drop across diode?




  - In diode circuits we still use Kirchhoff' s law:

$$V_{DD} = V_D + IR$$

$$I = V_{DD}/R - V_D/R$$

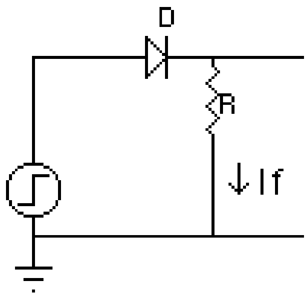
  - For this circuit $I$ vs. $V_D$ is a straight line with the following limits:

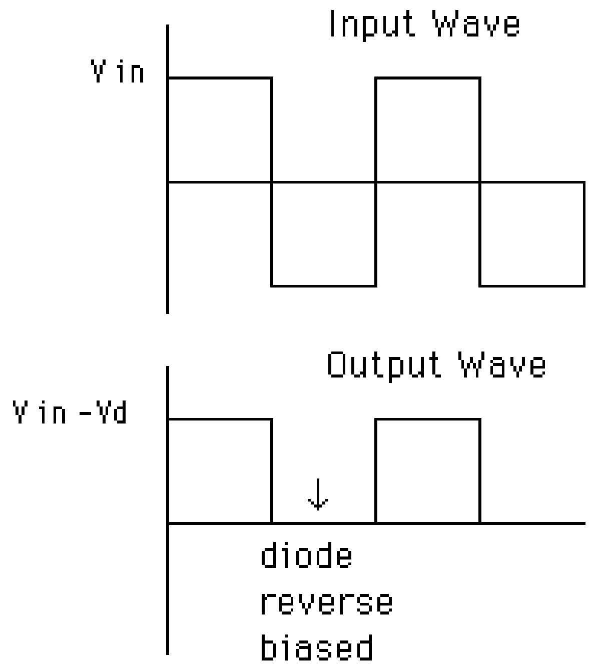
$$V_D = 0 \quad \Rightarrow \quad I = V_{DD}/R$$

$$V_D = V_{DD} \quad \Rightarrow \quad I = 0$$

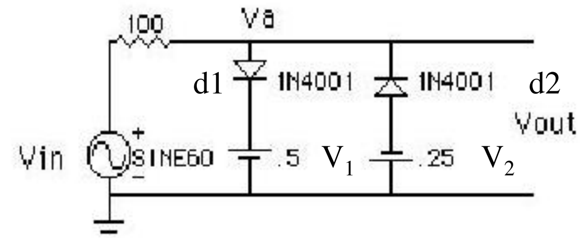
    - The straight line (load line) is all possible ($V_D$, $I$) for the **circuit**.
    - The diode curve is all possible ($V_D$, $I$) for the **diode**.
    - The place where these two lines intersect gives the actual voltage and current for <u>this</u> circuit.

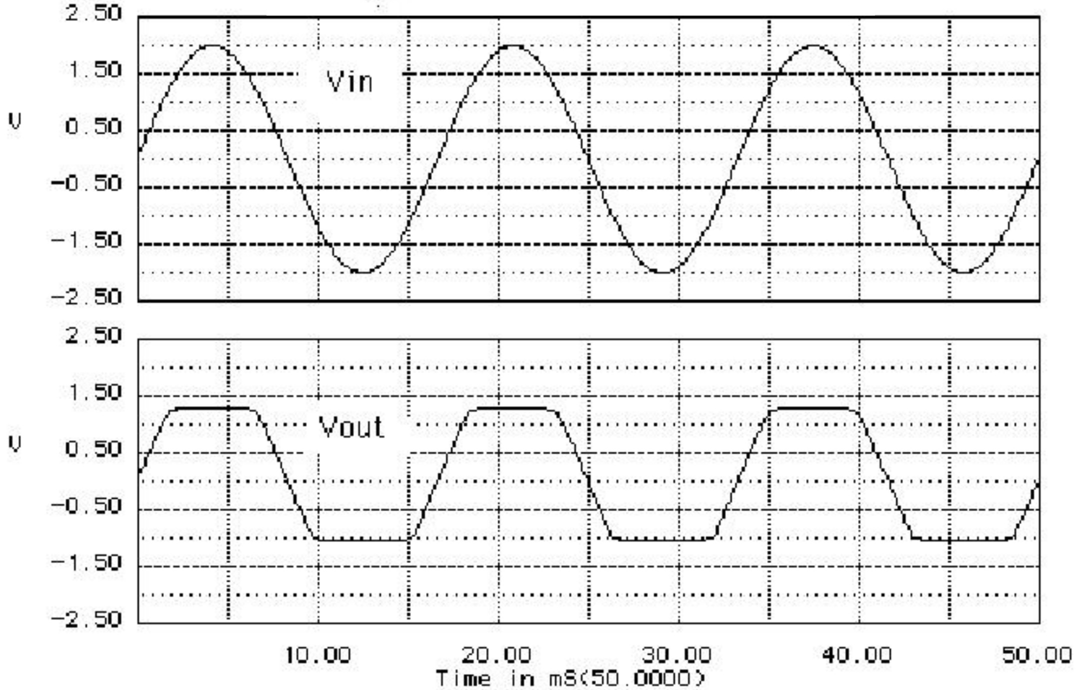
- Diode Protection (clipping and clamping)
  - The following circuit will get rid of the negative part of the input wave.
  - When the diode is negative biased, no current can flow in the resistor, so $V_{out} = 0$.



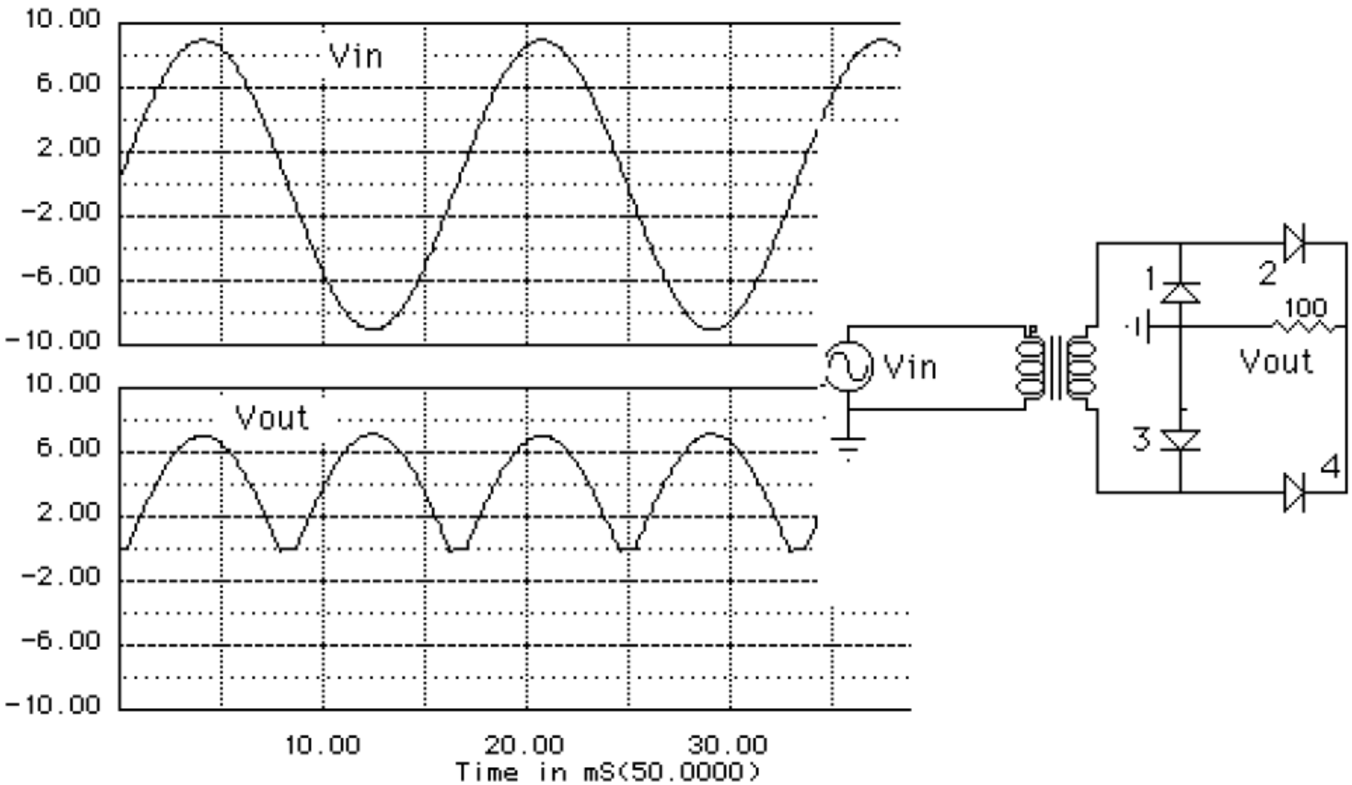
- For more protection consider the following "clipping" circuit: for silicon $V_d \approx 0.6\text{-}0.7$ V



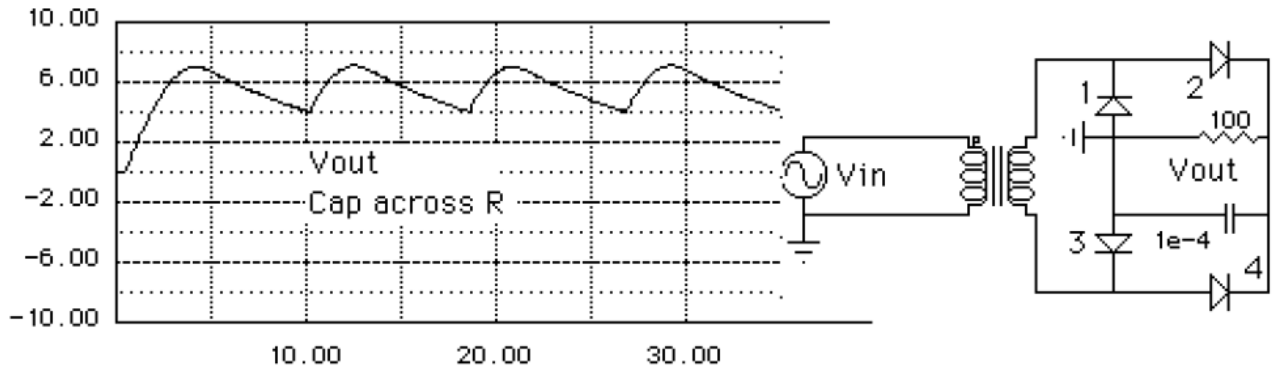




  - If $V_a > V_{d1} + V_1$, then diode 1 conducts so $V_{out} \leq V_{d1} + V_1$.
  - If $V_a < - V_{d2} - V_2$, then diode 2 conducts so $V_{out} \geq - V_{d2} - V_2$.
  - If we assume $V_{d1} = V_{d2} \approx 0.7$ V and $V_1 = 0.5$, $V_2 = 0.25$ V,
    - for $V_{in} > 1.2$ V, d1 conducts
    - for $V_{in} < -0.95$ V, d2 conducts

- Turning AC into DC (rectifier circuits)
  - Consider the following circuit with 4 diodes: full wave rectifier.



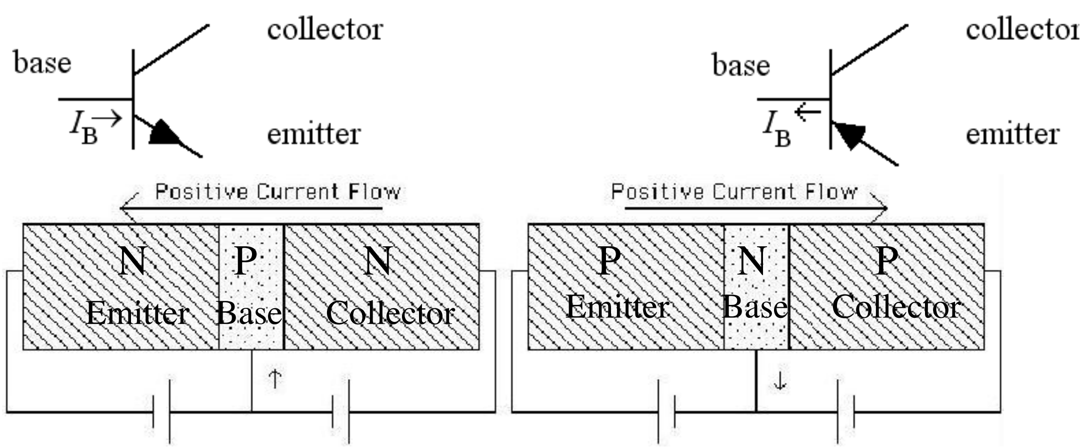

  - In the positive part of $V_{in}$, diodes 2 and 3 conduct.
  - In negative part of the cycle, diodes 1 and 4 conduct.
  - This circuit has lots of ripple.
    - We can reduce ripple by putting a capacitor across the load resistor.
    - Pick *RC* time constant such that: $RC > 1/(60\text{ Hz}) = 16.6$ msec.
      - example: $R = 100\ \Omega$ and $C = 100\ \mu F$ to reduce ripple




## Transistors:

- Transistors are the heart of modern electronics (replaced vacuum tubes)
  - voltage and current amplifier circuits
  - low power and small size, can pack millions of transistors in $mm^2$ (chips in cell phones/laptops)
- In this class we will only consider *bipolar* transistors.
  - Bipolar transistors have 3 leads: emitter, base, collector
  - Bipolar transistors are two diodes back to back and come in two forms:

NPN PNP




Arrow is always on the emitter and is in the direction of positive current flow

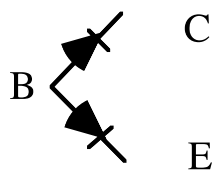
- N material has excess negative charge (electrons).
- P material has excess positive charge (holes).

- Some **simple** rules for getting transistors to work

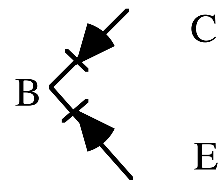
1. For NPN (PNP) collector must be more positive (negative) in voltage than emitter.

2. Base-emitter and base-collector are like diodes:

NPN




PNP

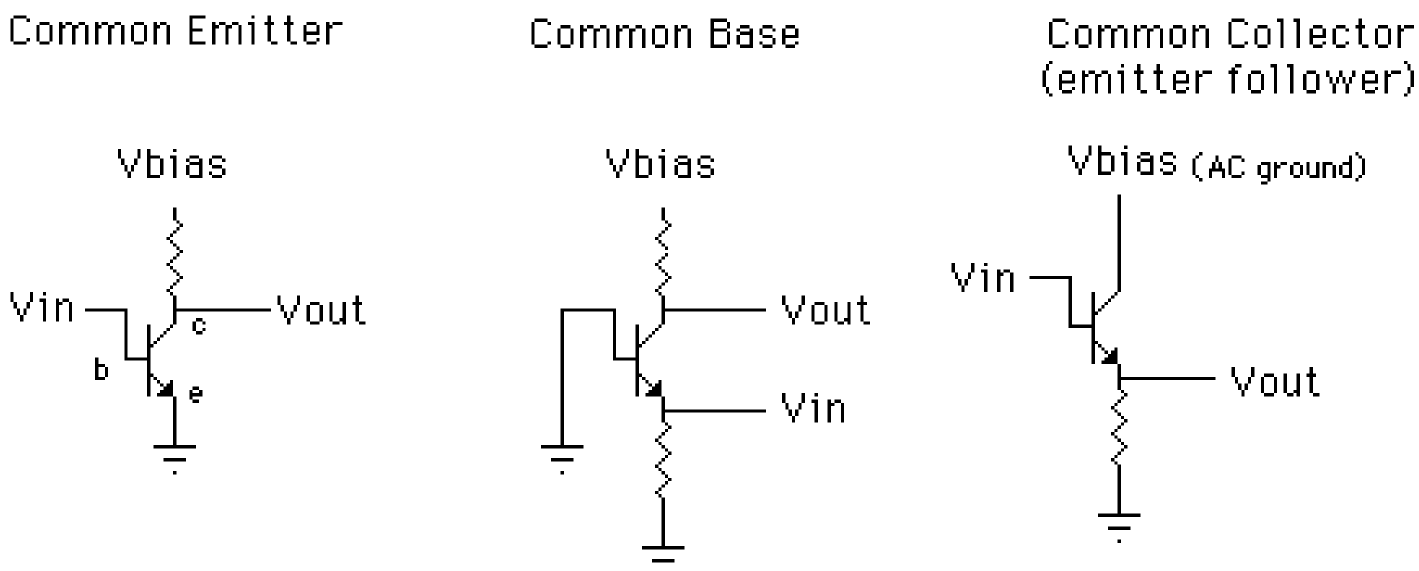



☞ For silicon transistors, $\boldsymbol{V_{BE}} \approx$ **0.6-0.7 V** when transistor is **on**.

3. The currents in the base ($I_B$), collector ($I_C$) and emitter ($I_E$) are related as follows:
   - always: $I_B + I_C = I_E$
   - rough rule: $I_C \approx I_E$, and the base current is very small ($\approx 0.01\ I_C$)
   - Better approximation uses 2 related constants, $\alpha$ and $\beta$.
     - $I_C = \beta I_B$
       - $\beta$ is called the current gain, typically 20-200
     - $I_C = \alpha I_E$
       - $\alpha$ typically 0.99
   - Still better approximation:
     - uses 4 (hybrid) parameters to describe transistor performance ($\beta = h_{fe}$)
     - when all else fails, resort to the data sheets!

4. Common sense: must not exceed the power rating, current rating etc. or else the transistor dies.

- Transistor Amplifiers
  - Transistor has 3 legs, one of them is usually grounded.
  - Classify amplifiers by what is common (*grounded*).

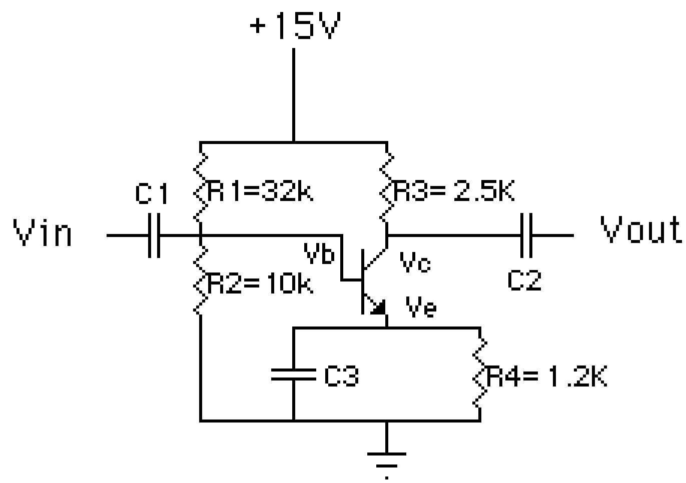



**Properties of Amplifiers**

| | C E | C B | C C |
|---|---|---|---|
| Power gain | Y | Y | Y |
| Voltage gain | Y | Y | N |
| Current gain | Y | N | Y |
| Input impedance | ≈ 3.5 kΩ | ≈ 30 Ω | ≈ 500 kΩ |
| Output impedance | ≈ 200 kΩ | ≈ 3 MΩ | ≈ 35 Ω |
| Output voltage phase change | $180^0$ | none | none |

- Biasing Transistors
  - For an amplifier to work properly it must be biased **on** all the time, not just when a signal is present.
  - "On" means current is flowing through the transistor (therefore $V_{BE} \approx 0.6$-$0.7$ V).
  - We usually use a DC circuit ($R_1$ and $R_2$ in the circuit below) to achieve the biasing.

- Calculating the operating (DC or quiescent) point of a Common Emitter Amplifier:




Common Emitter Amp

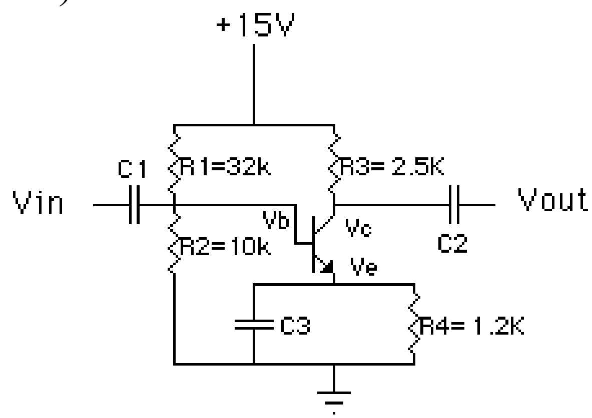
  - We want to determine the operating (quiescent) point of the circuit.
  - This is a fancy way of saying what's $V_B$, $V_E$, $V_C$, $V_{CE}$, $I_C$, $I_B$, $I_E$ when the transistor is on, but $V_{in} = 0$.
  - The capacitors $C_1$ and $C_2$ are decoupling capacitors, they block DC voltages.
  - $C_3$ is a bypass capacitor that provides the AC ground (common).

- **Crude Method** for determining operating point when no spec sheets are available.
  a. Remember $I_B = I_C/\beta$ and $\beta \approx 100$ (typical value).
     ☞ we can <u>neglect</u> the current into the base since it's much smaller than $I_C$ or $I_E$.
  b. If transistor is "working" then $V_{BE} \approx 0.6\text{-}0.7$ V (silicon transistor).
  c. Determine $V_B$ using $R_1$ and $R_2$ as a voltage divider

$$V_B = 15\text{ V}\frac{R_2}{R_1 + R_2} = 3.6\text{ V}$$

  d. Find $V_E$ using $V_B - V_E = 0.6\text{ V} \Rightarrow V_E = 3$ V.
  e. $I_E = V_E / R_4 = 3\text{V}/12\text{ k}\Omega = 2.5$ mA.
  f. Use the approximation $I_C = I_E \Rightarrow I_C = 2.5$ mA.
  g. $V_C = 15\text{ V} - I_C R_3 = 15 - 2.5\text{ mA} \times 2.5\text{ k}\Omega = 8.75$ V.
  h. $V_{CE} = 8.75 - 3 = 5.75$ V.

  ☞ The voltages at every point in the circuit are now determined!!!



Common Emitter Amp

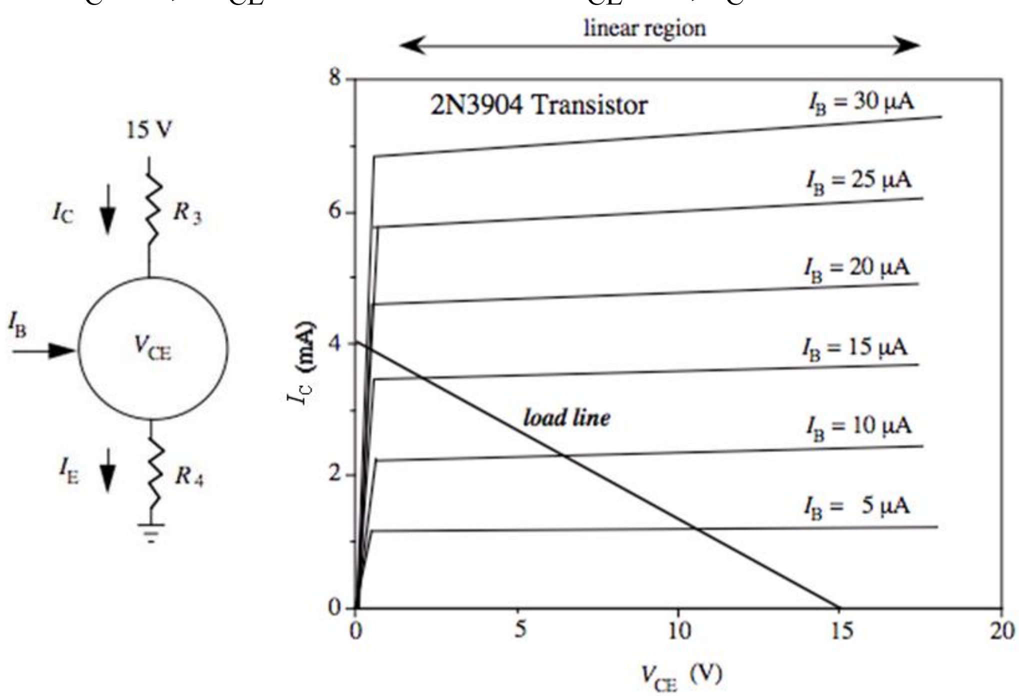
- **Spec Sheet or Load line method**
  - Much more accurate than previous method.
  - Load line is set of all possible values of $I_C$ vs. $V_{CE}$ for the circuit in hand.
  - Assume same circuit as previous page and we know $R_3$ and $R_4$.
  - If we neglect the base current, then

$$15 = I_C(R_3 + R_4) + V_{CE}$$

$$I_C = 15/(R_3 + R_4) - V_{CE}/(R_3 + R_4)$$

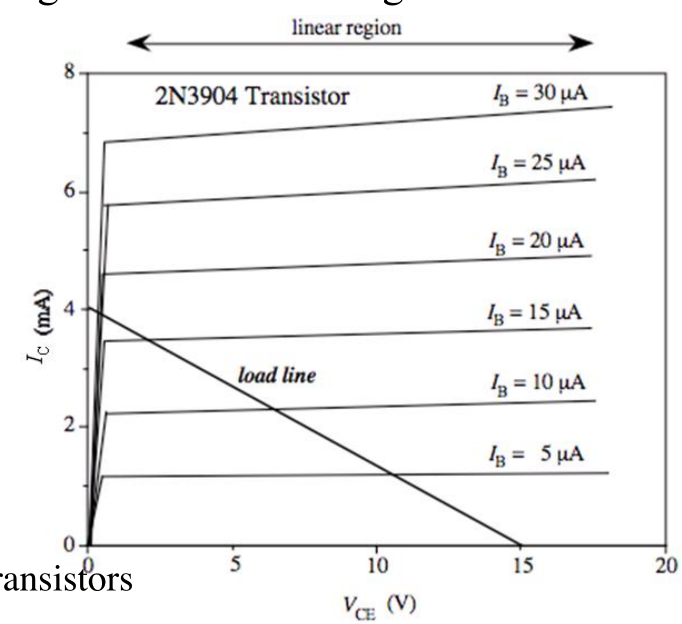
  - The above is a straight line in ($I_C$, $V_{CE}$) space.
    - This line is the load line.
  - Assume $R_3 + R_4 = 3.75$ kΩ, then we can plot the load line from the two limits:

$I_C = 0$, $V_{CE} = 15$ V and $V_{CE} = 0$, $I_C = 15$ V/ 3.75 kΩ = 4 mA




Spec. Sheet of 2N3904 transistor: $I_C$ vs. $V_{CE}$ for various $I_B$

- *We want the operating point to be in the linear region of the transistor*
  - ☞ we want the output to be a linear representation of the input.
- Pick the operating point such that for reasonable changes in $V_{CE}$, $I_C$
  - ☞ the circuit stays out of the non-linear region and has $I_C > 0$.
    - $I_C$ must be > 0 or transistor won't conduct current in the "correct" direction!
    - If circuit is in nonlinear region then $V_{out}$ is a distorted version of $V_{in}$.
    - If circuit is in region where $I_C = 0$ then $V_{out}$ is "clipped".
- If we pick $I_C = 2.5$ mA as operating point
  - $V_{CE} > 0.5$ is the linear region.
  - Usually pick $I_C$ to be in the middle of the linear region.
  - ☞ amp will respond the same way to symmetric (around operating point) output voltage swings.
- If $I_C = 2.5$ mA and $I_B = 10$-$11$ μA
  - ☞ $V_{CE} = 5$-$6$ V
- Can now choose the values for resistors ($R_1$, $R_2$) to give the above voltages and currents.



## Current Gain Calculation from Spec Sheet

- We define current gain as:

  $G = \Delta I_{out} / \Delta I_{in}$
  - This quantity is often called $\beta$.
  - In our example $I_B$ is the input and $I_C$ is the output.
- If we are in the linear region ($V_{CE} > 0.5$ V) and the base current changes from 5 to 10 μA
  - the collector current ($I_C$) changes from ~ 1.1 to 2.2 mA.
  - $G = (2.2 - 1.1 \text{ mA})/(10 - 5\ \mu\text{A}) \approx 200$
- Like almost all transistor parameters, the exact current gain depends on many parameters:
  - frequency of input voltage
  - $V_{CE}$
  - $I_C$
  - $I_B$