AQA GCSE Chemistry | 8462

SPECIFICATION POINT 4.2.2.4

Properties of small molecules

Past-paper questions

Tier	**Higher**
Question groups	**14**
Available paper years	**2007–2025**

Using this booklet

1. Answer the questions in order and show your working.
2. Original question numbers and marks are retained.
3. Print at actual size (100%) for measuring questions.
4. Use the companion answer booklet to check your work.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Whole questions are retained for context, so some parts assess other specification points. Current and legacy sources are labelled. Continue on extra paper if needed.

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 01

June 2007 | CHY1B | Original Q7 | Legacy

QUESTION SEVEN

A compound, C_4H_{10}, was decomposed by passing it over a hot catalyst.

Analysis showed the product to be a mixture of two different hydrocarbons, hydrocarbon **A** (an alkane) and hydrocarbon **B**.
Both hydrocarbon **A** and hydrocarbon **B** had two carbon atoms in each molecule.

7A Which row in the table shows the correct formulae for these two hydrocarbons?

	Hydrocarbon A	Hydrocarbon B
1	C_2H_6	C_2H_4
2	C_2H_2	C_2H_8
3	C_2H_4	C_2H_6
4	C_2H_5	C_2H_5

7B The boiling point of hydrocarbon **A** is –89 °C and that of hydrocarbon **B** is –104 °C.

They could probably be separated and collected by . . .

1 thermal decomposition.

2 cracking.

3 condensation.

4 polymerisation.

7C Each of the two hydrocarbons was tested with bromine water.

Which row in the table correctly shows what happens to the bromine water?

	With hydrocarbon A	With hydrocarbon B
1	turns green	turns colourless
2	turns colourless	stays yellow-brown
3	stays yellow-brown	turns colourless
4	stays yellow-brown	turns green

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

7D Of these two hydrocarbons, only hydrocarbon **B** can form polymers.

This is because . . .

1 it has a higher boiling point.

2 its molecule has a double carbon carbon bond.

3 its molecule is saturated.

4 it has smaller molecules.

Turn over for the next question

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 02

June 2008 | CHY1AP | Original Q4 | Legacy

QUESTION FOUR

Scientists are researching new catalysts to convert compounds in coal into small hydrocarbon molecules.

These small molecules can be used to make liquid fuels such as petrol.

4A Scientists are trying to develop processes that convert coal into liquid fuels, such as petrol, because . . .

1 they have found new supplies of catalysts.

2 oil reserves are running out quickly.

3 there is no alternative to using coal.

4 catalysts are being used up.

4B Petrol is made from small molecules and **not** large molecules because hydrocarbons with small molecules . . .

1 have a higher boiling point.

2 are more viscous.

3 are darker in colour.

4 ignite more easily.

4C Both petrol and coal produce carbon dioxide when burned.

To compare the volume of the gas produced by a sample of coal with the volume of gas produced by a sample of petrol, a control variable would be . . .

1 how much carbon dioxide is produced.

2 the amount of coal and petrol used.

3 the speed at which each fuel is set alight.

4 the time taken to burn all the fuel.

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

4D Ethanol, made from plant material, is another liquid fuel used in cars.

Ethanol and petrol produce similar amounts of carbon dioxide when they burn.

Burning ethanol made from plant material, in cars, is thought to be less of an environmental problem than burning petrol.

This is because . . .

1 ethanol does **not** produce water when it burns.

2 using ethanol made from plants as a fuel does **not** change the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

3 ethanol will burn without using oxygen.

4 in the car engine, only partial combustion of the ethanol occurs.

Turn over for the next question

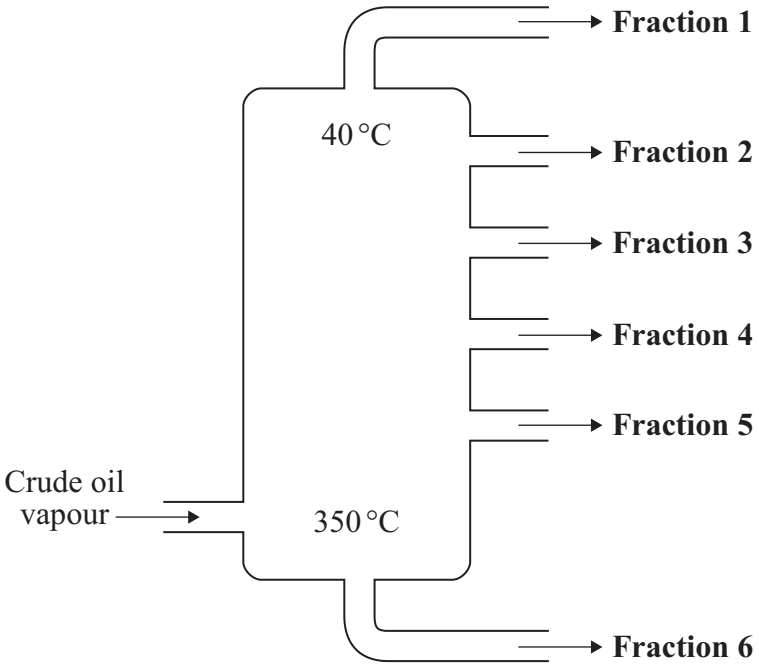
4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 03

March 2009 | CHY1AP | Original Q6 | Legacy

QUESTION SIX

Crude oil vapour can be separated into a number of fractions.



6A Crude oil vapour enters the fractionating column.

What happens as the vapour cools?

1 The fractions separate because they have different densities.

2 The fractions condense at 40 °C.

3 The fractions condense at different temperatures.

4 The fractions condense at 350 °C.

6B **Fraction 6** will contain . . .

1 alkanes with high boiling points.

2 alkanes with a small number of carbon atoms in each molecule.

3 only hydrocarbons that are unsaturated.

4 only hydrocarbons with low boiling points.

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 03 · continued March 2009 | CHY1AP | Original Q6 | Legacy

6C **Fraction 1** contains the alkanes called methane, ethane, propane and butane.

By what process could pure methane be obtained from this fraction?

1 evaporation

2 electrolysis

3 thermal decomposition

4 fractional distillation

6D Which of these statements is correct for the alkanes?

1 They are a series of compounds with the general formula C_nH_{2n+1}

2 They are saturated compounds.

3 Most are gases at room temperature (20 °C), some are liquids, none are solids.

4 Their molecules have a carbon : hydrogen ratio of 1 : 4

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 04

June 2009 | CHY2H | Original Q6 | Legacy

6 Perfumes contain a mixture of chemicals.



The main ingredients of perfumes are a solvent and a mixture of fragrances.

6 (a) A sample of the solvent used in one perfume contained 0.60 g of carbon, 0.15 g of hydrogen and 0.40 g of oxygen.

Relative atomic masses: H = l; C = 12; O = 16.

Calculate the empirical (simplest) formula of the solvent.

You must show all of your working to gain full marks for this question.

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(4 marks)

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 04 · continued

for mark

6 (b) Solvent molecules evaporate easily.

Explain why substances made of simple molecules evaporate easily.

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(2 marks)

6 (c) Most companies claim that their perfumes have been tested on skin. A study was made of the tests they used. The study found that each company used different tests. The perfumes were tested in the companies' own laboratories and **not** by independent scientists.

Some companies did not give any information about the tests that they had used.

6 (c) (i) Suggest why companies test their perfumes on skin.

.....

.....

.....

(1 mark)

6 (c) (ii) Did the study show that the tests made by the different companies were valid and reliable?

Explain your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

(2 marks)

9

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 05

3 (a) The table gives information about two isotopes of hydrogen, hydrogen-1 and hydrogen-2.

	Hydrogen-1	Hydrogen-2
Atomic number	1	1
Mass number	1	2

An atom of hydrogen-1 is represented as: $^{1}_{1}\mathbf{H}$

Show how an atom of hydrogen-2 is represented.

(1 mark)

3 (b) (i) Calculate the relative formula mass (M_r) of water, H_2O

Relative atomic masses: H = 1; O = 16.

.....

.....

Relative formula mass (M_r) = ...

(1 mark)

3 (b) (ii) Simple molecules like water have low boiling points.

Explain why, in terms of molecules.

.....

.....

.....

.....

(2 marks)

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 05 · continued

for mark

3 (c) Molecules of heavy water contain two atoms of hydrogen-2 instead of two atoms of hydrogen-1.

Explain why a molecule of heavy water has more mass than a normal water molecule. You should refer to the particles in the nucleus of the two different hydrogen atoms in your answer.

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.....

(2 marks)

6

Turn over for the next question

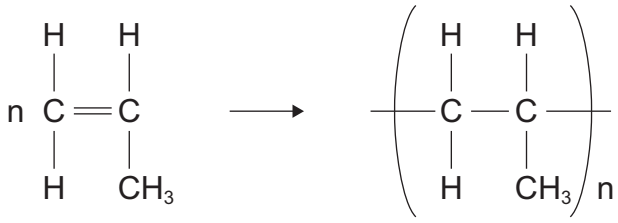
4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 06

March 2011 | CHY1BP | Original Q4 | Legacy

QUESTION FOUR

The equation shows a chemical reaction.



Small molecules of hydrocarbon **X**

Large molecule of hydrocarbon **Y**

4A Hydrocarbon **X** is . . .

1 an alkane.

2 a polymer.

3 an alkene.

4 a catalyst.

4B Hydrocarbon **Y** is . . .

1 an unsaturated compound.

2 a polymer.

3 an alkene.

4 a monomer.

4C Poly(propene) is a thermosoftening polymer so it **cannot** be used to make . . .

1 buckets.

2 food containers.

3 non-stick coating for frying pans.

4 washing-up bowls.

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 06 · continued

4D Putting poly(propene) and other polymer waste into landfill creates a problem because this type of waste . . .

1 is very lightweight and blows about.

2 is not biodegradable.

3 does not dissolve in water.

4 is very dense and sinks deep underground.

Turn over for the next question

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 07

0 6 This question is about polymers.

0 6 . 1 Polyesters are produced when monomers join together and lose a small molecule.

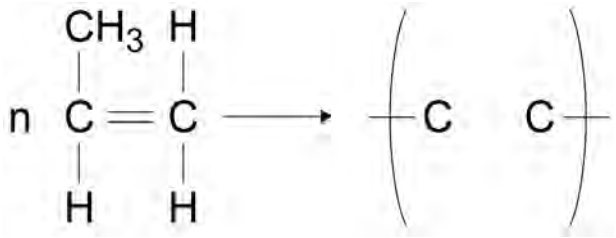
Name the small molecule lost.

[1 mark]

0 6 . 2 Poly(propene) is produced from propene.

Complete the structure of poly(propene) in the equation.

[3 marks]



0 6 . 3 Carpets are made from:

- poly(propene)
- wool
- a mixture of poly(propene) and wool.

Poly(propene) wears out more slowly than wool.

A mixture of poly(propene) and wool to make carpets is more sustainable than using just poly(propene) or just wool.

Suggest why.

[2 marks]

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 07 · continued

Polymer fibres are used to make firefighter uniforms.

Table 3 shows some properties of two polymer fibres.

Table 3

	Polymer fibres	
Property	**Poly(propene)**	**Polyester**
Density in g/cm^3	0.90	1.38
Melting point in °C	165	260
Flame resistance	Poor	Good
Water absorption	Low	High

0 6 . 4 Evaluate the suitability of poly(propene) and polyester for firefighter uniforms.

[4 marks]

10

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 08

June 2019 | 8462/2H | Original Q6

0 6 **Figure 5** shows a surfer on a surfboard.

Figure 5



Surfboards are made from polymers.

Surfboards have a poly(styrene) core and an outer skin.

0 6 . 1 **Figure 6** shows the displayed structural formula of poly(styrene).

Figure 6

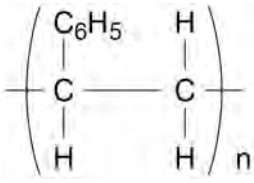
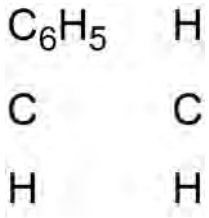


Figure 7 shows an incomplete displayed structural formula of the monomer styrene.

Complete **Figure 7**.

[2 marks]

Figure 7



4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 08 · continued

The outer skin of surfboards contains a polyester.

Two monomers, **A** and **B**, are needed to make the polyester.

Figure 8 shows how these two monomers are represented.

Figure 8



Monomer **A** Monomer **B**

0 6 . 2 Name the functional group in monomer **B**.

[1 mark]

0 6 . 3 Monomers **A** and **B** join together to produce a polyester and a small molecule.

Name the small molecule.

[1 mark]

0 6 . 4 Why does this type of polyester melt when it is heated?

[2 marks]

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 08 · continued

The outer skin of surfboards is a composite material.

The composite material contains glass fibres surrounded by a polyester.

0 6 . 5 Draw **one** line from each material to the description of that material.

[2 marks]

Material	Description of the material
	Hydrocarbon
Glass fibres	Matrix
	Monomer
Polyester	Polypeptide
	Reinforcement

0 6 . 6 The outer skin makes the surfboard more expensive.

Suggest **two** reasons why an outer skin is added to the poly(styrene) core.

[2 marks]

1 _____

_____

2 _____

_____

10

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 09

November 2020 | 8462/1H | Original Q1

0 1 This question is about structure and bonding.

0 1 . 1 Which **two** substances have intermolecular forces between particles?

[2 marks]

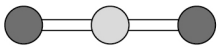
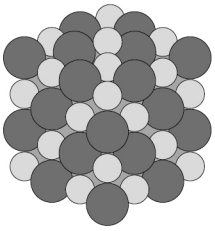
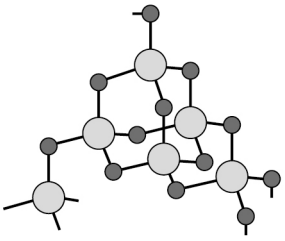
Tick (✓) **two** boxes.

- Diamond ☐
- Magnesium ☐
- Poly(ethene) ☐
- Sodium chloride ☐
- Water ☐

0 1 . 2 **Table 1** shows the structures of three compounds.

Table 1

Diagrams not to scale

Compound	Structure
Carbon dioxide	
Magnesium oxide	
Silicon dioxide	

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 09 · continued

Compare the structure and bonding of the three compounds:

- carbon dioxide
- magnesium oxide
- silicon dioxide.

[6 marks]

8

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 10

November 2021 | 8462/1H | Original Q1

0 1 This question is about carbon and its compounds.

Fullerenes are molecules of carbon atoms.

The first fullerene to be discovered was Buckminsterfullerene (C_{60}).

0 1 . 1 What shape is a Buckminsterfullerene molecule?

[1 mark]

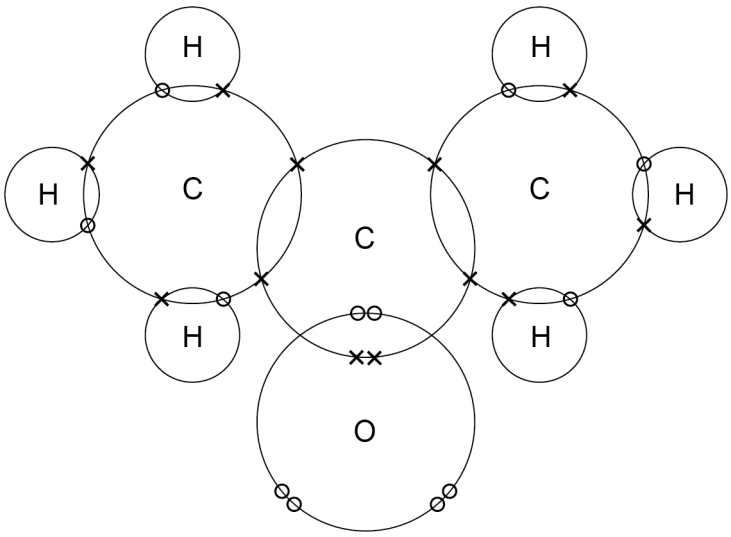
0 1 . 2 Give **one** use of a fullerene.

[1 mark]

Propanone is a compound of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen.

Figure 1 shows the dot and cross diagram for a propanone molecule.

Figure 1



4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 10 · continued

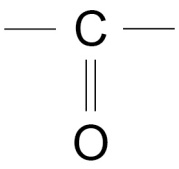
0 1 . 3 Complete **Figure 2** to show a propanone molecule.

Use a line to represent each single bond.

Use **Figure 1**.

[1 mark]

Figure 2



0 1 . 4 Determine the molecular formula of propanone.

Use **Figure 1**.

[1 mark]

Molecular formula = _____

0 1 . 5 Propanone is a liquid with a low boiling point.

Why does propanone have a low boiling point?

[1 mark]

Tick (✓) **one** box.

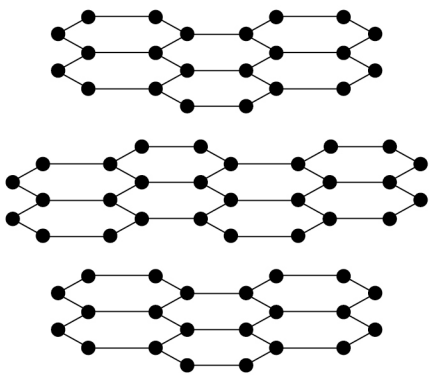
- The covalent bonds are strong. ☐
- The covalent bonds are weak. ☐
- The intermolecular forces are strong. ☐
- The intermolecular forces are weak. ☐

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 10 · continued

0 1 . 6 **Figure 3** represents the structure of graphite.

Figure 3



Explain why graphite is:

- a good electrical conductor
- soft and slippery.

You should answer in terms of structure and bonding.

[6 marks]

11

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 11

November 2021 | 8462/2H | Original Q4

0 4 This question is about poly(ethene) and polyesters.

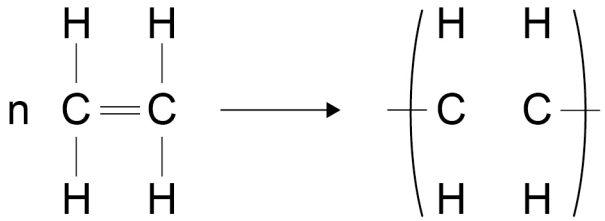
0 4 . 1 Poly(ethene) is produced from ethene.

Figure 3 shows part of the displayed structural formula equation for the reaction.

Complete **Figure 3**.

[2 marks]

Figure 3



0 4 . 2 Poly(ethene) is a thermosoftening polymer.

Suggest why poly(ethene) is easier to recycle than thermosetting polymers.

[2 marks]

0 4 . 3 Ethene produces different forms of poly(ethene).

How can different forms of poly(ethene) be produced from ethene?

[1 mark]

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 11 · continued

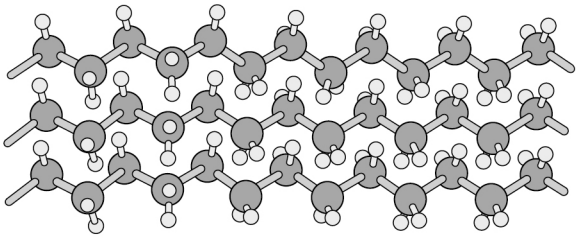
0 4 . 4 Two different forms of poly(ethene) are:

- high density poly(ethene) (HDPE)
- low density poly(ethene) (LDPE).

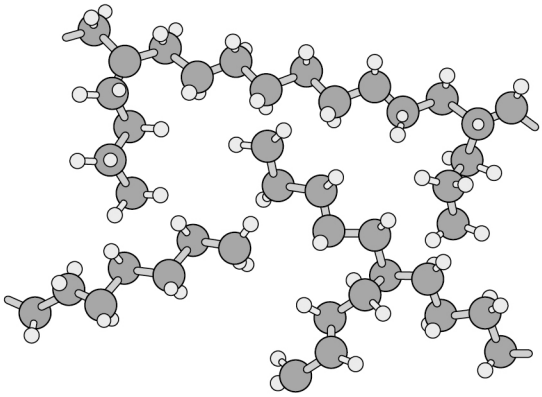
Figure 4 represents part of the structures of HDPE and LDPE.

Figure 4

HDPE



LDPE



Explain why HDPE has a higher density than LDPE.

[2 marks]

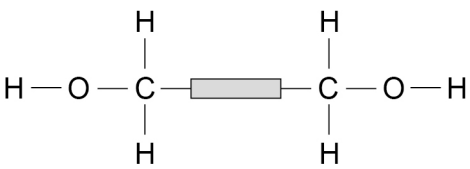
Question 4 continues on the next page.

Question 11 · continued

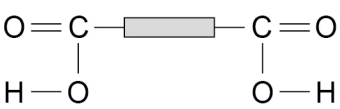
Figure 5 shows three monomers, **A**, **B** and **C**.

Monomer **A** can react with monomer **B** and with monomer **C** to produce polyesters.

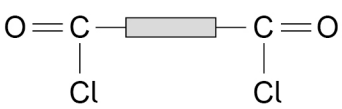
Figure 5



Monomer **A**



Monomer **B**



Monomer **C**

0 4 . 5 Draw a circle on **Figure 5** around an alcohol functional group.

[1 mark]

0 4 . 6 Complete **Table 2** to show the formula of the small molecule produced when:

- monomer **A** reacts with monomer **B**
- monomer **A** reacts with monomer **C**.

[1 mark]

Table 2

Reacting monomers	Formula of small molecule produced
A and **B**	
A and **C**	

9

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

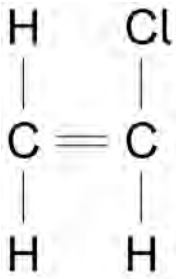
Question 12

June 2023 | 8462/2H | Original Q8

0 8 This question is about polymers.

Chloroethene can be used to produce an addition polymer called poly(chloroethene).

The displayed structural formula of chloroethene is

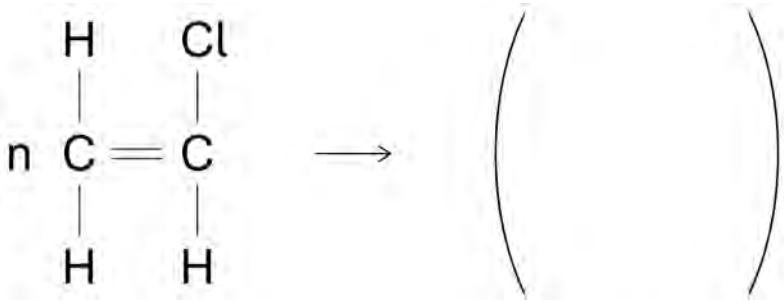


0 8 . 1 Draw a circle around the functional group on the displayed structural formula that allows chloroethene to produce an addition polymer.

[1 mark]

0 8 . 2 Complete the equation for the production of poly(chloroethene) from chloroethene.

[3 marks]



0 8 . 3 Poly(ethene) can be strengthened with wood particles to make a building material.

The building material consists of a wood particle reinforcement embedded in a poly(ethene) matrix.

What general name is given to materials like this?

[1 mark]

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 12 · continued

0 8 . 4 The amino acid beta-alanine has the formula

$H_2NCH_2CH_2COOH$

Beta-alanine polymerises to produce a polypeptide and a small molecule.

Name the small molecule produced when beta-alanine polymerises.

[1 mark]

0 8 . 5 An amino acid can be represented as:



The relative formula mass (M_r) of this amino acid is 75

Calculate the relative formula mass of the section of this amino acid molecule represented by



Relative atomic masses (A_r): H = 1 C = 12 N = 14 O = 16

[2 marks]

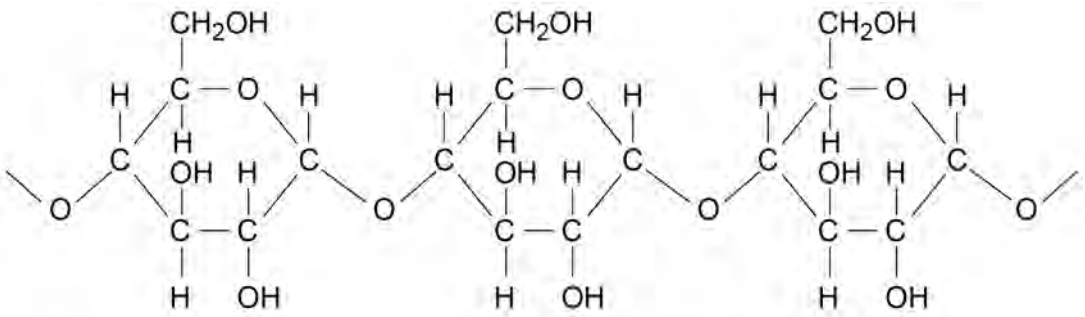
Relative formula mass = _____

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 12 · continued

Figure 6 represents part of a naturally occurring polymer molecule produced from glucose.

Figure 6



0 8 . 6 Draw a circle around the repeating unit in the polymer in **Figure 6**.

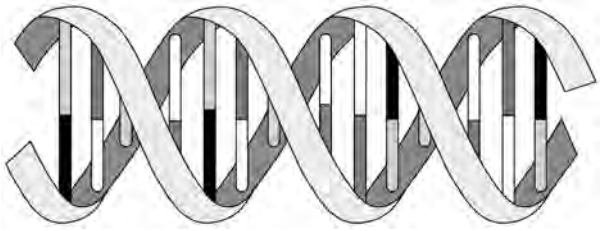
[1 mark]

0 8 . 7 Suggest the identity of this polymer.

[1 mark]

Figure 7 represents the structure of a naturally occurring polymer.

Figure 7



0 8 . 8 Give the general name for the four different monomers which make up the structure shown in **Figure 7**.

[1 mark]

0 8 . 9 Name the **shape** of the structure shown in **Figure 7**.

[1 mark]

12

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 13

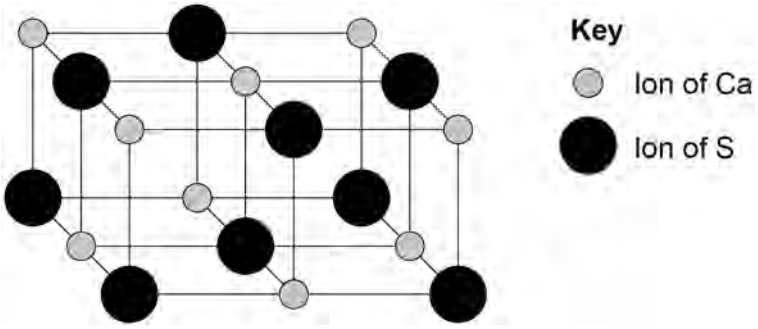
June 2025 | 8462/1H | Original Q2

0 2 This question is about structure and bonding.

Calcium sulfide is an ionic compound.

Figure 2 represents the structure of calcium sulfide.

Figure 2



0 2 . 1 Determine the empirical formula of calcium sulfide.

[1 mark]

Empirical formula _____

Question 2 continues on the next page

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 13 · continued

0 2 . 2 Calcium is in Group 2 of the periodic table.

Sulfur is in Group 6 of the periodic table.

Describe what happens when a calcium atom reacts with a sulfur atom.

Answer in terms of electrons and ions.

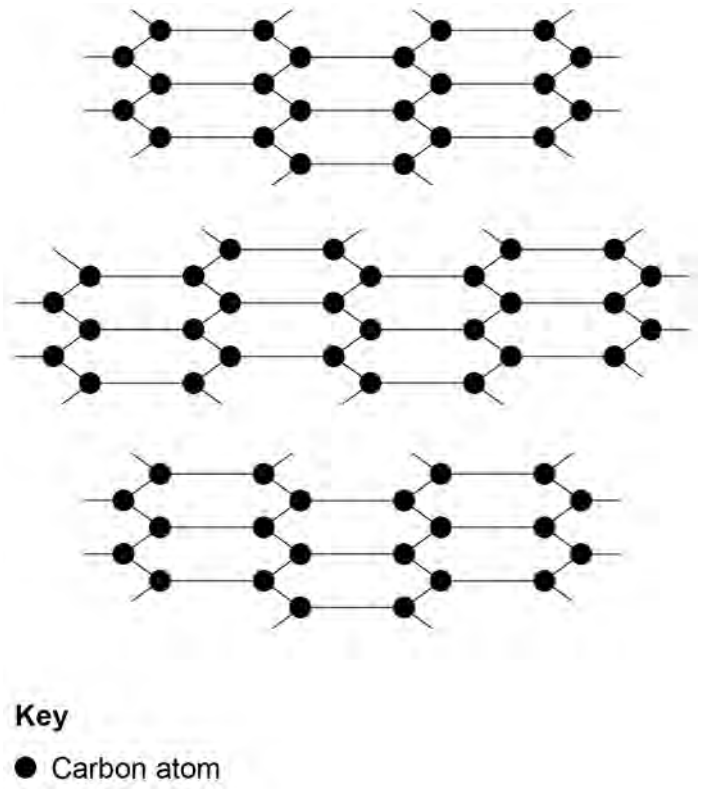
[4 marks]

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 13 · continued

Figure 3 shows the structure of graphite.

Figure 3



0 2 . 3 Describe the structure and bonding of graphite.

[4 marks]

Extra space

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 13 · continued

0 2 . 4 Substances that consist of small molecules do **not** conduct electricity.

Give **one** reason why.

[1 mark]

0 2 . 5 Methane consists of small molecules.

Poly(ethene) is a polymer.

Why does poly(ethene) have a higher melting point than methane?

[1 mark]

Tick (✓) **one** box.

- Poly(ethene) has more covalent bonds to break than methane. ☐
- Poly(ethene) has no intermolecular forces to overcome. ☐
- Poly(ethene) has stronger covalent bonds to break than methane. ☐
- Poly(ethene) has stronger intermolecular forces to overcome than methane. ☐

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4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 14

June 2025 | 8462/2H | Original Q7

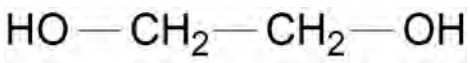
0 7 This question is about polymers.

A condensation polymer is produced from two different compounds, **A** and **B**.

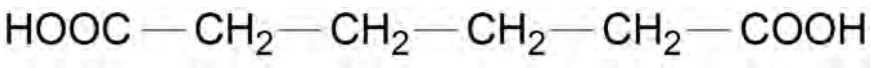
Figure 4 represents a molecule of **A** and a molecule of **B**.

Figure 4

A



B



0 7 . 1 Name compound **A** and compound **B**.

[2 marks]

A _____

B _____

0 7 . 2 Compound **A** and compound **B** react to produce a condensation polymer.

Name the type of condensation polymer produced from compound **A** and compound **B**.

[1 mark]

_____

0 7 . 3 Name the small molecule lost when molecules of compound **A** and of compound **B** react.

[1 mark]

_____

4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 14 · continued

Glycine is an amino acid.

Glycine can produce condensation polymers.

0 7 . 4 Name the type of condensation polymer produced when glycine polymerises.

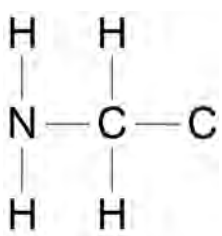
[1 mark]

_____

0 7 . 5 Complete **Figure 5** to show the displayed structural formula of glycine.

[1 mark]

Figure 5



0 7 . 6 Which polymer is produced when different amino acids are combined in the same chain?

[1 mark]

Tick (✓) **one** box.

- Cellulose ☐
- DNA ☐
- Protein ☐
- Starch ☐

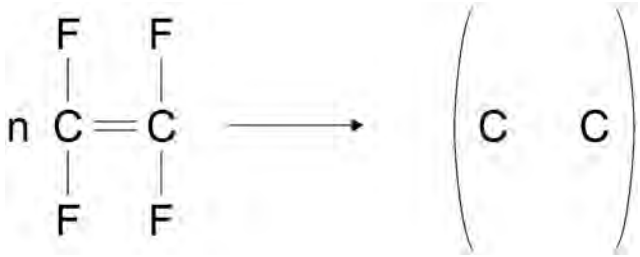
4.2.2.4 Properties of small molecules

Question 14 · continued

The polymer poly(tetrafluoroethene) is produced from the monomer tetrafluoroethene (C_2F_4).

0 7 . 7 Complete the equation for the production of poly(tetrafluoroethene) from tetrafluoroethene.

[3 marks]



0 7 . 8 Poly(tetrafluoroethene) is a thermosoftening polymer.

Some other polymers are thermosetting polymers.

Describe the structure of a thermosetting polymer.

[2 marks]

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