AQA GCSE Combined Science - Trilogy | 8464

SPECIFICATION POINT 5.1.2.1

The periodic table

Mark schemes and examiner comments

Tier	**Foundation**
Question groups	**14**
Available paper years	**2018–2025**

Using this booklet

1. Booklet answer numbers match the question booklet.
2. Use the original question number within marking tables.
3. Examiner comments are included where available.

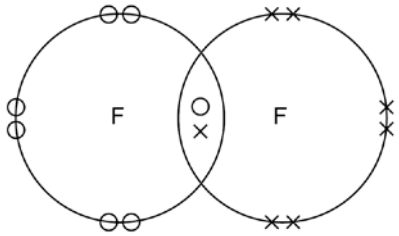
Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Where a precise marking extract is unavailable, the full source document is included in an appendix. Any missing mark scheme is explicitly identified.

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 01 · Mark scheme

June 2018 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q2

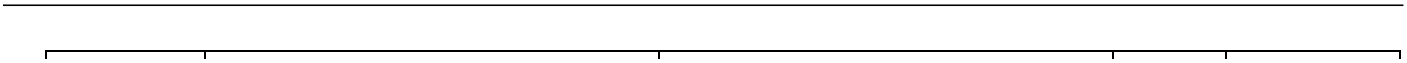
Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.1	group 7		1	AO1 5.1.2.6
02.2		one shared pair anywhere in overlap between two circles **or** on intersection 6 other electrons on each atom allow dots **or** crosses **or** mixture for all marks ignore any inner shell electrons	1 1	AO2 5.1.2.6 5.2.1.4
02.3	bromine potassium chloride	allow correct chemical formulae either order	1 1	AO2 5.1.1.1 5.1.2.6
02.4	displacement		1	AO1 5.1.2.6
02.5	(an) electron		1	AO2 5.1.2.6
02.6	smaller than		1	AO2 5.1.2.1 5.1.2.6

02.7	(chlorine has) fewer levels / shells (of electrons)	mark independent of answer to question **02.6** allow converse for bromine allow (chlorine has) fewer electrons allow Cl has 3 levels / shells and Br has 4 levels / shells ignore atomic number **or** mass number **or** number of protons	1	AO2 5.1.2.1 5.1.2.6
02.8	3	allow multiples	1	AO2 5.1.1.1 5.1.2.6
02.9	there are weak forces between molecules which require little energy to overcome / break	do **not** accept weak bonds allow weak intermolecular forces for the first **2** marks allow does not need much energy to boil	1 1 1	AO1 5.1.2.6 5.2.2.4 AO1 5.1.2.6 5.2.2.4 AO2 5.1.2.6 5.2.2.4
Total			**13**	

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 01 · Mark scheme

June 2018 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q2



5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 02 · Mark scheme

June 2018 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q4

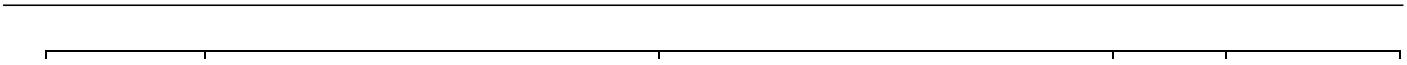
Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
04.1	B		1	AO2 5.1.2.1
04.2	calcium oxide **or** CaO carbon dioxide **or** CO_2	either order	1 1	AO1 5.1.1.1 5.3.1.3
04.3	decomposition		1	AO1 5.3.1.3
04.4	endothermic		1	AO1 5.5.1.1
04.5	32 (g)	allow 31–33 (g)	1	AO2 5.3.1.3
04.6	 $\frac{32}{5.2} \times 24$ 148 (g) **or** uses graph eg 12 dm^3 gives 74 (g) (1) (then factors up so that 24 dm^3 gives) 148 (g) (1)	an answer of 148 (g) scores **2** marks allow ecf from question **04.5** allow a range 143–153 (g) allow a range 143–153 (g)	 1 1	AO3 5.3.1.3

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
04.7		mark mistakes and calculation independently		AO3 5.3.1.3
	(mistakes) increase in mass = 3 (not 4)	allow mistakes in either order	1	
	inserted numbers inversely into formula	allow numbers wrong way round	1	
	(calculation)	an answer of 250 scores the **2** calculation marks	1	
	gradient = $\frac{750}{3}$	allow $\frac{1000}{4}$		
	250 (cm^3 per g)	if no calculation marks awarded allow $\frac{750}{3}$ **or** 187.5 **or** $\frac{3}{750}$ **or** 0.004 for **1** mark	1	
04.8		an answer of 24 scores the **3** calculation marks		AO2 5.3.1.2 5.3.1.3 5.1.1.5
	3 × 16 or 48		1	
	(48) + 12 or 60	allow their mass of oxygen + 12	1	
	84 − (60) **or** 24	allow 84 − their mass of carbonate	1	
	magnesium **or** Mg	magnesium **or** Mg without working scores this mark	1	
Total			**16**	

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 02 · Mark scheme

June 2018 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q4



5.1.2.1 The periodic table

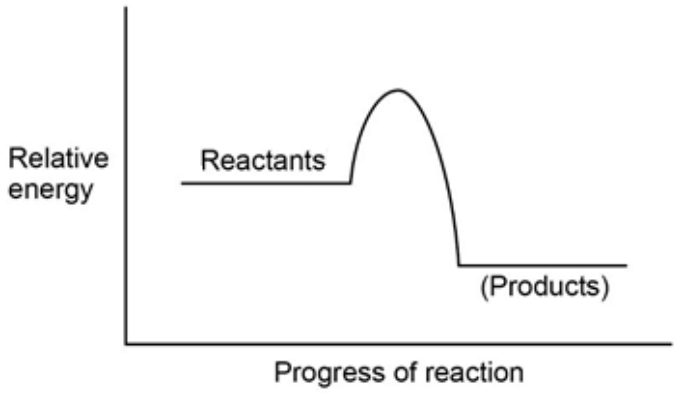
Answer 03 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
06.1	(difference) sodium has one and chlorine has seven electrons in outer level / shell **or** number of electrons	number of electrons must be correct if quoted	1	AO2 5.1.1.7 5.1.2.1
	(similarity) both have three / same number of levels / shells **or** have electrons in third level / shell **or** both have incomplete (outer) levels / shells	allow both have 2 electrons in inner shell **or** both have 8 electrons in second shell **or** both are one electron away from full outer level / shell	1	
06.2		allow marks from suitable diagram(s)		AO1 5.2.1.2
	sodium (atom) loses	allow moves / transfers for loses do **not** accept sodium ion loses	1	
	one (outer shell electron)		1	
	chlorine (atom) gains	do **not** accept chloride	1	
	one (electron)		1	
		transfer of 1 electron from chlorine to sodium **max 2** marks		
		reference to sharing **or** covalent bonding **max 3** marks		

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 03 · Mark scheme

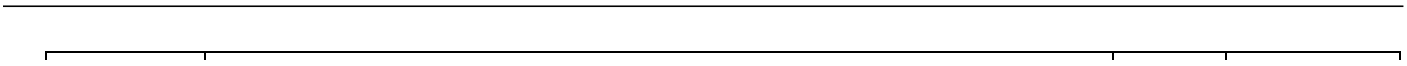
June 2018 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q6

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
06.3		ignore labels any curve / line going up and then down products line below reactants allow curve to start / finish anywhere along reactant / product lines	1 1	AO1 5.5.1.2
Total			8	

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 03 · Mark scheme

June 2018 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q6



5.1.2.1 The periodic table

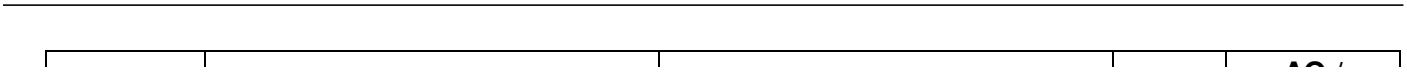
Answer 04 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.1	16		1	AO2 5.1.1.5
01.2	8 e^- in 2nd shell 6 e^- in 3rd shell	allow ●, x ,e^- or any combination	1	AO2 5.1.1.7
01.3	oxygen → sulfur dioxide	allow = in place of → do **not** accept sulfur oxide ignore symbols	1	AO2 5.1.1.1 5.9.3.1
01.4	acid rain		1	AO1 5.9.3.2
01.5	yes / no any **two** from: • increases • constant • decreases correct date range for any one of the above • (increases) 1984–1987 • (constant) 1987–1990 • (decreases) 1990–2014	 allow goes up allow similar allow goes down allow levels off (at the end)	 2 1	 AO3 5.9.3.1 AO2 5.9.3.1
01.6	(69 + 6 =) 75 100 – 75 = 25(%)	an answer of 25(%) scores **2** marks allow a final percentage calculated from an incorrect value in the first step	 1 1	AO2 5.9.3.1
Total			**9**	

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 04 · Mark scheme

June 2018 | 8464/C/2F | Original Q1



5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 05 · Mark scheme

June 2019 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q3

03.1	atomic weight of element		1	AO1 5.1.2.2
03.2	gaps	allow spaces / blanks do **not** accept undiscovered elements	1	AO1 5.1.2.2
03.3	noble gases		1	AO1 5.1.2.4
03.4	18 22	this order only	1 1	AO2 5.1.1.5
03.5	isotopes		1	AO1 5.1.1.5
03.6	2,8,8		1	AO2 5.1.1.5
03.7	stable arrangement (of electrons)	allow full outer shell allow eight electrons in the outer shell allow does not need to gain or lose electrons	1	AO1 5.1.2.4
Total			**8**	

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 05 · Mark scheme

June 2019 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q3

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 06 · Mark scheme June 2019 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q6

06.1	Ca Mg Zn Cu		1	AO3 5.4.1.2

06.2	any **two** from: • mass (of metal / element) • surface area (of metal / element) • concentration (of acid) • volume (of acid) • temperature (of acid)	 allow weight ignore size ignore length ignore pH ignore strength ignore room temperature	2	AO3 5.4.1.2

06.3	(type of) metal / element		1	AO2 5.4.1.2

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

06.4	(beryllium is) less reactive any **one** from: • greater attraction between nucleus and outer electrons • more energy is needed to remove electrons • loss of electrons is more difficult • outer electrons closer to nucleus • less shielding	allow converse answers for magnesium MP2 only if MP1 is correct allow higher in group allow reactivity increases down the group ignore reactivity series	1 1	AO3 5.1.2.3 5.1.2.5 5.4.1.2

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 06 · Mark scheme

06.5	$\frac{50}{1000}$ (dm^3) = 0.05 (dm^3) ($\frac{3.2}{0.05}$) = 64 (g per dm^3) **alternative approach:** $\frac{3.2}{50}$ (1) = 0.064 (1) (× 1000) = 64 (g per dm^3) (1) **alternative approach**: $\frac{1000}{50}$ (1) = 20 (1) (× 3.2) = 64 (g per dm^3) (1)	an answer of 64 (g per dm^3) scores **3** marks an incorrect answer for one step does **not** prevent allocation of marks for subsequent steps an answer of 0.16 / 0.064 / 0.64 / 6.4 / 6.4 × 10^{-5} (g per dm^3) gains **2** marks	1 1 1	AO2 5.3.2.5
Total			**9**	

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 06 · Mark scheme

June 2019 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q6

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 07 · Mark scheme

November 2020 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q4

04.1	$\frac{8}{10} \times 100$ **or** 0.8×100 = 80 (%)	 if no other mark awarded allow **1** mark for 20 (%)	1 1	AO2 5.1.2.3
04.2	any **two** from: • conducts electricity • conducts thermal energy • ductile • high melting point • malleable • shiny • strong	 allow conducts heat allow high boiling point allow can be bent / shaped allow dense allow sonorous ignore chemical properties	2	AO1 5.1.2.3
04.3	2 Na + Cl_2 → 2 NaCl	allow multiples	1	AO2 5.1.2.5 5.1.2.6 5.3.1.1
04.4	electrostatic attractions		1	AO3 5.2.1.3 5.2.2.3
04.5	(heat sodium chloride until) molten / liquid dissolve in water	 allow form aqueous solution allow add water	1 1	AO1 5.2.2.3
Total			**8**	

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 07 · Mark scheme

November 2020 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q4

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 08 · Mark scheme November 2020 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q5

05.1	atomic weight		1	AO1 5.1.2.2
05.2	(because) properties were similar **or** (because) iodine has similar / same properties as bromine / chlorine / fluorine	allow symbols	1	AO3 5.1.2.2
05.3	solid		1	AO3 5.1.2.5 5.2.2.1
05.4	scale on the y-axis up to 180 bar for sodium at 98 (°C) bar for potassium at 63 (°C)	ignore scale beyond 180 allow a tolerance of ± half a small square allow a tolerance of ± half a small square	1 1 1	AO2 5.1.2.4 5.2.2.1
05.5	 lithium (atom) loses one electron chlorine (atom) gains one electron any **one** from: • ions are formed • lithium forms positive ion • chlorine forms negative ion • form a full outer shell(s) / level(s)	max **2** marks if reference to incorrect particle / bonding allow ionic bonding allow noble gas structure is formed	 1 1 1	 AO2 AO2 AO1 5.1.2.3 5.2.1.2

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 08 · Mark scheme

November 2020 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q5

05.6	any **two** from: • reactivity of elements increases going down the group • potassium has more shells • potassium can lose an (outer) electron more easily • potassium has an outer shell / electron further away from the nucleus • potassium has more shielding (of the outer shell / electron) • potassium has a weaker attraction between nucleus and outer shell / electron	allow energy levels for shells allow converse for lithium	2	AO1 AO2 5.1.2.3 5.1.2.5

Total			**11**

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 08 · Mark scheme

November 2020 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q5

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 09 · Mark scheme

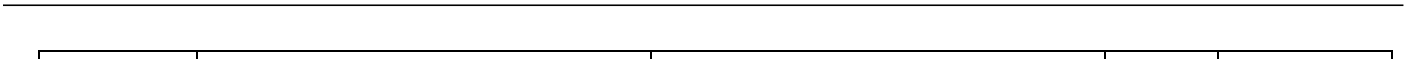
November 2021 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q1

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.1	a metal and a non-metal		1	AO1 5.1.2.1 5.1.2.3 5.3.1.1
01.2	magnesium + chlorine → magnesium chloride	allow Mg for magnesium allow Cl_2 for chlorine allow $MgCl_2$ for magnesium chloride	1	AO2 5.1.1.1 5.1.2.6
01.3	balance		1	AO1 5.3.1.3
01.4	more than 1.0 g		1	AO3 5.3.1.3 5.4.1.1
01.5	(% =) $\frac{24}{40} \times 100$ = 60 (%)		1 1	AO2 5.3.1.2
01.6	the student heated the magnesium carbonate for less than ten minutes		1	AO3 5.3.1.3
01.7	$\frac{0.97 + 0.91 + 0.95}{3}$ **or** $\frac{2.83}{3}$ = 0.943333 (g) = 0.94 (g)	allow for **1** mark $\frac{0.97 + 0.91 + 0.50 + 0.95}{4}$ **or** $\frac{3.33}{4}$ = 0.8325 (g) allow an answer correctly rounded to 2 significant figures using values from the table	1 1 1	AO3 AO2 AO2 5.3.1.3
Total			10	

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 09 · Mark scheme

November 2021 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q1



5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 10 · Mark scheme

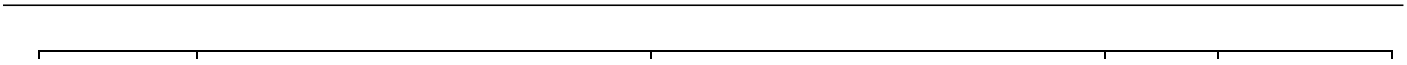
November 2021 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q6

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
06.1	(Group) 0 **or** noble gases		1	AO2 5.1.2.2
06.2	B		1	AO2 5.1.1.3
06.3	A		1	AO3 5.1.1.3
06.4	(atoms with the) same number of protons	allow atoms with the same atomic number allow atoms of the same element ignore the same number of electrons	1	AO1 5.1.1.5
	(but with) different numbers of neutrons	ignore (but with) different mass numbers do **not** accept (but with) different relative atomic mass	1	
06.5	$\frac{(39 \times 93.1) + (41 \times 6.9)}{100}$ = 39.138 = 39.1	 allow correctly rounded answer to **1** decimal place from an incorrect calculation using all the values given in the question	1 1 1	AO2 5.1.1.6
Total			**8**	

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 10 · Mark scheme

November 2021 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q6



5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 11 · Mark scheme

June 2024 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q1

Question 1

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.1	alkali metals		1	AO1 5.1.2.5

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.2	0.2 nm		1	AO1 5.1.1.5

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.3	atomic number		1	AO1 5.1.1.5

Question	Answers	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.4	<table><tr><th>Name</th><th>Relative charge</th></tr><tr><td>Proton</td><td>**+(1)**</td></tr><tr><td>**Neutron**</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Electron</td><td>-1</td></tr></table>	1 1	AO1 5.1.1.4

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.5	+1		1	AO2 5.1.1.7 5.1.2.3 5.2.1.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.6	63 (°C)	allow a value in the range 50–80 (°C)	1	AO3 5.1.2.5

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 11 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.7	$A_r = \frac{(39 \times 93) + (41 \times 7)}{100}$		1	AO2 5.1.1.6

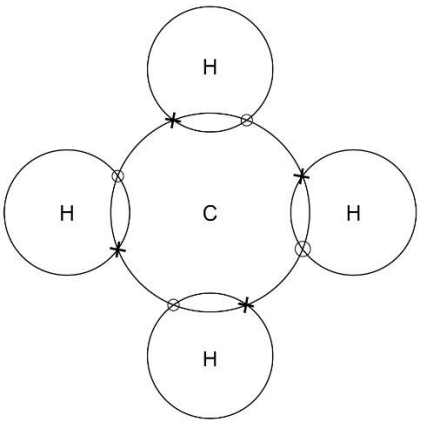
Total Question 1	**8**

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 12 · Mark scheme

June 2024 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q2

Question 2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.1	one pair of electrons drawn in each of the three overlaps	allow any combination of circles, dots, crosses, $e^{(-)}$ for electrons ignore inner shell electrons on the carbon atom do **not** accept extra electron(s) on outer shell of carbon / hydrogen allow **1** mark for one shared pair in one overlap without non-bonding electron(s) on that hydrogen an answer of  scores **2** marks	2	AO1 5.2.1.1 5.2.1.4

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.2			1	AO1 5.2.1.4 5.2.2.6 5.2.3.1

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 12 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.3	3		1	AO1 5.2.3.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.4	(delocalised) electrons	allow (free) electrons	1	AO2 5.2.3.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.5	in electronic components		1	AO1 5.2.3.3

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.6	any **two** from: • hollow (shape) • hexagonal rings • (of) carbon atoms • each (carbon) atom forms 3 (covalent) bonds	 allow cylindrical (shape) allow (nano)tube allow (made of) hexagons	2	AO1 5.2.3.3

Total Question 2	8

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

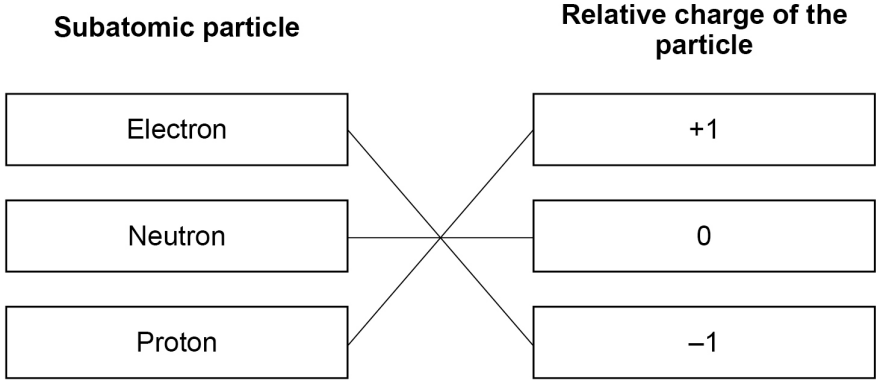
Answer 13 · Mark scheme

June 2025 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q1

Question 1

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.1	electron		1	AO1 5.1.1.3

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.2	nucleus		1	AO1 5.1.1.3

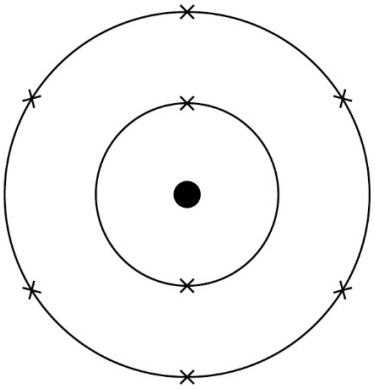
Question	Answers	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.3	 allow **1** mark for 1 or 2 correct do **not** accept more than one line from a box on the left	2	AO1 5.1.1.4

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.4	the number of protons only		1	AO1 5.1.1.4

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 13 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.5	$(A_r =) \frac{(10 \times 19.7) + (11 \times 80.3)}{100}$	allow $(A_r =) \frac{197 + 883.3}{100}$ allow $(A_r =) \frac{1080.3}{100}$	1	AO2 5.1.1.6
	= 10.803		1	
	= 10.8		1	

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.6		allow any combination of x, O, $e^{(-)}$, ● for electrons	1	AO2 5.1.1.7

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.7	model **B** shows the 3D arrangement of the ions		1	AO3 5.2.1.3
	model **B** shows the relative sizes of the ions		1	

Total Question 1	11

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

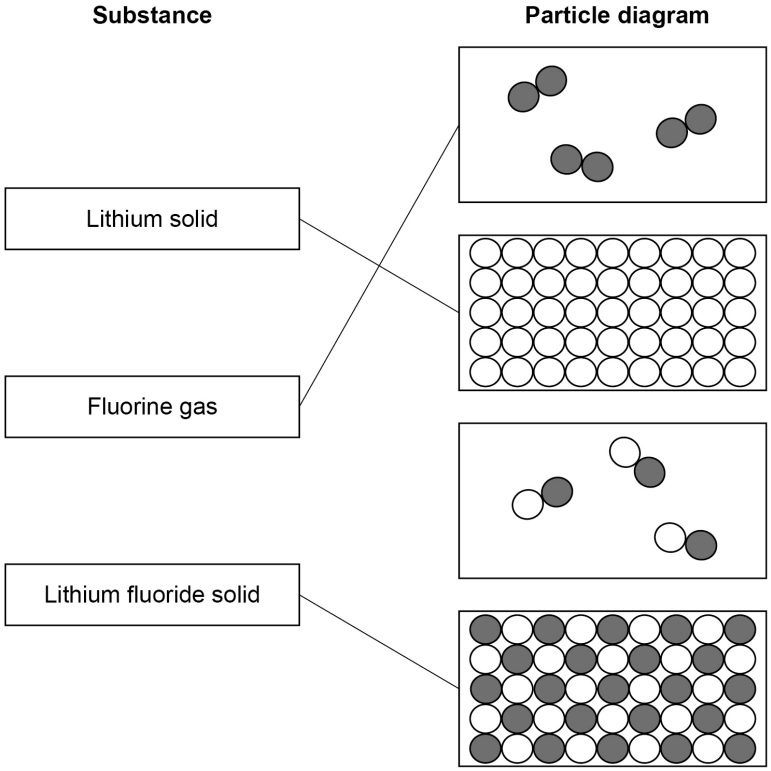
Answer 14 · Mark scheme

June 2025 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q2

Question 2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.1	Li		1	AO1 5.1.1.1

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.2	delocalised electrons from the outer shell		1	AO1 5.2.1.5

Question	Answers	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.3	 do **not** accept more than one line from a box on the left	1 1 1	AO3 5.1.1.1 5.2.2.1

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.4	**D**		1	AO3 5.2.2.3

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 14 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.5	diamond		1	AO1 5.2.3.1

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.6	(relative formula mass =) 12 + (19 × 4) = 88		1 1	AO2 5.3.1.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.7	6	allow 3 pairs	1	AO2 5.2.1.1 5.2.1.4

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.8	nitride		1	AO2 5.1.1.1

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.9	neon has a stable arrangement of electrons		1	AO1 5.1.2.4

Total Question 2	**12**

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 01 · Examiner comments June 2018 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q2

Question 2 (low & standard demand)

02.4 47% of students knew that the type of reaction between chlorine and potassium bromide solution is called displacement.

02.5 73% of students knew that chlorine is more reactive than bromine because chlorine gains electrons more easily.

02.6 60% of students understood that a chlorine atom is smaller than a bromine atom.

Answer 02 · Examiner comments June 2018 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q4

Question 4 (low & standard demand)

04.2 Even though the stem informed students that the products were a metal oxide and a gas, very few students (6%) could name both of the products formed when calcium carbonate ($CaCO_3$) is heated.

04.3 63% of students knew that the type of reaction when a compound breaks down is called decomposition.

04.4 60% of students knew that the type of reaction that takes in energy from the surroundings is called an endothermic reaction.

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 02 · Examiner comments

June 2018 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q4

04.7 This question discriminated between students well. The two mistakes made in the student's calculation were often poorly expressed or ambiguous such as, 'the calculation is wrong'; 'used the wrong numbers'; 'the volume is wrong'; and 'readings are taken from the wrong place'.

Many students correctly identified at least one of the mistakes but several of these students continued to use either the incorrect mass or the inverse formula for their calculation.

13% of students expressed the mistakes well and correctly calculated the gradient. There were 12% of students who did not attempt to answer this question.

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 03 · Examiner comments

June 2018 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q6

Question 6 (standard demand)

06.1 This question discriminated well with 27% of students achieving some degree of credit. Many students did not consider the most obvious difference and similarity in the electronic structures of sodium and chlorine. Students often used the periodic table shown in the stem of the question to answer this question, but most of these students referred to periods or rows and groups or columns and so failed to gain any marks.

06.2 This question discriminated well. 23% of students achieved all four marks, often with concise statements about the transfer of the outer electron of sodium to chlorine.

Some students contradicted their description by mentioning covalent bonding, or the sharing of electrons, which restricted the number of marks they could attain. Poor expression and the use of incorrect terms were the main problem for most students. It was common to see the term ‘atom’ used instead of ‘electron’. 19% of students did not attempt to answer this question.

06.3 This question discriminated well. 26% of students achieved both marks; whereas 185 of students achieved a single mark. It was common for students to have incomplete reaction profile diagrams, by failing to include a horizontal line for the products.

Some students confused the two types of energy changes (endothermic and exothermic), while others provided a wide range of incorrect diagrams. Labels were ignored because they were not required to answer the question. 20% of students did not attempt to answer this question.

5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 09 · Examiner comments

November 2021 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q1

Question 1 (low and standard demand)

01.1 Most students knew that magnesium reacting with chlorine is an example of a metal reacting with a non-metal.

01.2 Approximately two thirds of students were able to construct a word equation from the information supplied in the question.

01.3 Approximately two thirds of students knew that a balance is used to measure 1.0 g of magnesium.

01.4 Nearly half of students deduced that more than 1.0 g of magnesium chloride is formed when 1.0 g of magnesium reacts with chlorine.

01.5 Just under one third of students gained two marks for correctly calculating the percentage of magnesium in magnesium oxide.

01.6 More than half of students deduced that the anomalous result is explained when the student heated the magnesium carbonate for less than ten minutes. 'The student used a higher temperature' was a strong distractor.

01.7 Approximately one quarter of students gained three marks for correctly calculating the mean and just under one third of students incorrectly included the anomalous result in their mean. A few did not give their answer to two significant figures.

Answer 10 · Examiner comments

November 2021 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q6

Question 6 (standard demand)

06.1 Just under half of students knew that Group 0, the noble gases, had not been discovered when Mendeleev's version of the periodic table was published.

06.2 The plum pudding model was identified by nearly three fifths of students.

06.3 Chadwick discovered the neutron. Students found difficulty in making the link between this discovery and the figure which represented an atom containing neutrons. Approximately one third of students gained the mark.

06.4 The question required students to answer in terms of 'subatomic particles'; the answer was that isotopes are atoms with the same number of protons but different numbers of neutrons. Less than one fifth of students gained a mark.

06.5 Just over one fifth of students gained the first mark by showing that the weighted average had to be divided by 100. The evaluation of this gained the second mark which then needed to be correctly rounded to one decimal place.

Answer 11 · Examiner comments

June 2024 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q1

Question 1 (low & standard demand)

01.1 Three-quarters of students could name Group 1 elements as the alkali metals. Halogens was the most common incorrect response.

01.2 Three-quarters of students could estimate the radius of a potassium atom as 0.2 nm. A fifth of students selected 0.2 mm.

01.3 The majority of students knew that the atomic number is the number of protons in an atom. Mass number was the most popular incorrect distractor.

01.4 Two-thirds of students gained both marks. Some students failed to indicate that protons are positively charged: + or +1 was needed for the answer. Phonetic spellings of neutron were credited.

0 1 . 4 **Table 1** shows the name and the relative charge of the particles in a potassium atom.

Table 1

Name of particle	Relative charge
Proton	1
Nefron	0
Electron	−1

Complete **Table 1**.

[2 marks]

This response demonstrates a common error in not giving the charge on the proton, but the spelling for neutron is acceptable phonetically so marking point 2 was awarded.

01.5 Students were given the electronic structure of a potassium atom (2,8,8,1) and a diagram showing that a potassium ion has a full outer shell (2,8,8). Nearly two-thirds of students were able to deduce that the ion is formed by losing an electron, which results in the formation of a +1 ion. A quarter of students thought that the ion had a –1 charge.

01.6 Most students were able to correctly predict the melting point of potassium from the trend shown in the bar graph.

01.7 Nearly two-thirds of students knew that relative atomic mass is calculated by multiplying the percentage abundance of each isotope by its mass number and averaging these values for all isotopes. A fifth of students selected the third option.

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Answer 12 · Examiner comments

June 2024 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q2

Question 2 (low & standard demand)

02.1 To help students complete the dot and cross diagram for a methane molecule one shared pair of electrons was drawn in one of the overlap areas. More than half the students correctly added three more shared pairs of electrons. Some gained only 1 mark by either adding just one shared pair or including extra electrons in the outer shells of either the carbon atom or hydrogen atoms.

02.2 Three-quarters of students recognised the structure of diamond. Buckminsterfullerene was the most common incorrect response.

02.3 A diagram to represent part of the structure of graphite was given to show that each carbon atom forms three covalent bonds. Nearly 60% of students answered the question correctly. Approximately equal numbers of students thought that carbon atoms formed either two or four bonds with only a small number choosing one bond.

02.4 Just over 40% of the students knew that (delocalised) electrons carry electrical charge through graphite. Many students incorrectly answered that ions or atoms were the particles responsible or wrote carbon for their answer.

02.5 Half of the students knew that fullerenes are used in electronic components. The other two distractors were equally popular.

02.6 Nearly half of the students scored at least 1 mark. A diagram was included to help students describe the structure of a fullerene. The better responses stated that fullerenes are hollow and have hexagonal rings of carbon atoms, although few stated that each carbon atom forms three covalent bonds.

0 2 . 6 Describe the structure of the fullerene shown in **Figure 4**.

[2 marks]

a Cylinder Shape it that is made up of Hexigons

This answer gave two points from the 'extra information' column of the mark scheme so gave *just* enough information to gain 2 marks.

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Answer 13 · Examiner comments

June 2025 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q1

Question 1 (Low and Standard demand)

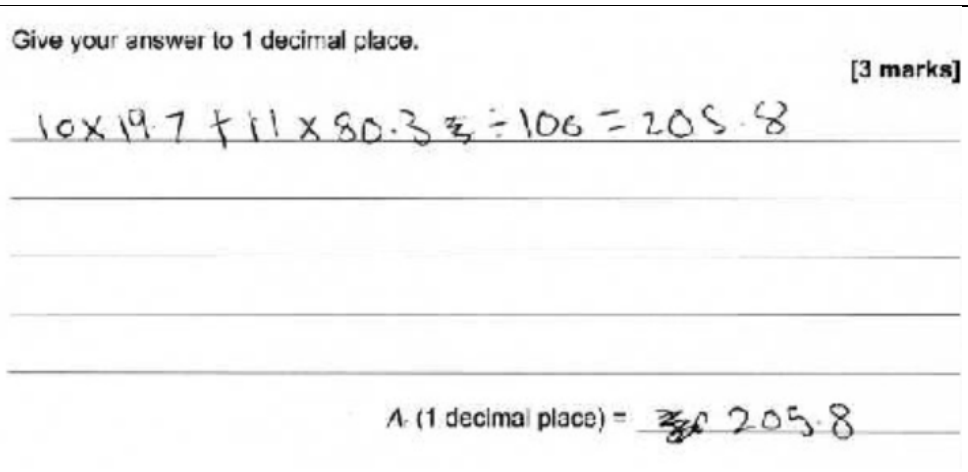
01.1 Just under half of students could name the electron as the first subatomic particle to be discovered. Proton was the most common incorrect response.

01.2 The majority of students knew that the name of the centre of an atom is the nucleus. Phonetic spellings were credited. Common incorrect answers were proton and neutron.

01.3 The majority of students correctly linked the relative charges with each subatomic particle. Many gained 1 mark for showing that the neutron has no charge.

01.4 Less than half of students knew that the atomic number is the number of protons in an atom. The number of number of neutrons + the number of protons in an atom was a more popular incorrect distractor.

01.5 The calculation of the relative atomic mass using the mass numbers and percentage abundance was correctly carried out by nearly two-third of students. The first mark was for the mathematical expression although some students did not divide 1080.3 by 100 and others used their calculator incorrectly. A small number of students who evaluated the expressions as 10.803 did not round their answer to 1 decimal place.


Give your answer to 1 decimal place. [3 marks]

10 x 19.7 + 11 x 80.3 ÷ 100 = 205.8

A (1 decimal place) = 205.8

This student did not gain any credit. They only divided the last number (80.3) by 100 so their calculation evaluates as:
10 × 19.7 = 197 then added [11 × (80.3÷100) = 8.833] so 197 + 8.833 = 205.8

01.6 Many students correctly arranged the 8 electrons on the two levels on the figure as 2,8. A number arranged the 8 electrons as 4,4 or 0,8 and others used a different numbers of electrons.

01.7 Less than 20% of students gained 2 marks for Model B shows the 3D arrangement of the ions and the relative sizes of the ions. The most popular incorrect distractors were the charges on the ions and the electronic structures of the ions.

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5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 14 · Examiner comments

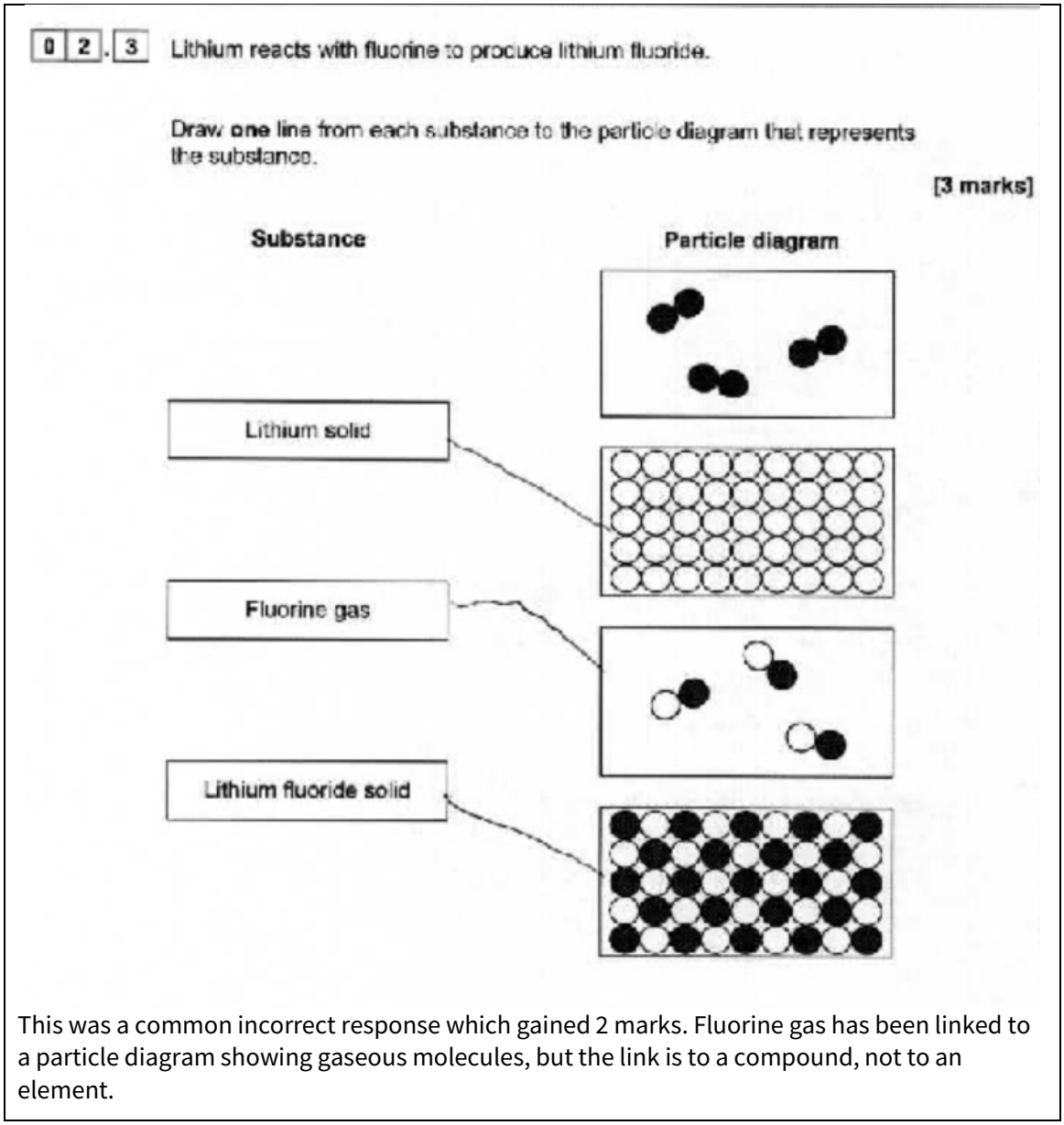
June 2025 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q2

Question 2 (Low demand)

02.1 Many students correctly wrote the chemical symbol of lithium with a capital L followed by a lower case i. When writing symbols lowercase letters must be discernibly smaller than capitals.

02.2 More than half of students knew that delocalised electrons from the outer shell are involved in metallic bonding. Fixed electrons in the outer shell was the most popular incorrect distractor.

02.3 Students should recognise particle diagrams for solid and gaseous states and for elements and compounds. Different colour circles are used to represent different atoms or ions so students should deduce that both the (diatomic) fluorine gaseous molecule and lithium solid particle diagram would only have one colour circle whereas the ionic compound lithium fluoride solid particle diagram would have two different colour circles. The majority of students correctly linked the substance to the particle diagram that represents the substance.



This was a common incorrect response which gained 2 marks. Fluorine gas has been linked to a particle diagram showing gaseous molecules, but the link is to a compound, not to an element.

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5.1.2.1 The periodic table

Answer 14 · Examiner comments June 2025 | 8464/C/1F | Original Q2

02.4 Just over half the students were able to use the electrical conductivity of a substance when solid and liquid to identify the ionic compound lithium fluoride.

02.5 Just over half the students recognised the structure of diamond. Graphite was the most common incorrect response.

02.6 A third of students gained both marks for 88 with or without working. Some gained 1 mark for the correct mathematical expression or writing 12 + 76. Many students did not multiply the number of atoms by the relative atomic mass of the atom so gave either 31 or 288 by adding or multiplying the A_r values of carbon and fluorine or used the 4 (atoms of fluorine) as a power giving a M_r of several thousand.

02.7 Just over half the students identified that six shared electrons were shown in the overlap of energy levels in the diagram representing a molecule of nitrogen. Three pairs would have been an acceptable answer although 3 was a common incorrect answer.

02.8 Only 5% of students were able to select the word from the box to complete the name of the compound with the formula Li_3N. The most common answer was nitrogen. Credit was awarded if the student identified the correct answer in the box, provided this was not contradicted by what was written in the answer space.

02.9 Just under half of students knew that neon does not react with other elements because neon has a stable arrangement of electrons. The most popular incorrect distractor was neon is a non-metallic element.