AQA GCSE Combined Science - Trilogy | 8464

SPECIFICATION POINT 5.2.1.3

Ionic compounds

Mark schemes and examiner comments

Tier	**Higher**
Question groups	**2**
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.

5.2.1.3 Ionic compounds

Answer 01 · Mark scheme

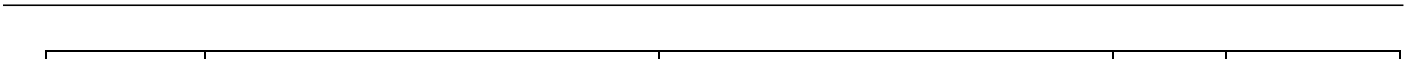
June 2018 | 8464/C/1H | Original Q5

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
05.1		**max 2** for incorrect reference to particles or bonds		AO1 5.2.3.1
	covalent bonds		1	
	giant structure / macromolecule	allow each C has 4 bonds allow giant covalent structure for **2** marks allow giant ionic / lattice structure for **1** mark ignore lattice	1	
	lots of energy needed to break / overcome	allow disrupt structure ignore heat and high temperature	1	
		if no other marks awarded allow **1** mark for strong / many bonds		
05.2		**max 2** for incorrect reference to particles or bonds		AO1 5.2.2.3
	dissolved (in water) **or** aqueous	allow in solution	1	
	molten / liquid		1	
	so ions are mobile **or** free moving		1	
05.3		**max 2** for incorrect reference to particles or bonds		AO1 5.2.1.5 5.2.2.8
	delocalised electrons (from outer shell)		1	
	(free to) move		1	
	energy transferred (through structure)	ignore conducts thermal energy ignore electricity	1	
		if no other mark awarded allow **1** mark for ions / atoms vibrate		
Total			**9**	

5.2.1.3 Ionic compounds

Answer 01 · Mark scheme

June 2018 | 8464/C/1H | Original Q5



5.2.1.3 Ionic compounds

Answer 02 · Mark scheme

June 2025 | 8464/C/1H | Original Q7

Question 7

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
07.1	(model **A**) does not show the 3D arrangement (of the ions / particles)	allow (model **A**) only shows the 2D arrangement (of the ions / particles) allow (model **A**) does not show lattice arrangement (of the ions / particles) allow (model **A**) only shows two ions / particles	1	AO3 5.2.1.3
	(model **A**) does not show the relative sizes of the ions / particles		1	

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
07.2	$Al_2(SO_4)_3$		1	AO2 5.1.1.1 5.2.1.2 5.4.2.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
07.3	aluminium has more delocalised electrons per atom than sodium	allow aluminium has more outer shell electrons per atom than sodium	1	AO2 5.1.1.7 5.2.1.5 5.2.2.8

5.2.1.3 Ionic compounds

Answer 02 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
07.4	**Level 2:** Scientifically relevant features are identified; the way(s) in which they are similar / different is made clear and (where appropriate) the magnitude of the similarity / difference is noted.	3–4	AO1 5.2.1.4 5.2.2.5 5.2.2.6
	Level 1: Relevant features are identified and differences noted.	1–2	
	No relevant content	0	

	Indicative content
	
	Similarities
	• both have covalent bonding
	  ○ both form bonds by sharing electrons
	
	• both have atoms that form 4 bonds
	  ○ in silicon dioxide each silicon atom forms 4 bonds, in poly(ethene) each carbon atom forms 4 bonds
	
	• both substances have strong (covalent) bonds
	
	Differences
	• silicon dioxide has atoms that form 2 bonds
	  ○ in silicon dioxide each oxygen atom forms 2 bonds
	• poly(ethene) has atoms that form 1 bond
	  ○ in poly(ethene) each hydrogen atom forms 1 bond
	
	• silicon dioxide only has covalent bonds
	• poly(ethene) has intermolecular forces between polymer molecules
	
	• silicon dioxide is a giant structure
	• poly(ethene) has very large molecules
	
	For **Level 2** a comparison and reference to magnitude, structure and bonding is required		

Total Question 7	8

5.2.1.3 Ionic compounds

Answer 01 · Examiner comments

June 2018 | 8464/C/1H | Original Q5

Question 5 (standard / high & high demand)

05.1 The question was well attempted with 80% of students achieving at least one mark. The marks awarded were fairly evenly distributed between the three marking points.

Students rarely achieved full marks (14%), often because they confused the type of particles or bonding involved. While many could identify that covalent bonds were used and lots of energy was needed to break these bonds, they found it difficult to describe the structure involved.

A common response was that diamond contains four carbon atoms rather than each carbon atom having four bonds, which would have been sufficient to be awarded the second marking point.

05.2 The diagram showed a structure made up of ions. These have to be free moving to conduct electricity.

7% of students achieved full marks. Generally students missed out on full marks because they only included one way to produce ions, dissolving or melting. There was confusion among students between the terms liquid and solution. Many said that sodium chloride needs to be ‘molten’ or ‘liquid’, presumably often meaning molten or dissolved (in water).

The most common mistake in responses was that students thought that electrons were involved in the conduction of electricity in this situation.

05.3 49% of students achieved at least one mark, usually for marking points one or two. Higher attaining-students frequently achieved two marks for ‘delocalised electrons free to move’.

Marking point three was rare and was often poorly expressed. Lots of responses repeated the question stem with phrases such as ‘so it conducts thermal energy’ or ‘thermal energy passes between the particles’. Very few students mentioned energy being transferred. A common statement was that ‘delocalised electrons carry electric charge’ but not (thermal) energy.

Answer 02 · Examiner comments

Question 7 (Standard, Standard/High and High demand)

07.1 Very few students gained full credit in this question. The most common creditworthy statement was 'A shows the 2D arrangement' or 'B shows the 3D arrangement'. Many referred to atom, molecule or subatomic particle instead of ion; some students thought that the + and – charges meant the spheres were protons and electrons. There were many descriptions of what the models showed rather than a comparison of how they represented ionic bonding. Relative size of the ions seems to be a difficult concept; some wrote about not seeing the actual size of the particles in A whereas you could in B.

07.2 Very few knew how to construct a formula from the constituent ions. Those who were successful in writing the formula of aluminium sulfate either used the lowest common multiple or 'swap and drop' methods. Many answers placed the two ions together and reported the remaining charge, rather than forming a neutral formula. $AlSO_4$ was the most common incorrect answer.

07.3 Many students recognised that 'more delocalised electrons' was why aluminium metal conducts electricity better than sodium metal. However, this answer needed 'per atom' to be creditworthy. Some students answered in terms of properties, bond strength and reactivity.

07.4 This was an 'extended response' style of question. Such questions are marked holistically. There are overall generic descriptions for the two levels of response at the top of the mark scheme, giving a hierarchy of response. Within each level there are 2 marks.

Students were asked to compare the structure and bonding of silicon dioxide and poly(ethene). In the indicative content the first 4 black bullet points in the 'differences' relate to bonding, the last 2 to structure.

At Level 1, students needed to identify some relevant features. To enter Level 2 a comparison, reference to magnitude and reference to the structure and bonding of silicon dioxide or poly(ethene) were required.

Students found this question challenging and a significant proportion did not attempt it. Neither the structure nor bonding of these two compounds were well known. Silicon dioxide has a giant structure was common, but some did not state whether this was ionic or covalent. Poly(ethene) contains covalent bonds was common but long chain molecules very rare. Few knew the intermolecular forces were between chains of poly(ethene). There were many contradictions such as giant ionic and giant covalent and many wrote that silicon dioxide contained carbon or carbon dioxide bonded to silicon or formed a simple molecule containing 3 atoms. There were many two-paragraph answers and very few comparisons which would have lifted many responses from Level 1 to Level 2 and lots of references to properties.

Students often contradicted themselves, sometimes seemingly when later adding to their answer. The most common contradiction was correctly stating that silicon dioxide had a giant covalent structure and later stating that it had intermolecular forces. A common expression was 'is a covalent bond'.

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5.2.1.3 Ionic compounds

Answer 02 · Examiner comments June 2025 | 8464/C/1H | Original Q7

0 7 . 4 Silicon dioxide and the polymer poly(ethene) are solid substances.

Compare silicon dioxide with the polymer, poly(ethene).

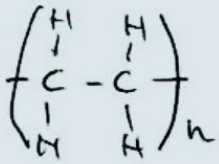
Answer in terms of structure and bonding.

[4 marks]

Silicon dioxide is a allotrope of carbon it is a giant covalent structure. it is held together by strong covalent bonds meaning it has a high melting and boiling point as lot's of energy is needed to break the bonds. Silicon dioxide can transfer electricity as it has delocalised electron.

Poly(ethene) is a Hydrocarbon made up of 2 carbon atoms each bonded to 2 Hydrogen atoms. Carbon

Extra space it's a lighter Hydrocarbon which means it has a lower boiling/melting point. It's held together via covalent bonding.



END OF QUESTIONS

This response includes references to magnitude (*giant* structure and *strong* covalent bonds) and sufficient indicative content to access Level 2; strong bonds, both have covalent bonding and giant structure. There are also some incorrect statements. However, there is no comparison (simply a paragraph referring to silicon dioxide and then one for poly(ethene)), so the response does not meet the Level 2 descriptor. They have identified a number of relevant features, so the response was awarded 2 marks, in Level 1.

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5.2.1.3 Ionic compounds

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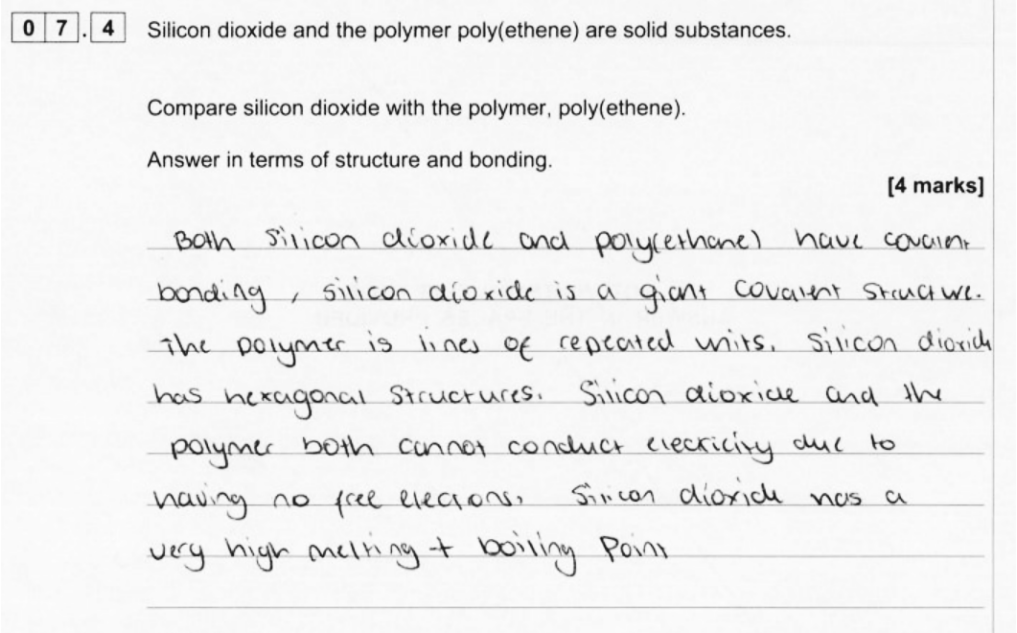


0 7 . 4 Silicon dioxide and the polymer poly(ethene) are solid substances.

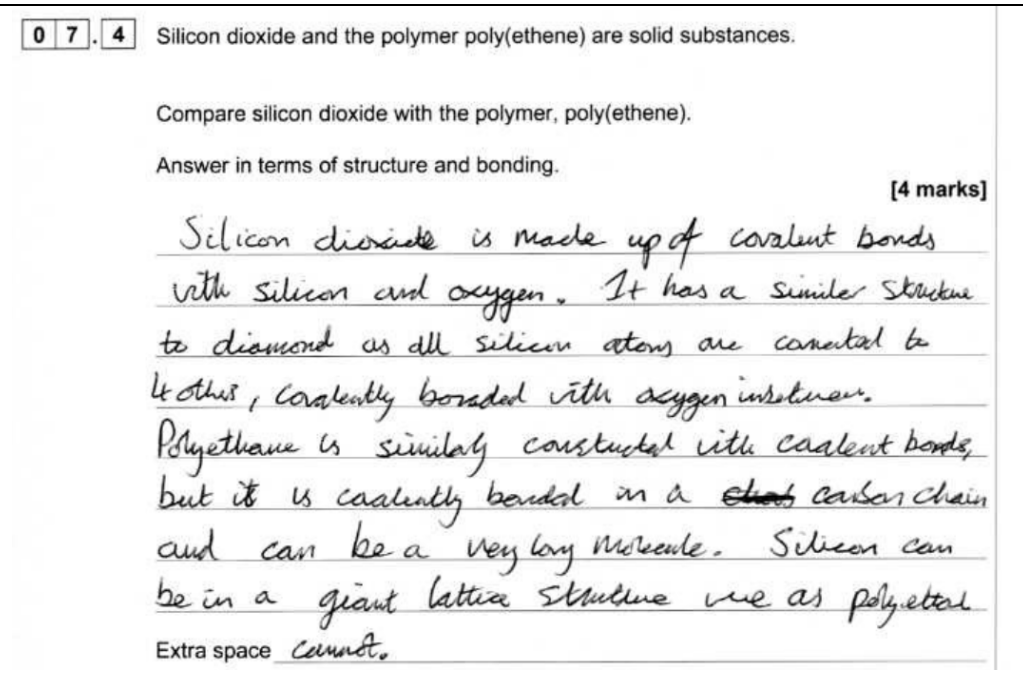
Compare silicon dioxide with the polymer, poly(ethene).

Answer in terms of structure and bonding.

[4 marks]

Both silicon dioxide and poly(ethene) have covalent bonding, silicon dioxide is a giant covalent structure. The polymer is lines of repeated units. Silicon dioxide has hexagonal structures. Silicon dioxide and the polymer both cannot conduct electricity due to having no free electrons. Silicon dioxide has a very high melting + boiling point

In the first two lines of this response there is a reference to magnitude (*giant* structure) and sufficient indicative content; both have covalent bonding and giant structure and a comparison so the response meets the Level 2 descriptor. With a comparison, reference to magnitude and to the structure and bonding of silicon dioxide, this response was awarded 3 marks, in Level 2.



0 7 . 4 Silicon dioxide and the polymer poly(ethene) are solid substances.

Compare silicon dioxide with the polymer, poly(ethene).

Answer in terms of structure and bonding.

[4 marks]

Silicon dioxide is made up of covalent bonds with silicon and oxygen. It has a similar structure to diamond as all silicon atoms are covalent to 4 others, covalently bonded with oxygen inbetween. Polyethene is similarly constructed with covalent bonds, but it is covalently bonded in a ~~chain~~ carbon chain and can be a very long molecule. Silicon can be in a giant lattice structure like as polymers cannot.

Extra space

This response includes references to magnitude (*giant* structure and *very long* molecule) and sufficient indicative content; both have covalent bonding, very long molecule and giant structure and there is a comparison, so the response meets the Level 2 descriptor. With 2 comparisons, a reference to magnitude and to the structure and bonding of silicon dioxide and of poly(ethene), this response was awarded the maximum 4 marks.

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5.2.1.3 Ionic compounds

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Contact us

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