AQA GCSE Combined Science - Trilogy | 8464

SPECIFICATION POINT 6.2.3.1

Direct and alternating potential difference

Mark schemes and examiner comments

Tier	**Higher**
Question groups	**3**
Available paper years	**2019–2025**

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.

6.2.3.1 Direct and alternating potential difference

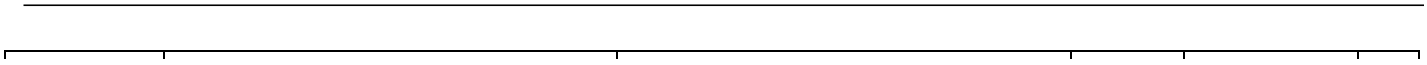
Answer 01 · Mark scheme June 2019 | 8464/P/1H | Original Q3

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.	ID
03.1	an energy resource that cannot be replenished as it is used	allow an energy resource that will run out ignore cannot be re-used	1	AO1.1 AO1 in isolation 6.1.3	E
03.2		an answer of 30 (A) scores **4** marks		AO2.1 6.2.4.1	E
	6.9 k(W) = 6900 (W)		1		
	6900 = 230 × I	allow correct substitution of an incorrectly/not converted value for power	1		
	$I = \frac{6900}{230}$	allow a correct transformation using an incorrectly/not converted value for power	1		
	I = 30 (A)	allow a correct calculation using an incorrectly/not converted value for power	1		
03.3	direct potential difference is always in the same direction	allow direct current is always in the same direction	1	AO1.1 6.2.3.1	E
	alternating potential difference changes direction	allow alternating current changes direction	1		
03.4	lower potential difference across the cable	allow lower power/energy dissipation	1	AO1.1 6.1.2.2	E
	it is more efficient	allow it won't get as hot	1	6.2.4.1	
	OR (lower resistance gives) a greater current (for the same potential difference) (1) so the car battery can charge faster (1)				
Total			**9**		

6.2.3.1 Direct and alternating potential difference

Answer 01 · Mark scheme

June 2019 | 8464/P/1H | Original Q3



6.2.3.1 Direct and alternating potential difference

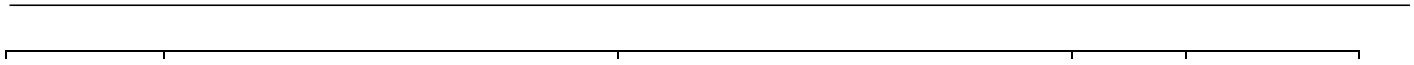
Answer 02 · Mark scheme November 2021 | 8464/P/1H | Original Q5

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
05.1	240 mW = 0.24 W		1	AO2 6.2.4.1
	$0.24 = 2.5 \times I$	allow a correct substitution using an incorrectly/not converted value of power	1	
	$I = \frac{0.24}{2.5}$	allow a correct re-arrangement using an incorrectly/not converted value of power	1	
	$I = 0.096$ (A)	allow a correct calculation using an incorrectly/not converted value of power	1	
05.2	because the potential difference is always positive	allow because potential difference does not change direction	1	AO1 6.2.3.1
05.3	potential difference is (directly) proportional to current		1	AO2 6.2.1.4
05.4	voltmeter: the reading is the same in both circuits		1	AO2 6.2.2
	ammeter: the reading in circuit **B** is twice the reading of circuit **A**	allow **1** mark for the reading in circuit **B** is bigger than circuit **A**	2	
Total			**9**	

6.2.3.1 Direct and alternating potential difference

Answer 02 · Mark scheme

November 2021 | 8464/P/1H | Original Q5



6.2.3.1 Direct and alternating potential difference

Answer 03 · Mark scheme

June 2025 | 8464/P/1H | Original Q5

Question 5

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
05.1	230 (V) 50 (Hz)	allow about 230 (V)	1 1	AO1 6.2.3.1

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
05.2	live – brown neutral – blue		1 1	AO1 6.2.3.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
05.3	alternating (potential difference) continuously changes direction direct (potential difference) is always in the same direction		1 1	AO1 6.2.3.1

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
05.4	energy / power is transferred by the laptop (when being used) (so) the power delivered to the battery is reduced	 allow (so) the rate at which energy is transferred to the battery is lower	1 1	AO2 AO3 6.1.1.4 6.1.2.1

6.2.3.1 Direct and alternating potential difference

Answer 03 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
05.5	$P = 15 \times 4.8$		1	AO2 6.2.4.1
	$P = 72$ (W)		1	6.2.4.2 6.1.1.4
	$\Delta P = 97 - 72 = 25$ (W)		1	
	$25 = \frac{225\,000}{t}$	subsequent marks may be awarded if an incorrect / not converted value of E is used.	1	
	$t = 9000$ (s)		1	
	$t = 2.5$ (hours)		1	

Total Question 5	**14**

6.2.3.1 Direct and alternating potential difference

Answer 01 · Examiner comments June 2019 | 8464/P/1H | Original Q3

Question 3 (Standard/high demand)

03.1 Just over 70% of students described a non-renewable resource correctly, as either a resource which is not replenished as it is used, or as a resource which is finite and will run out.

03.2 Slightly more than 40% of students gained full marks on this question. Around one in seven students gained 3 marks, mostly for failing to convert 6.9 kW into watts, or for making an incorrect conversion. Around 35% of students gained no marks on this question.

03.3 About a third of students gained 2 marks on this question but over half the students gained 0 marks. Answers describing current or potential difference were accepted, but a proportion of students incorrectly described direct current as what happens in a series circuit, and alternating as what happens in a parallel circuit. Other misconceptions included students who suggested that direct potential difference takes a constant value but alternating potential difference changes value. While this may be true, it does not explain the difference between direct and alternating.

Answer 01 · Examiner comments June 2019 | 8464/P/1H | Original Q3

03.4 Just under half of students scored 1 mark, with around a further 15% of students gaining both marks. Many students gave answers in terms of the risk of electrocution or safety, which did not gain credit. Many students wrote of more electricity going through a lower resistance cable, which was not sufficient: they needed to either mention a lower potential difference across the cable, or a greater current in the cable for the same potential difference.

6.2.3.1 Direct and alternating potential difference

Answer 02 · Examiner comments November 2021 | 8464/P/1H | Original Q5

Question 5 (High demand)

05.1 Of those students who attempted to convert 240 mW to watts, there was confusion evident about whether mW referred to milliwatts or megawatts. Around 45% of students gained at least 3 marks.

05.2 Many students incorrectly suggested that the changing frequency of the potential difference explained the answer. Only around 15% of students answered correctly.

05.3 Almost 30% of students correctly identified the directly proportional relationship.

05.4 Very few students were able to correctly identify that the potential difference in both circuits would be the same. To gain full marks when discussing the ammeter readings, students had to realise that since the potential difference across each resistor is the same, and all resistors have the same resistance, the current in each resistor is the same. The current in the ammeter in circuit B is therefore double that of circuit A. The question was targeted at the highest ability students, and very few students were able to reason this through and state this relationship.

Answer 03 · Examiner comments

June 2025 | 8464/P/1H | Original Q5

Question 5 (Standard/high and high demand)

05.1 55% of students gave one correct value and 20% gave both correct. Where, only one was correct, the frequency was more commonly known.

05.2 75% of students correctly named both wires and the correct colour of insulation. Where only one mark was awarded, it was most common to see the live wire and colour correct, but the name of the second wire was incorrect. Incorrect responses often gave the colour of the earth wire.

05.3 43% gained 1 mark. The vast majority of these were awarded the mark for direct (potential difference) is always in the same direction. Under 10% of students also gained the mark for the alternating potential difference. For alternating potential difference, the idea that it is continuously changing direction must be explicit.

0 5 . 3 The input to the charger is an alternating potential difference.

The output from the charger is a direct potential difference.

Describe the difference between an alternating potential difference and a direct potential difference.

[2 marks]

Direct potential difference only flows in one direction whereas alternating potential difference flows in more than one direction

This answer gains 1 mark. For alternating potential difference, 'more than one direction' is insufficient.

0 5 . 3 The input to the charger is an alternating potential difference.

The output from the charger is a direct potential difference.

Describe the difference between an alternating potential difference and a direct potential difference.

[2 marks]

Alternating potential difference constantly changes direction but direct potential difference goes in one direction only.

This answer gains 2 marks; the idea that an alternating potential difference is continuously changing direction is explicit, along with a correct description of direct potential difference.

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6.2.3.1 Direct and alternating potential difference

Answer 03 · Examiner comments June 2025 | 8464/P/1H | Original Q5

05.4 60% of students correctly identified that the laptop is using energy as it is still being used. Only a very small number correctly explained that this meant that the rate at which the energy is stored in the battery decreases.

05.5 This multi-step calculation proved to be more challenging than in previous years. Only approximately 15% of students gained full marks. 50% of students calculated the power of the laptop but could not get any further. Some students calculated the time in seconds correctly but could not convert the answer to hours. Students are reminded that they should show their working for multi-step calculations.