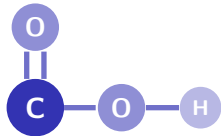


Carboxylic Acids & Derivatives

A-Level Chemistry ■ Topic 18

A-Level Chemistry



What we will cover

- 1 Carboxylic acid reactions
- 2 Esterification
- 3 Esters
- 4 Hydrolysis of esters



vinegar is ethanoic acid

Making a carboxylic acid

From an alcohol

Oxidation 氧化 of a **primary alcohol** 醇 with acidified $\text{K}_2\text{Cr}_2\text{O}_7$ or KMnO_4 , under **reflux** 回流 so it goes all the way.

From an aldehyde

The same oxidation, one step later: an **aldehyde** 醛 is the halfway product, and reflux takes it to the acid.

From a nitrile

Hydrolysis 水解 of a **nitrile** 腈 with dilute acid or alkali, then acidifying.

From an ester

Hydrolysis of an **ester** 酯 with dilute acid or alkali and heat, then acidifying.

Distillation stops at the aldehyde; **reflux** returns the vapour to the flask and gives the acid.
The apparatus is the answer.

1

Carboxylic acids

Carboxylic acid reactions

A **carboxylic acid** 羧酸 ($-\text{COOH}$) is a **weak acid**:

+ metal

→ salt + H_2

+ alkali

→ salt + water

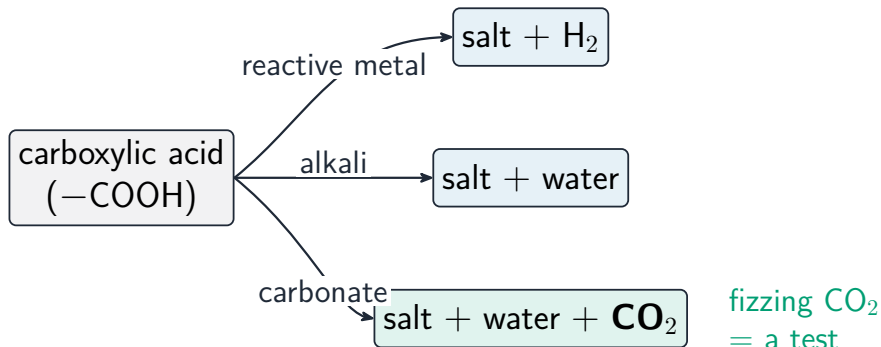
+ carbonate

→ salt + water + CO_2 : **the fizz is the test**



example

Carboxylic acid reactions, in detail

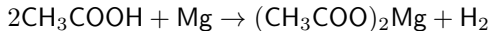


Carboxylic acids behave as acids: a salt with a metal (+ H_2), with an alkali (+ water), or with a carbonate (+ water + CO_2 – the fizz is a test)

Two reactions that change the group, and three that prove it is an acid

Reactive metal

A **redox** 氧化还原 reaction: salt + hydrogen.



Alkali

A **neutralisation** 中和: **salt** 盐 + water.

Carbonate

Salt + water + carbon dioxide – the **fizz** is the test for a carboxylic acid.

Esterification

With an alcohol and concentrated H_2SO_4 as catalyst: an ester.

Reduction

Reduction 还原 by LiAlH_4 takes it back to a **primary alcohol**.

The first three are acid behaviour; the last two rebuild the functional group. Sort any reaction into that pair first.

2

Esters

Esterification

An **ester** 酯 forms by **condensation** 缩合 of an alcohol + a carboxylic acid (conc. H_2SO_4 catalyst).

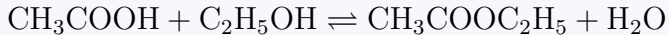
The $-\text{OH}$ (acid) and $-\text{H}$ (alcohol) leave as water, making the $\text{C}-\text{O}-\text{C}$ ester link. The reaction is reversible.



the $-\text{OH}$ (acid) and $-\text{H}$ (alcohol) leave as **water**; the $\text{C}-\text{O}-\text{C}$ ester link forms
(concentrated H_2SO_4 catalyst; reversible)

Esters

An **ester** 酯 has the —COO— group: sweet, fruity smells for flavourings, solvents and perfumes.



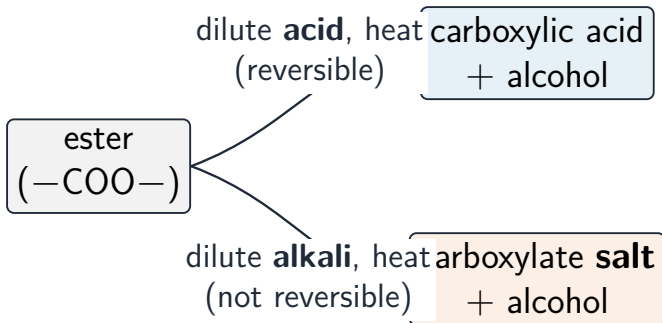
conc. H_2SO_4 : catalyst and dehydrating agent

Name from the **alcohol**, then the **acid**: ethanol + ethanoic acid $\rightarrow$ **ethyl ethanoate**.

Hydrolysis of esters

Hydrolysis 水解 splits the ester apart:

- dilute **acid** (reversible) → the acid + alcohol
- dilute **alkali** (not reversible) → the carboxylate **salt** 盐 + alcohol



Esters as scents and flavours



Esters give many fruits and perfumes their sweet smell

Exam tips

- Carboxylic acids react with carbonates to give **CO₂** (fizzing) – this distinguishes them from phenols.
- Explain acid strength via the **delocalised carboxylate ion**; electron-withdrawing groups (e.g. Cl) increase strength.
- **Esterification** (with concentrated H₂SO₄) is reversible; name esters as *alkyl alkanoate*.
- Know the products of **acid vs alkaline** hydrolysis of an ester (they differ).

3

Recap

Worked example – naming an ester

Name the ester from ethanoic acid and propan-1-ol, and give the conditions.

- acid + alcohol $\rightleftharpoons$ ester + water, with concentrated H_2SO_4 catalyst, heated under reflux.
- $\text{CH}_3\text{COOH} + \text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OH} \rightleftharpoons \text{CH}_3\text{COOCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_3 + \text{H}_2\text{O}$
- The alcohol gives the first word, the acid the second (ending *-oate*).
- Name: propyl ethanoate.

Ester name = alcohol part first, acid part second.

The reaction is reversible, so the yield is never 100% – acyl chlorides do it better.

Topic 18 – key takeaways

1

Acidity

salt + H_2 /water/ CO_2 with
metal/alkali/carbonate

2

Esterification

alcohol + acid $\rightarrow$ ester + water

3

Esters

$-\text{COO}-$ group; sweet smell

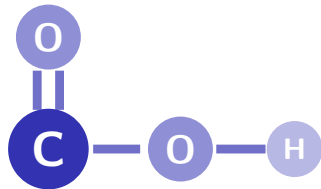
4

Hydrolysis

acid (reversible) vs alkali (salt)

Check yourself

- 1 What gas tests for a carboxylic acid with a carbonate?
- 2 What small molecule leaves in esterification?
- 3 Which functional group does an ester have?
- 4 Alkaline hydrolysis of an ester gives which two products?

**Answers**

1. carbon dioxide 2. water 3. —COO— 4. a carboxylate salt and an alcohol