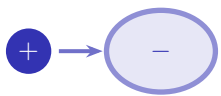
Group 2

A-Level Chemistry ▪ Topic 27

A-Level Chemistry



What we will cover

1. Thermal stability & polarisation
2. Solubility & energetics
3. Why the trends are opposite

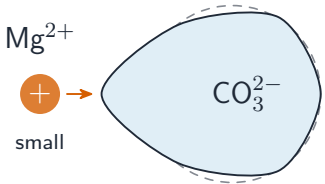
limestone decomposes in a kiln

Thermal stability and polarisation

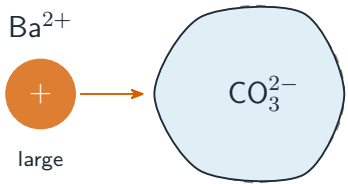
Thermal stability 热稳定性 of the nitrates & carbonates increases down the group.

> A small cation has high charge density, so it **polarises** 极化 the large anion more – weakening it. Larger cations polarise less, so the compound is more stable.

Thermal stability and polarisation



high charge density —
distorts the anion a lot
less stable: decomposes easily



low charge density —
distorts the anion little
more stable: needs high heat

Solubility and energetics

Two energy changes compete when a solid dissolves:

$$\Delta H_{\text{sol}} = -\Delta H_{\text{latt}} + \Delta H_{\text{hyd}}$$

Pull the lattice apart, then **hydrate** 水合 the ions. Down the group both get smaller – but at different rates.

Why the trends are opposite

hydroxides 氢氧化物 ↑

small OH^-: lattice energy falls a lot → more soluble

sulfates 硫酸盐 ↓

large SO_4^{2-}: lattice ≈ constant → less soluble

Worked example – thermal stability

Explain why $BaCO_3$ needs a higher temperature to decompose than $MgCO_3$.

- Decomposition: $MCO_3 \rightarrow MO + CO_2$.
- The cation **polarises** 极化 the carbonate ion, distorting its electron cloud and weakening a C–O bond.
- Mg^{2+} is small with high charge density $\Rightarrow$ polarises strongly $\Rightarrow$ decomposes easily.
- Ba^{2+} is much larger, low charge density $\Rightarrow$ weak polarising $\Rightarrow$ survives to a higher temperature.

Thermal stability rises down Group 2 – the cation gets bigger and polarises less. The same argument works for the nitrates.

Topic 27 – key takeaways

1 Stability

rises down; large cations polarise less

2 Dissolving

$\Delta H_{\text{sol}} = -\Delta H_{\text{latt}} + \Delta H_{\text{hyd}}$

3 Hydroxides

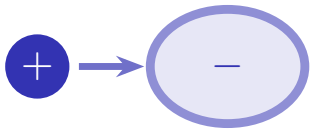
more soluble down (lattice falls a lot)

4 Sulfates

less soluble down (lattice $\approx$ constant)

Check yourself

1. Which way does thermal stability change down Group 2?
2. What does a small cation do to a large anion?
3. Which become more soluble down the group?
4. Which become less soluble down the group?



Answers **1.** increases **2.** polarises (distorts) it **3.** the hydroxides **4.** the sulfates