

Organic chemistry

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Carbon's family tree

Crude oil is a mixture of hydrocarbons – compounds of carbon and hydrogen only – built from the smallest molecules in the gas fraction to the tars of bitumen. This section organises them into families, follows crude oil from well to fraction, and then meets each family in turn: the unreactive alkanes, the double-bonded alkenes, and (C) the alcohols, acids, esters and polymers that come after.

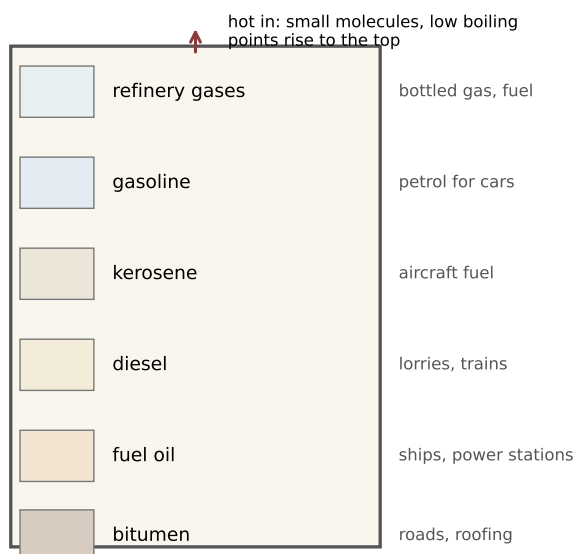
Edexcel International GCSE Chemistry 4CH1, Section 4 (statements 4.1–4.50C) closes the course. C-suffixed statements are Chemistry-only.

Introduction and crude oil

A **hydrocarbon** holds hydrogen and carbon only. Molecules are drawn as empirical, molecular, general, structural and **displayed formulae**. A **homologous series** shares a general formula and **functional group**, members differing by CH_2 ; **isomerism** – **isomers** share a molecular formula with different structures. IUPAC naming runs to six carbons.

alkanes $\text{C}_n\text{H}_{2n+2}$ C-C single bonds only	alkenes C_nH_{2n} one C=C double bond	alcohols (C) $\text{C}_n\text{H}_{2n+1}\text{OH}$ -OH group
carboxylic acids (C) $\text{C}_n\text{H}_{2n+1}\text{COOH}$ -COOH group	esters (C) RCOOR' -COO- link	

Crude oil separates by **fractional distillation**: the furnace vaporises the oil, and vapours rise up the column, cooling as they go – small molecules with low boiling points collect at the top, large viscous molecules at the bottom.



Fractions darken and thicken down the column (rising boiling point and viscosity).

Complete combustion gives $\text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O}$; **incomplete combustion** also gives carbon monoxide – poisonous because it reduces the blood's oxygen-carrying capacity – and soot. In engines, hot air makes nitrogen and oxygen combine into oxides of nitrogen; sulfur impurities burn to SO_2 ; both gases dissolve in rain making it acidic (acid rain damages leaves, lakes and buildings). **Cracking** converts long-chain alkanes to alkenes + shorter alkanes over silica/alumina at $600\text{--}700\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ – because the refinery's supply of long fractions outstrips demand while short fractions are wanted.

Alkanes and alkenes

Alkanes ($\text{C}_n\text{H}_{2n+2}$) are **saturated** – only single C–C bonds. Methane, ethane, propane, butane, pentane. With halogens in **ultraviolet light** they substitute one hydrogen: $\text{CH}_4 + \text{Cl}_2 \rightarrow \text{CH}_3\text{Cl} + \text{HCl}$ (substitution).

Alkenes (C_nH_{2n}) carry **C=C** – **unsaturated** . With bromine they add across the double bond to a dibromoalkane (addition): $\text{C}_2\text{H}_4 + \text{Br}_2 \rightarrow \text{C}_2\text{H}_4\text{Br}_2$.

Bromine water distinguishes them: decolourised (orange $\rightarrow$ colourless) by an alkene, unchanged by an alkane.

Alcohols, acids and esters (C)

Alcohols carry **–OH**: methanol, ethanol, propan-1-ol, butan-1-ol. Ethanol oxidises to ethanoic acid by complete combustion, by microbial oxidation in air, or by warming with potassium dichromate(VI) in dilute sulfuric acid. Ethanol is made by **ethene + steam** over a phosphoric acid catalyst ($\approx 300\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$, 60–70 atm) or by **fermentation**

of glucose with yeast enzymes in the absence of air at $\approx 30\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ – the optimum for the enzymes, and no oxygen so the yeast produces ethanol not water.

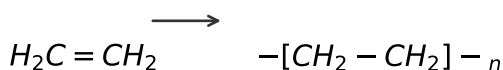
Carboxylic acids carry **–COOH**: methanoic, ethanoic, propanoic, butanoic. Their solutions react with metals (giving H_2) and carbonates (giving CO_2) like other acids; vinegar is dilute ethanoic acid.

Esters carry **–COO–**: ethanol + ethanoic acid, with an acid catalyst, give **ethyl ethanoate** and water (esterification). Given an alcohol and an acid, join the acid's **–COOH** to the alcohol's **–O–**. Esters are volatile, sweet-smelling, used as flavourings and perfumes.

Synthetic polymers

Addition polymers form when many alkene **monomers** join, opening their **C=C** bonds.

monomer: ethene repeat unit of poly(ethene)



open the **C=C** double bond, draw the two bonds out to the brackets

Draw the repeat unit of poly(ethene), poly(propene), poly(chloroethene), PTFE; from a repeat unit, close the two bonds back into a **C=C** to recover the monomer. Disposal problems: polymers are **inert and do not biodegrade**, and burning can release toxic gases. (C) **Condensation polymerisation**: a dicarboxylic acid + a diol link ester bonds, releasing water – a **polyester** ; some (biopolyesters) biodegrade.

Check yourself

1. Define hydrocarbon, homologous series and isomerism.
2. Name the six main fractions of crude oil in boiling-point order.
3. Write the products of complete and incomplete combustion of a hydrocarbon.
4. Give two pollutant gases from burning fuels and one source of each.
5. Why is cracking necessary?
6. Write the equation for methane reacting with chlorine in UV light, naming the reaction type.
7. How does bromine water distinguish an alkene from an alkane?
8. (C) Name the two methods of manufacturing ethanol with one condition for each.

9. (C) Which alcohol and acid make ethyl ethanoate, and what else forms?
10. (C) What monomers make a polyester, and what small molecule is released?

Answers: 1 a compound of hydrogen and carbon only; a family with the same general formula and functional group, differing by CH_2 ; molecules with the same molecular formula but different structures; 2 refinery gases, gasoline, kerosene, diesel, fuel oil, bitumen; 3 complete: carbon dioxide + water; incomplete adds carbon monoxide (and soot); 4 carbon monoxide – incomplete combustion; sulfur dioxide – burning sulfur impurities; oxides of nitrogen – hot engine air; 5 supply of long-chain fractions exceeds demand while short fractions and alkenes are in short supply; 6 $\text{CH}_4 + \text{Cl}_2 \rightarrow \text{CH}_3\text{Cl} + \text{HCl}$ – substitution (photo, UV); 7 the alkene decolourises orange bromine water; the alkane leaves it orange; 8 (C) ethene + steam, phosphoric acid catalyst, $\sim 300^\circ\text{C}$, 60–70 atm; fermentation of glucose with yeast, no air, $\sim 30^\circ\text{C}$; 9 (C) ethanol + ethanoic acid – water also forms (acid catalyst); 10 (C) a dicarboxylic acid and a diol; water is released at each ester link.