

# **ELECTROMAGNETISM**

**Second Edition**

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# ELECTROMAGNETISM

Second Edition

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**I. S. Grant**

**W. R. Phillips**

*Department of Physics  
University of Manchester*

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# Editors' Preface to the Manchester Physics Series

The first book in the Manchester Physics Series was published in 1970, and other titles have been added since, with total sales world-wide of more than a quarter of a million copies in English language editions and in translation. We have been extremely encouraged by the response of readers, both colleagues and students. The books have been reprinted many times, and some of our titles have been rewritten as new editions in order to take into account feedback received from readers and to reflect the changing style and needs of undergraduate courses.

The Manchester Physics Series is a series of textbooks at undergraduate level. It grew out of our experience at Manchester University Physics Department, widely shared elsewhere, that many textbooks contain much more material than can be accommodated in a typical undergraduate course and that this material is only rarely so arranged as to allow the definition of a shorter self-contained course. In planning these books, we have had two objectives. One was to produce short books: so that lecturers should find them attractive for undergraduate courses; so that students should not be frightened off by their encyclopaedic size or their price. To achieve this, we have been very selective in the choice of topics, with the emphasis on the basic physics together with some instructive, stimulating and useful applications. Our second aim was to produce books which allow courses of different length and difficulty to be selected, with emphasis on different applications. To achieve such flexibility we have encouraged authors to use flow diagrams showing the logical connections between different chapters

and to put some topics in starred sections. These cover more advanced and alternative material which is not required for the understanding of later parts of each volume. Although these books were conceived as a series, each of them is self-contained and can be used independently of the others. Several of them are suitable for wider use in other sciences. Each author's preface gives details about the level, prerequisites, etc., of his volume.

We are extremely grateful to the many students and colleagues, at Manchester and elsewhere, whose helpful criticisms and stimulating comments have led to many improvements. Our particular thanks go to the authors for all the work they have done, for the many new ideas they have contributed, and for discussing patiently, and often accepting, our many suggestions and requests. We would also like to thank the publishers, John Wiley & Sons, who have been most helpful.

*January, 1987*

F. MANDL  
R. J. ELLISON  
D. J. SANDIFORD

# Preface to the Second Edition

The basic content of undergraduate courses in electromagnetism does not change rapidly, and the range of topics covered in the second edition of this book is almost the same as in the first edition. We have made a few additions, for example by giving a fuller treatment of circuit analysis and by discussing the dispersion of electromagnetic waves. Some material which now seems outdated has been removed, and illustrative examples have been modernized.

We have made many small changes in presentation which we hope will make the argument clearer to readers. We gratefully acknowledge the help of all those who have suggested ways of improving the text. We are particularly indebted to Dr. R. Mackintosh and his colleagues at the Open University for a host of detailed suggestions. The adoption of this book as the text for the new 'third-level' Open University course on electricity and magnetism led to a careful scrutiny of the first edition by the course team. This has resulted, we believe, in changes which make the book more useful for students. Any errors or obscurities which remain are our responsibility.

Manchester  
*January, 1990*

I. S. GRANT  
W. R. PHILLIPS

# Preface to the First Edition

This book is based on lectures on classical electromagnetism given at Manchester University. The level of difficulty is suitable for honours physics students at a British University or physics majors at an American University. A-level or high school physics and calculus are assumed, and the reader is expected to have some elementary knowledge of vectors. Electromagnetism is often one of the first branches of physics in which students find that they really need to make use of vector calculus. Until one is used to them, vectors are difficult, and we have accordingly treated them rather cautiously to begin with. Brief descriptions of the properties of the differential vector operators are given at their first appearance. These descriptions are not intended to be a substitute for a proper mathematical text, but to remind the reader what div, grad and curl are all about, and to set them in the context of electromagnetism. The distinction between macroscopic and microscopic electric and magnetic fields is fully discussed at an early stage in the book. It is our experience that students do get confused about the fields  $\mathbf{E}$  and  $\mathbf{D}$ , or  $\mathbf{B}$  and  $\mathbf{H}$ . We think that the best way to help them overcome their difficulties is to give a proper explanation of the origin of these fields in terms of microscopic charge distributions or circulating currents.

The logical arrangement of the chapters is summarized in a flow diagram on the inside of the front cover. Provided that one is prepared to accept Kirchhoff's rules and the expressions for the e.m.f.s across components before discussing the laws on which they are based, the A.C. theory in Chapters 7 and 8 does not require any prior knowledge of the earlier chapters. Chapters 7 and 8 can therefore be used at the beginning of a course on electromagnetism. Sections of

the book which are starred may be omitted at a first reading, since they do not contain material needed in order to understand later chapters.

We should like to thank the many colleagues and students who have helped with suggestions and criticisms during the preparation of this book; any errors which remain are our own responsibility. It is also a pleasure to thank Mrs Margaret King and Miss Elizabeth Rich for their rapid and accurate typing of the manuscript.

May, 1974  
Manchester, England.

I. S. GRANT  
W. R. PHILLIPS



# Contents

## 1 FORCE AND ENERGY IN ELECTROSTATICS

1.1	Electric Charge . . . . .	2
1.2	The Electric Field . . . . .	6
1.3	Electric Fields in Matter . . . . .	10
1.3.1	The Atomic Charge Density . . . . .	10
1.3.2	The Atomic Electric Field . . . . .	11
1.3.3	The Macroscopic Electric Field . . . . .	13
1.4	Gauss' Law . . . . .	16
1.4.1	The Flux of a Vector Field . . . . .	17
1.4.2	The Flux of the Electric Field out of a Closed Surface . . . . .	19
1.4.3	The Divergence of a Vector Field . . . . .	24
1.4.4	The Differential Form of Gauss' Law . . . . .	26
1.5	Electrostatic Energy . . . . .	28
1.5.1	The Electrostatic Potential . . . . .	28
1.5.2	The Electric Field as the Gradient of the Potential . . . . .	31
1.5.3	The Dipole Potential . . . . .	35
1.5.4	Energy Changes Associated with the Atomic Field . . . . .	38
1.5.5	Capacitors, and Energy in Macroscopic Fields . . . . .	40
★ 1.5.6	Energy Stored by a Number of Charged Conductors . . . . .	44
	PROBLEMS I . . . . .	46

★Starred sections may be omitted as they are not required later in the book.

## 2 DIELECTRICS

2.1	Polarization . . . . .	49
2.2	Relative Permittivity and Electric Susceptibility . . . . .	55
2.2.1	The Local Field . . . . .	59
2.2.2	Polar Molecules . . . . .	60
2.2.3	Non-polar Liquids . . . . .	67
2.3	Macroscopic Fields in Dielectrics . . . . .	70
2.3.1	The Volume Density of Polarization Charge . . . . .	71
2.3.2	The Electric Displacement Vector . . . . .	73
2.3.3	Boundary Conditions for <b>D</b> and <b>E</b> . . . . .	76
2.4	Energy in the Presence of Dielectrics . . . . .	79
★ 2.4.1	Some Further Remarks about Energy and Forces . . . . .	80
	PROBLEMS 2 . . . . .	82

## 3 ELECTROSTATIC FIELD CALCULATIONS

3.1	Poisson's Equation and Laplace's Equation . . . . .	85
3.1.1	The Uniqueness Theorem . . . . .	88
3.1.2	Electric Fields in the Presence of Free Charge . . . . .	89
3.2	Boundaries Between Different Regions . . . . .	91
★ 3.3	Boundary Conditions and Field Patterns . . . . .	93
★ 3.3.1	Electrostatic Images . . . . .	93
★ 3.3.2	Spheres and Spherical Cavities in Uniform External Field . . . . .	97
★ 3.4	Electrostatic Lenses . . . . .	100
★ 3.5	Numerical Solutions of Poisson's Equation . . . . .	103
3.6	Summary of Electrostatics . . . . .	107
	PROBLEMS 3 . . . . .	109

## 4 STEADY CURRENTS AND MAGNETIC FIELDS

4.1	Electromotive Force and Conduction . . . . .	112
4.1.1	Current and Resistance . . . . .	112
★ 4.1.2	The Calculation of Resistance . . . . .	116
4.2	The Magnetic Field . . . . .	119
4.2.1	The Lorentz Force . . . . .	119
4.2.2	Magnetic Field Lines . . . . .	123
4.3	The Magnetic Dipole . . . . .	127
4.3.1	Current Loops in External Fields . . . . .	127
4.3.2	Magnetic Dipoles and Magnetic Fields . . . . .	130
4.4	Ampère's Law . . . . .	132
4.4.1	The Field of a Large Current Loop . . . . .	132
4.4.2	The Biot-Savart Law . . . . .	137

4.4.3	Examples of the Calculation of Magnetic Fields	139
4.5	The Differential Form of Ampère's Law	44
4.5.1	The Operator Curl	144
4.5.2	The Vector Curl $\mathbf{B}$	148
4.5.3	The Magnetic Vector Potential	148
4.6	Forces and Torques on Coils	150
4.6.1	Magnetic Flux	151
4.7	The Motion of Charged Particles in Electric and Magnetic Fields	154
4.7.1	The Motion of a Charged Particle in a Uniform Magnetic Field	155
4.7.2	Magnetic Mirrors and Plasmas	157
★ 4.7.3	Magnetic Quadrupole Lenses	159
	PROBLEMS 4	163

## 5 MAGNETIC MATERIALS

5.1	Magnetization	166
5.1.1	Diamagnetism	169
5.1.2	Paramagnetism	173
5.1.3	Ferromagnetism	175
5.2	The Macroscopic Magnetic Field Inside Media	176
5.2.1	The Surface Currents on a Uniformly Magnetized Body	178
5.2.2	The Distributed Currents Within a Magnetized Body	179
5.2.3	Magnetic Susceptibility and Atomic Structure	183
5.3	The Field Vector $\mathbf{H}$	186
5.3.1	Ampère's Law for the Field $\mathbf{H}$	186
5.3.2	The Boundary Conditions on the Field $\mathbf{B}$ and $\mathbf{H}$	191
5.4	Magnets	194
5.4.1	Electromagnets	194
★ 5.4.2	Permanent Magnets	204
5.5	Summary of Magnetostatics	208
	PROBLEMS 5	209

## 6 ELECTROMAGNETIC INDUCTION AND MAGNETIC ENERGY

6.1	Electromagnetic Induction	212
6.1.1	Motional Electromotive Force	214
6.1.2	Faraday's Law	218
6.1.3	Examples of Induction	221
6.1.4	The Differential Form of Faraday's Law	228
6.2	Self-inductance and Mutual Inductance	230
6.2.1	Self-inductance	230

6.2.2	Mutual Inductance.	232
6.3	Energy and Forces in Magnetic Fields	234
6.3.1	The Magnetic Energy Stored in an Inductor.	234
6.3.2	The Total Magnetic Energy of a System of Currents	235
6.3.3	The Potential Energy of a Coil in a Field and the Force on the Coil	237
6.3.4	The Total Magnetic Energy in Terms of the Fields <b>B</b> and <b>H</b>	239
6.3.5	Non-linear Media	241
★ 6.3.6	Further Comments on Energy in Magnetic Fields.	243
6.4	The Measurement of Magnetic Fields and Susceptibilities	246
6.4.1	The Measurement of Magnetic Fields	246
6.4.2	The Measurement of Magnetic Susceptibilities	248
	PROBLEMS 6	250
<b>7</b>	<b>ALTERNATING CURRENTS AND TRANSIENTS</b>	
7.1	Alternating Current Generators	253
7.2	Amplitude, Phase and Period	256
7.3	Resistance, Capacitance and Inductance in A.C. Circuits	257
7.4	The Phasor Diagram and Complex Impedance	260
7.5	Power in A.C. Circuits	266
7.6	Resonance.	268
7.7	Transients.	274
	PROBLEMS 7	280
<b>8</b>	<b>LINEAR CIRCUITS</b>	
8.1	Networks	282
8.1.1	Kirchhoff's Rules	283
8.1.2	Loop Analysis, Node Analysis and Superposition	286
8.1.3	A.C. Networks	288
8.2	Audio-frequency Bridges	291
8.3	Impedance and Admittance	293
8.3.1	Input Impedance	296
8.3.2	Output Impedance and Thévenin's Theorem	297
8.4	Filters	299
8.4.1	Ladder Networks	301
8.4.2	Higher Order Filters and Delay Lines	303
8.5	Transformers	307
8.5.1	The Ideal Transformer	308
8.5.2	Applications of Transformers	311
★ 8.5.3	Real Transformers	312
	PROBLEMS 8	318

**9 TRANSMISSION LINES**

9.1	Propagation of Signals in a Lossless Transmission Line.	324
9.2	Practical Types of Transmission Line	329
9.2.1	The Parallel Wire Transmission Line	329
9.2.2	The Coaxial Cable	331
9.2.3	Parallel Strip Lines	333
9.3	Reflections	335
★ 9.4	The Input Impedance of a Mismatched Line	338
★ 9.5	Lossy Lines	342
	PROBLEMS 9	345

**10 MAXWELL'S EQUATIONS**

10.1	The Equation of Continuity	348
10.2	Displacement Current	350
10.3	Maxwell's Equations	356
10.4	Electromagnetic Radiation	359
★ 10.5	The Microscopic Field Equations	360
	PROBLEMS 10	362

**11 ELECTROMAGNETIC WAVES**

11.1	Electromagnetic Waves in Free Space	365
11.2	Plane Waves and Polarization	368
11.2.1	Plane Waves in Free Space	373
11.2.2	Plane Waves in Isotropic Insulating Media	375
11.3	Dispersion	379
11.4	Energy in Electromagnetic Waves	383
11.5	The Absorption of Plane Waves in Conductors and the Skin Effect	388
11.6	The Reflection and Transmission of Electromagnetic Waves	391
11.6.1	Boundary Conditions on Electric and Magnetic Fields	392
11.6.2	Reflection at Dielectric Boundaries	396
11.6.3	Reflection at Metallic Boundaries	399
★ 11.6.4	Polarization by Reflection	401
★ 11.7	Electromagnetic Waves and Photons	404
	PROBLEMS 11	406

**12 WAVEGUIDES**

12.1	The Propagation of Waves Between Conducting Plates	409
12.2	Rectangular Waveguides	415
12.2.1	The $TE_{01}$ Mode	420

★ 12.2.2 Further Comments on Waveguides . . . . .	423
12.3 Cavities . . . . .	426
PROBLEMS 12 . . . . .	430

### 13 THE GENERATION OF ELECTROMAGNETIC WAVES

13.1 The Retarded Potentials . . . . .	433
13.2 The Hertzian Dipole . . . . .	436
13.3 Antennas . . . . .	443
PROBLEMS 13 . . . . .	450

### 14 ELECTROMAGNETISM AND SPECIAL RELATIVITY

14.1 Introductory Remarks . . . . .	451
14.2 The Lorentz Transformation . . . . .	452
14.3 Charges and Fields as seen by Different Observers. . . . .	455
14.4 Four-vectors . . . . .	458
14.5 Maxwell's Equations in Four-vector Form . . . . .	461
14.6 Transformation of the Fields . . . . .	464
14.7 Magnetism as a Relativistic Phenomenon . . . . .	469
14.8 Retarded Potentials From the Relativistic Standpoint . . . . .	473
PROBLEMS 14 . . . . .	476

### APPENDIX A UNITS

A.1 Electrical Units and Standards . . . . .	477
A.1.1 The Definition of the Ampere . . . . .	477
A.1.2 Calibration and Comparison of Electrical . . . . .	
Standards . . . . .	479
A.2 Gaussian Units . . . . .	482
A.3 Conversion between SI and Gaussian Units . . . . .	485

### APPENDIX B FIELDS AND DIFFERENTIAL OPERATORS

B.1 The Operators div, grad and curl . . . . .	487
B.2 Formulae in Different Coordinate Systems . . . . .	489
B.3 Identities . . . . .	493

### APPENDIX C THE DERIVATION OF THE BIOT-SAVART LAW

Solutions to Problems . . . . .	497
Further Reading . . . . .	518
Index . . . . .	519

## CHAPTER

# 1

## Force and energy in electrostatics

The only laws of force which are known with great precision are the two laws describing the gravitational forces between different masses and the electrical forces between different charges. When two masses or two charges are stationary, then in either case the force between them is inversely proportional to the square of their separation. These inverse square laws were discovered long ago: Newton's law of gravitation was proposed in 1665, and Coulomb's law of electrostatics in 1785. This chapter is concerned with the application of Coulomb's law to systems containing any number of stationary charges. Before studying this topic in detail, it is worth pausing for a moment to consider the consequences of the law in the whole of physics.

In order to make full use of our knowledge of a law of force, we must have a theory of mechanics, that is to say, a theory which describes the behaviour of an object under the action of a known force. Large objects which are moving at speeds small compared to the speed of light obey very closely the laws of classical Newtonian mechanics. For example, these laws and the gravitational force law together lead to accurate predictions of planetary motion. But classical mechanics does not apply at all to observations made on particles of atomic scale or on very fast-moving objects. Their behaviour can only be understood in terms of the ideas of quantum theory and of the special theory of relativity. These two theories have changed the framework of discussion in physics, and have made possible the spectacular advances of the twentieth century.

It is remarkable that while mechanics has undergone drastic amendment,

Coulomb's law has stood unchanged. Although the behaviour of atoms does not fit the framework of the old mechanics, when the Coulomb force is used with the theories of relativity and quantum mechanics, atomic interactions are explained with great precision in every instance when an accurate comparison has been made between experiment and theory. In principle, atomic physics and solid state physics, and for that matter the whole of chemistry, can be derived from Coulomb's law. It is not feasible to derive everything in this way, but it should be borne in mind that atoms make up the world around us, and that its rich variety and complexity are governed by electrical forces.

## 1.1 ELECTRIC CHARGE

Most of this book applies electromagnetism to large-scale objects, where the atomic origin of the electrical forces is not immediately apparent. However, to emphasize this origin, we shall begin by consideration of atomic systems. The simplest atom of all is the hydrogen atom, which consists of a single proton with a single electron moving around it. The hydrogen atom is stable because the proton and the electron attract one another. In contrast, two electrons repel one another, and tend to fly apart, and similarly the force between two protons is repulsive\*. These phenomena are described by saying that there are two different kinds of *electric charge*, and that like charges repel one another, whereas unlike charges are attracted together. The charge carried by the proton is called *positive*, and the charge carried by the electron *negative*.

The magnitude and direction of the force between two stationary particles, each carrying electric charge, is given by Coulomb's law. The law summarizes four facts:

- (i) Like charges repel, unlike charges attract.
- (ii) The force acts along the line joining the two particles.
- (iii) The force is proportional to the magnitude of each charge.
- (iv) The force is inversely proportional to the square of the distance between the particles.

The mathematical statement of Coulomb's law is:

$$\mathbf{F}_{21} \propto \frac{q_2 q_1}{r_{21}^3} \mathbf{r}_{21}. \quad (1.1)$$

The vector  $\mathbf{F}_{21}$  in Figure 1.1 represents the force on particle 1 (carrying a charge  $q_1$ ) exerted by the particle 2 (carrying charge  $q_2$ ). The line from  $q_2$  to  $q_1$  is represented by the vector  $\mathbf{r}_{21}$ , of length  $r_{21}$ : since the unit vector along the direction  $\mathbf{r}_{21}$  can be written  $\mathbf{r}_{21}/r_{21}$ , Equation (1.1) is an *inverse square law of force*,

\*If the protons are separated by a distance less than  $10^{-14}$  m, they are affected by the very short range nuclear forces. Unlike gravitational and electrical forces, nuclear forces are not known precisely. However, in the study of atoms one does not need to know anything about nuclear forces beyond the fact that they are strong enough to bind together the constituent parts of the atomic nucleus.



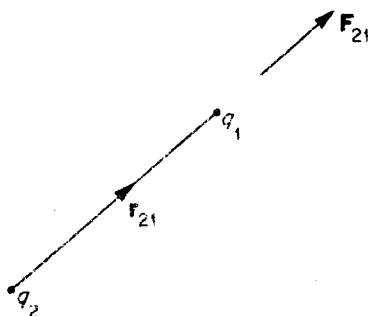


Figure 1.1. The force between two charges.

although  $r_{21}^3$  appears in the denominator. Notice that the equation automatically accounts for the attractive or repulsive character of the force if  $q_1$  and  $q_2$  include the sign of the charge. When the charges  $q_1$  and  $q_2$  are both positive or both negative, the force on  $q_1$  is along  $\mathbf{r}_{21}$ , i.e. it is repulsive. On the other hand, when one charge is positive and the other negative, the force is in the direction opposite to  $\mathbf{r}_{21}$ , i.e. it is attractive.

To complete the statement of the force law, we must decide what units to use, and hence determine the constant of proportionality in Equation (1.1). We shall use SI (Système International) units, which are favoured by most physicists and engineers applying electromagnetism to problems involving large-scale objects. A different system of units, called the Gaussian system, is frequently used in atomic physics and solid state physics, and it is an unfortunate necessity for students to become reasonably familiar with both systems. (The two systems of units are discussed in Appendix A.) In SI units, Coulomb's law is written as

$$\mathbf{F}_{21} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{q_2 q_1}{r_{21}^3} \mathbf{r}_{21} \quad (1.2)$$

where

$q_1$  and  $q_2$  are measured in coulombs,

$r_{21}$  is measured in metres

and

$\mathbf{F}_{21}$  is measured in newtons.

The magnitude of the unit of charge, which is called the *coulomb*, is actually defined in terms of magnetic forces, and we shall leave discussion of the definition until Chapter 4. The factor  $4\pi$  in the constant of proportionality in Coulomb's law is introduced in order to simplify some important equations which we shall