



# **ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY**

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

A.	Ångström unit(s)	A.S.M.E.	American Society of
A	anion; as, HA		Mechanical Engineers
abs.	absolute	A.S.T.M.	American Society for
a.c.	alternating current		Testing Materials
ac-	alicyclic; as, <i>ac</i> -derivatives of tetrahydronaphthalene	atm.	atmosphere(s), atmospheric
		at. no.	atomic number
A.C.S.	American Chemical Society	at. wt.	atomic weight
addn.	addition	av.	average
A.G.A.	American Gas Association	b. (as, b <sub>11</sub> )	boiling (at 11 mm.)
		<i>B</i>	base; as, <i>B.2HCl</i>
A.I.Ch.E.	American Institute of Chemical Engineers	bbl.	barrel(s)
		Bé.	Baumé
A.I.M.E.	American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers	b.p.	boiling point
		B.t.u.	British thermal unit(s)
alc.	alcohol, alcoholic	bu.	bushel(s)
alk.	alkaline (not alkali)	C.	centigrade
Alk	alkyl	<i>C-</i>	denoting attachment to carbon; as, <i>C</i> -alkyl derivatives of aniline
amp.	ampere(s)	cal.	calorie(s)
amp.-hr.	ampere-hour(s)	calcd.	calculated
amt.	amount (noun)	c.f.m.	cubic foot (feet) per minute
anhyd.	anhydrous	cg.	centigram(s)
A.P.I.	American Petroleum Institute	c.g.s.	centimeter-gram-second
		chem.	chemical
app.	apparatus	<i>C.I.</i>	<i>Colour Index</i> no.
approx.	approximate (adj.), approximately	cks.	centistokes
aq.	aqueous	c.l.	car lots
Ar	aryl	cm.	centimeter(s)
<i>ar-</i>	aromatic; as, <i>ar</i> -derivatives of tetrahydronaphthalene	coeff.	coefficient
		com.	commercial
<i>as-</i>	asymmetric; as, <i>as-m</i> -xylydine	compd.	compound (noun)
		compn.	composition
ASA	American Standards Association	concd.	concentrated
		concn.	concentration
A.S.M.	American Society for Metals	cond.	conductivity
		const.	constant
		cor.	corrected



c.p.	chemically pure	ff.	following (pages)
cps.	centipoise	fl.oz.	fluid ounce(s)
crit.	critical	f.o.b.	free on board
cryst.	crystalline	f.p.	freezing point
crystd.	crystallized	ft.	foot (feet)
crystn.	crystallization	ft.-lb.	foot-pound(s)
cu.	cubic	g.	gram(s)
d (as, d <sub>4</sub> <sup>20</sup> )	density (conveniently, specific gravity)	gal.	gallon(s)
d	differential operator	g.p.d.	grams per denier
d-	<i>dextro</i> -, dextrorotatory	g.p.m.	gallons per minute
D-	denoting configurational relationship, as to <i>dex</i> - <i>tro</i> -glyceraldehyde	hp.	horsepower
d.c.	direct current	hr.	hour(s)
dec., decomp.	decompose(s)	hyd.	hydrated, hydrous
decompn.	decomposition	i.	insoluble
deriv.	derivative	i-	inactive; as, <i>i</i> -methio- nine
detd.	determined	i.b.p.	initial boiling point
detn.	determination	I.C.C.	Interstate Commerce Commission
diam.	diameter	I.D.	inner diameter
dielec.	dielectric (adj.)	in.	inch(es)
dil.	dilute	insol.	insoluble
dist.	distilled	I.P.T.	Institute of Petroleum Technologists
distn.	distillation	I.U.	International Unit(s)
DL-, dl-	racemic	I.U.C., I.U.P.A.C.	International Union of Chemistry, Interna- tional Union of Pure and Applied Chem- istry
dm.	decimeter		
e	electron	j.	joule
ed.	edition, editor	K.	Kelvin
elec.	electric, electrical	K	dissociation constant
elev.	elevated	Kev	kilo electron volt
e.m.f.	electromotive force	kg.	kilogram(s)
eng.	engineering	kg.-cal.	kilogram-calorie(s)
eq.	equation	kv.	kilovolt(s)
equil.	equilibrium	kv.-amp.	kilovolt-ampere(s)
equiv.	equivalent	kw.	kilowatt(s)
esp.	especially	kw.-hr.	kilowatt-hour(s)
estd.	estimated	l.	liter(s)
estn.	estimation	l-	<i>levo</i> -, levorotatory
e.s.u.	electrostatic unit(s)	L-	denoting configurational relationship, as to <i>levo</i> -glyceraldehyde
e.u.	entropy unit(s)	lb.	pound(s)
e.v.	electron volt(s)	LC <sub>50</sub>	concentration lethal to 50% of animals tested
expt.	experiment		
exptl.	experimental		
ext.	extract		
extd.	extracted		
extn.	extraction		
F.	Fahrenheit		
Fedl.	Federal		



l.c.l.	less than car lots	N.O.I.B.N.	not otherwise indexed
LD <sub>50</sub>	dose lethal to 50% of animals tested	<i>o</i> -	by name
ln	logarithm (natural)	<i>O</i> -	ortho; as, <i>o</i> -xylene
log	logarithm (common)		denoting attachment to oxygen; as, <i>O</i> -acetyl- hydroxylamine
m.	meter(s)	O.D.	outer diameter
<i>m</i> -	meta: as <i>m</i> -xylene	oz.	ounce(s)
M	metal	p., pp.	page, pages
<i>M</i>	molar (as applied to concn.; not molal, which is written out)	<i>p</i> -	para; as, <i>p</i> -xylene
ma.	milliampere(s)	pos.	positive (adj.)
manuf.	manufacture	powd.	powdered
manufd.	manufactured	p.p.m.	parts per million
manufg.	manufacturing	ppt.	precipitate
max.	maximum	pptd.	precipitated
M.C.A.	Manufacturing Chem- ists' Association	pptn.	precipitation
m.c.f.	million cubic feet	prepd.	prepared
m.e., meq.	milliequivalent(s)	prepn.	preparation
mech.	mechanical	Pr. no.	Foreign Prototype no. (for dyes)
M.e.v.	million electron volts	p.s.i.(g.), (a.)	pound(s) per square inch (gage), (absolute)
mg.	milligram(s)	pt.	point
m.g.d.	million gallons per day	pts.	parts
min.	minimum; minute(s)	quad. pt.	quadruple point
misc.	miscellaneous	qual.	qualitative
mixt.	mixture	quant.	quantitative
ml.	milliliter(s)	<i>q.v.</i>	"which see"
M.L.D.	minimum lethal dose	R	univalent hydrocarbon radical (or hydrogen)
mm.	millimeter(s)	R.	Rankine
mM	millimole(s)	ref.	reference
mol.	molecule, molecular	resp.	respectively
m.p.	melting point	r.h.	relative humidity
m.p.h.	miles per hour	<i>R.I.</i>	<i>Ring Index</i> no.
M.R.	molar refraction	r.p.m.	revolutions per minute
mv.	millivolt(s)	r.p.s.	revolutions per second
mμ	millimicron(s)	s.	soluble
<i>n</i> (as, <i>n</i> <sub>D</sub> <sup>20</sup> )	index of refraction (for 20°C., and sodium light)	<i>s</i> -	symmetric(al); as, <i>s</i> - <i>m</i> - xyldine
<i>n</i> -	normal; as, <i>n</i> -butyl	<i>S</i> -	denoting attachment to sulfur; as, <i>S</i> -methyl- cysteine
<i>N</i>	normal (as applied to concn.)	S.A.E.	Society of Automotive Engineers
<i>N</i> -	denoting attachment to nitrogen; as, <i>N</i> -meth- ylaniline	satd.	saturated
neg.	negative (adj.)	satn.	saturation
no.	number		

S.C.F.	standard cubic foot (feet)	t.s.i.	tons per square inch
Sch.	Schultz no. (for dyes)	Twad.	Twaddell
sec.	second(s)	u.v.	ultraviolet
sec-	secondary; as, <i>sec</i> -butyl	v.	volt(s)
S.F.s.	Saybolt Furol second(s)	var.	variety
sl.s.	slightly soluble	vic-	vicinal; as, <i>vic-m</i> -xyli- dine
sol.	soluble	vol.	volume(s) (not volatile)
soln.	solution	v.s.	very soluble
soly.	solubility	w.	watt(s)
sp.	specific	wt.	weight
sp., spp.	species	X.U. ( $10^{-10}$ mm.)	X-unit
spec.	specification	yd.	yard(s)
sp.gr.	specific gravity	yr.	year(s)
sq.	square	$[\alpha]_D^{20}$	optical rotation (for 20°C. and sodium light)
S.T.P.	standard temperature and pressure	$\gamma$	microgram(s)
subl.	sublime(s), subliming	$\partial$	differential operator (partial)
S.U.s.	Saybolt Universal second(s)	$\Delta$	finite difference
<i>sym</i> -	symmetric(al); as, <i>sym</i> - <i>m</i> -xylidine	$\eta$	viscosity
T.A.P.P.I.	Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry	$\lambda$	wave length
tech.	technical	$\mu$	micron(s)
temp.	temperature	$\Omega$	ohm(s)
<i>tert</i> -	tertiary; as, <i>tert</i> -butyl	<	less than
theoret.	theoretical	>	more than
t.p.h.	tons per hour	$\sim$	cycle(s)
		$\approx$	approximately equal to

Other letter symbols may be found in "Standard System of Nomenclature for Chemical Engineering Unit Operations" adopted by the American Institute of Chemical Engineers.

## SHIPPING REGULATIONS

Complete information for the U.S. is given in "Tariff No. 9 Publishing Interstate Commerce Commission Regulations for Transportation of Explosives and Other Dangerous Articles by Land and Water in Rail Freight Service and by Motor Vehicle (Highway) and Water Including Specifications for Shipping Containers," with supplements, issued by H. A. Campbell, Agent, 30 Vesey Street, New York 7, N.Y. (1954). The following terms for labeling explosives and other dangerous articles have been used in the Encyclopedia:

- Red label (for inflammable liquids)
- Yellow label (for inflammable solids and oxidizing materials)
- White label (for acids and corrosive liquids)
- Red label (for inflammable compressed gases)
- Green label (for noninflammable compressed gases)
- N.O.I.B.N. (not otherwise indexed by name)

In the text of the Encyclopedia the preferred terms "flammable" and "nonflammable" are used in place of "inflammable" and "noninflammable," respectively.

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## PERIODICAL ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations used are, for the most part, those given in the "List of Periodicals Abstracted by Chemical Abstracts" (Vol. 45, No. 24, Pt. 2 (1951), also published separately). See also *Literature (survey)*, especially the sections on "Reviews, yearbooks, and monographs" and "Periodicals," Vol. 8, pp. 437-40.

*Am. Soc. Testing Materials, Proc.*  
*Anal. Chem.* (superseding *Ind. Eng. Chem., Anal. Ed.*)  
*Angew. Chem.* (superseding *Die Chemie; Z. angew. Chem.*)  
*Ann. Chem., Justus Liebigs*  
*Arch. Biochem. and Biophys.* (superseding *Arch. Biochem.*)  
*Arch. Ind. Hyg. and Occupational Med.* (superseding *J. Ind. Hyg. Toxicol.*)  
*Biochem. J.* (London)  
*Biochem. Z.*  
*Biochim. et Biophys. Acta*  
*BIOS Repts.*  
*Bull. Chem. Soc. Japan*  
*Bull. soc. chim. or Bull. soc. chim. France C.A.*  
*Can. J. Research*  
*Chem. Ber.* (superseding *Ber.*)  
*Chem. Eng.* (superseding *Chem. & Met. Eng.*)  
*Chem. Eng. News* (superseding *News Ed. (Am. Chem. Soc.): Ind. Eng. Chem., News Ed.*)  
*Chem. Eng. Progress* (superseding *Trans. Am. Inst. Chem. Engrs.*)  
*Chem. Eng. Science*  
*Chemische Industrie*  
*Chemistry & Industry* (formerly part of *J. Soc. Chem. Ind.*)  
*Chem. Revs.*  
*Chem. Tech. (Berlin)* (superseding *Chem. Fabrik*)  
*Chem. Week* (superseding *Chem. Inds. Week*)  
*Chem. Zentr.*  
*Chem.-Ztg.*  
  
*Chimica e industria (Italy) or Chimica e industria (Milan)*  
*Chimie & industrie*  
*CIOS Repts.*  
  
*Compt. rend.*  
  
*FIAT Repts.*  
*Fortschr. chem. Forsch.*  
*Gazz. chim. ital.*  
*Helv. Chim. Acta*  
*Ind. Chemist*

American Society for Testing Materials, Proceedings  
Analytical Chemistry  
Angewandte Chemie  
Annalen der Chemie, Justus Liebigs  
Archives of Biochemistry and Biophysics  
Archives of Industrial Hygiene and Occupational Medicine  
Biochemical Journal, The  
Biochemische Zeitschrift  
Biochimica et Biophysica Acta  
British Intelligence Objectives Subcommittee Reports  
Bulletin of the Chemical Society of Japan  
Bulletin de la société chimique de France  
Chemical Abstracts  
Canadian Journal of Research  
Chemische Berichte  
Chemical Engineering with Chemical & Metallurgical Engineering  
Chemical and Engineering News  
  
Chemical Engineering Progress with Transactions of American Institute of Chemical Engineers  
Chemical Engineering Science  
Chemische Industrie  
Chemistry & Industry  
  
Chemical Reviews  
Chemische Technik, Die (Berlin)  
  
Chemical Week  
Chemisches Zentralblatt  
Chemiker-Zeitung mit dem Sonderteil, Die Chemische Praxis und der Beilage, Chemisch-technische Übersicht  
Chimica, La, e l'industria (Italy) or (Milan)  
  
Chimie & industrie  
Combined Intelligence Objectives Subcommittee Reports  
Comptes rendus hebdomadaires des séances de l'Académie des sciences  
Field Information Agency Technical Reports  
Fortschritte der chemischen Forschung  
Gazzetta chimica italiana  
Helvetica Chimica Acta  
Industrial Chemist and Chemical Manufacturer. The  
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*Ind. Eng. Chem.* (superseding *J. Ind. Eng. Chem.*)

*J. Agr. Food Chem.*

*J. Am. Chem. Soc.*

*J. Am. Med. Assoc.*

*J. Am. Pharm. Assoc.*

*J. Appl. Chem. (U.S.S.R.)* (see also *Zhur. Priklad. Khim.*)

*J. Appl. Phys.* (superseding *Physics*)

*J. Assoc. Offic. Agr. Chemists*

*J. Biol. Chem.*

*J. Chem. Phys.*

*J. Chem. Soc.*

*J. Colloid Sci.*

*J. Electrochem. Soc.* (superseding *Trans. Electrochem. Soc.*; *Trans. Am. Electrochem. Soc.*)

*J. Gen. Chem. (U.S.S.R.)* (see also *Zhur. Obshchei Khim.*)

*J. Indian Chem. Soc.*

*J. Inst. Metals*

*J. makromol. Chem.* (superseding *J. prakt. Chem.*)

*J. Org. Chem.*

*J. Phys. Chem.* (superseding *J. Phys. & Colloid Chem.*)

*J. Polymer Sci.* (superseding *J. Polymer Research*)

*J. Research Natl. Bur. Standards* (superseding *Bur. Standards J. Research*)

*J. Sci. Food Agr.*

*J. Soc. Chem. Ind. or J. Soc. Chem. Ind. (London)* (formerly containing *Chemistry & Industry*)

*J. Soc. Chem. Ind., Japan*

*Kolloid-Z.*

*Mfg. Chemist*

*Monatsh. Chem.*

*Nature*

*Nucleonics*

*Office Tech. Services (OTS) Repts.* (superseding *Office Publication Board Repts.*)

*Oil, Paint Drug Repr.*

*Phys. Rev.*

*Rec. trav. chim.*

*Research (London)*

*Revs. Mod. Phys.*

*Science*

*Trans. Am. Inst. Mining Met. Engrs.*

*Trans. Am. Soc. Metals* (superseding

*Trans. Am. Soc. Steel Treating*)

*Trans. Inst. Chem. Engrs. (London)*

*Z. anorg. u. allgem. Chem.* (superseding *Z. anorg. Chem.*)

*Z. Elektrochem.*

*Zhur. Obshchei Khim.*

*Zhur. Priklad. Khim.*

*Z. physik. Chem.*

Industrial and Engineering Chemistry

Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry

Journal of the American Chemical Society, The

Journal of the American Medical Association, The

Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association

Journal of Applied Chemistry (U.S.S.R.)

Journal of Applied Physics

Journal of the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists

Journal of Biological Chemistry, The

Journal of Chemical Physics, The

Journal of the Chemical Society (London)

Journal of Colloid Science

Journal of the Electrochemical Society

Journal of General Chemistry (U.S.S.R.)

Journal of the Indian Chemical Society

Journal of the Institute of Metals and Metallurgical Abstracts

Journal für makromolekulare Chemie

Journal of Organic Chemistry, The

Journal of Physical Chemistry, The

Journal of Polymer Science

Journal of Research of the National Bureau of Standards

Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture

Journal of the Society of Chemical Industry (London)

Journal of the Society of Chemical Industry, Japan

Kolloid-Zeitschrift

Manufacturing Chemist and Pharmaceutical and Fine Chemical Trade Journal Incorporating Manufacturing Perfumer

Monatshefte für Chemie und verwandte Teile anderer Wissenschaften

Nature

Nucleonics

Office of Technical Services Reports

Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter

Physical Review, The

Recueil des travaux chimiques des Pays-Bas

Research, A Journal of Science and Its Applications

Reviews of Modern Physics

Science

Transactions of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers

Transactions of the American Society for Metals

Transactions of the Institution of Chemical Engineers (London)

Zeitschrift für anorganische und allgemeine Chemie

Zeitschrift für Elektrochemie und angewandte physikalische Chemie

Zhurnal Obshchei Khimii (Journal of General Chemistry (U.S.S.R.))

Zhurnal Prikladnoi Khimii (Journal of Applied Chemistry (U.S.S.R.))

Zeitschrift für physikalische Chemie



# **T** *continued*

## **THERMODYNAMICS**

Thermodynamics deals with energy and its transformation, driving potential of a process, and equilibrium with reference to either physical change of state or chemical reaction. As the result of experience, three laws of thermodynamics have been developed as the backbone of thermodynamics. Based upon facts and basic principles of chemistry and physics, these laws have found wide applications to problems in various fields of engineering as well as in pure science.

In chemical technology, thermodynamics has been successfully applied in prediction of limiting conditions of unit operations or processes and the energy quantities involved. As a powerful and versatile tool in process research, development, design and operation, thermodynamics is indispensable in the solution of an ever-increasing number of process problems. During recent developments in petroleum refining, petroleum chemicals, synthetic rubber, plastics, synthetic fibers, and other synthetic organic chemicals, many new compounds and processes have been encountered. Only with the aid of thermodynamics has it been possible to get the most out of research and engineering effort. For instance, the process design can be performed by means of thermodynamic correlations of various thermochemical and phase equilibrium data without an excessive amount of pilot-plant work. The optimum operating temperature and pressure for a given chemical reaction can be predicted to save time-consuming effort in laboratories. This is especially important in making the cost estimate of a plant or preliminary proposal for an engineering service.

It must be emphasized that thermodynamics deals with equilibrium situations. It has nothing to say about the rate at which equilibrium is approached from any non-equilibrium situation. See *Equilibrium, chemical*; *Reaction kinetics*.

### **Basic Concepts and Definitions**

**System and Surroundings.** The so-called system in thermodynamics designates a specific part of the material universe to be set apart for the purpose of study. It may consist of a single body, part of a body, or a number of bodies, large or small. The system can be either homogeneous or heterogeneous. The choice of a system, which depends largely upon the individual situation, may affect the analysis of a problem by thermodynamics. A wise choice of the system can provide a convenient route in



solving complex problems. With an improper selection of a system, some thermodynamic problems may even become unsolvable.

Once a system is specified, the rest of the universe becomes "surroundings." The term "surroundings" in thermodynamics refers more particularly to the surroundings immediately adjacent to the system. Between a system and its surroundings lies a boundary. In locating a boundary exactly between a system and its surroundings, the system can be unmistakably identified.

Several kinds of systems are frequently encountered. During the change of state, if there is no material flowing across the boundary between a system and its surroundings, the system is defined as a *closed system*. An *open system* is one involving the exchange of material across the boundary. In a multiphase system each separate phase is usually considered an open system wherein materials are flowing freely from one phase to the other, although the system as a whole may be a closed one.

A closed system may be free to absorb from or reject heat to the environment. It is also possible for a closed system to perform or to receive work. However, when the boundary between a system and its surroundings is made impervious to the heat flow, the closed system becomes *thermally isolated*. The closed system becomes *mechanically isolated* if a rigid boundary is present to prevent any volume change. When neither heat nor work is added or removed during a change of state, the closed system involved becomes a *completely isolated system*.

Two kinds of open systems are frequently encountered in industries, steady-state and unsteady-state. If the properties of any part of the system are constant regardless of the duration of an operation or a process, the so-called open system is a *steady-state flow system*. Most large-scale plants in industries which are operated continuously with a feed of constant composition at a carefully controlled operating condition belong to this class. On the other hand, if the properties of any part of a system undergo fluctuation and variation, the open system is an *unsteady-state flow system*. The compression of gases by a compressor into a storage tank is an example of this type of open system. The quantitative evaluation of a problem dealing with an unsteady-state flow system is more involved because the duration of the process becomes an additional variable.

**State and State Function.** To characterize any system it is necessary to find out the state in which the system exists. The term "state," in any thermodynamic discussion, is a kind of statistical average of the state assumed by all minute components of the system. This is a state in its gross sense, which is a macroscopic one. For instance, 10 cu. ft. of oxygen gas has its state completely defined if the temperature and pressure are given. The state of the oxygen so defined is a statistical average of the microscopic "states" of all individual oxygen molecules.

The variables which are used to characterize or to define completely the state of a system are called *state functions* or sometimes, simply, "properties." Once the state of a system is given, the "properties" or state functions are fixed irrespective of any changes undergone by the system. Although a system can have fixed values for different properties at a given state, the minimum number of properties required to define the state of a system at equilibrium is determined by the number of components and phases present in the system. This minimum number of properties is identified as the degrees of freedom. The quantitative relation known as the phase rule is:

$$F = C - P + 2 \quad (1)$$

See *Phase rule*.

**Process.** Any change of state taking place in a system is called a *process*. The process can be either a physical change of state or a chemical reaction. In other words, "process" as used in thermodynamics refers to unit operations as well as to unit processes.

Depending upon the limitation imposed upon a system during a process, special kinds of processes can be distinguished. An *adiabatic process* is one in which no heat flows across the boundary between the system and its surroundings; an *isobaric process* takes place at constant pressure. In general, it is desirable to have a chemical reaction carried out as an *isothermal process*, for this leads to a higher equilibrium conversion in either an endothermic or an exothermic reaction. In most organic reactions a large number of undesirable side reactions accompany a main reaction. The control of reaction at one uniform temperature throughout the reactor can either eliminate or reduce the extent of the side reactions.

On the other hand, it is always more economical to carry out some unit operations, such as fractional distillation, evaporation, other heat exchanges, and drying adiabatically. In gas absorption, where a large amount of heat is evolved, isothermal operation is desirable to obtain the maximum recovery.

**Heat Reservoir.** This is an ideal piece of equipment conceived for the convenience of theoretical thermodynamic treatment. A heat reservoir, as normally referred to in thermodynamic consideration, is one of infinite capacity. Any transfer of a finite quantity of heat in or out of the heat reservoir has a negligible effect on its temperature. The ocean and the atmosphere are practical examples that approach this type of heat reservoir.

**Reversible and Irreversible Processes.** The rate of a process can always be expressed as follows:

$$\text{Rate} = \frac{\text{driving force}}{\text{resistance}}$$

When all the forces acting upon a system are balanced, the driving force for a change of state is equal to zero, and the rate of a process becomes zero. Under this condition a system is said to be at equilibrium, and its state remains the same.

For a *reversible process* the driving force is made infinitesimally small. This makes the rate of a process negligibly small, so that a truly reversible process would require an infinite number of years before reaching its final state. Since the driving force in one direction is almost equal to zero, its direction can easily be reversed by an extremely small external force. On the other hand, an *irreversible process* is one proceeding under a driving force of finite order of magnitude. All actual processes are spontaneous, proceeding at a finite rate, and are therefore irreversible. However, an irreversible process can be made to approach a reversible one by some device with a suitable choice of conditions.

Consider a process involving the expansion of a gas against a piston in a vertical cylinder. To simplify the explanation, it is assumed that the piston and piston rod have no weight of their own. The gas inside the cylinder has an initial pressure of 10 atm. and is allowed to expand to 1 atmosphere pressure. If the pressure acting on the outside of the piston is 1 atm., the piston will continue to move upward, with a variable speed of finite order of magnitude, until the pressure of the gas inside the cylinder becomes identical with the outside pressure, that is, 1 atm. This actual process of expansion is irreversible because it proceeds under a driving force greater than an