AQA GCSE PHYSICS (HIGHER) · 8463

PHYSICS



EXAM QUESTION PACK

4.4.1 ATOMS AND ISOTOPES (PACK 1)

SCORE	PERCENTAGE
/244	%

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Q1.

Americium-241 ($^{241}_{95}Am$) is an isotope of americium.

(a) Which of the isotopes given in the table below is **not** an isotope of americium?

Isotope	Mass number	Atomic number
A	243	95
B	243	94
C	242	95

Isotope _____

Give a reason for your answer.

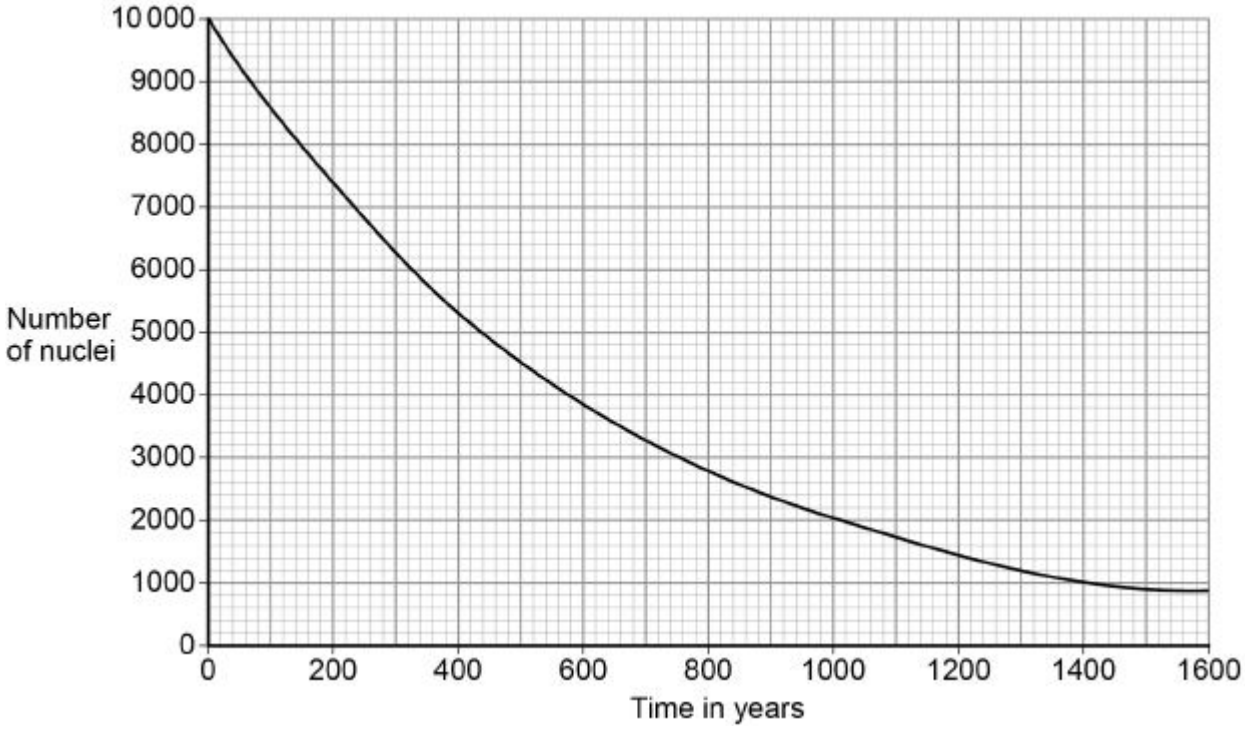
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(2)

The graph below shows how the number of americium-241 nuclei in a sample changes with time.



(b) How many years does it take for the number of americium-241 nuclei to decrease from 10 000 to 5000?

Time = _____ years

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(1)

(c) What is the half-life of americium-241?

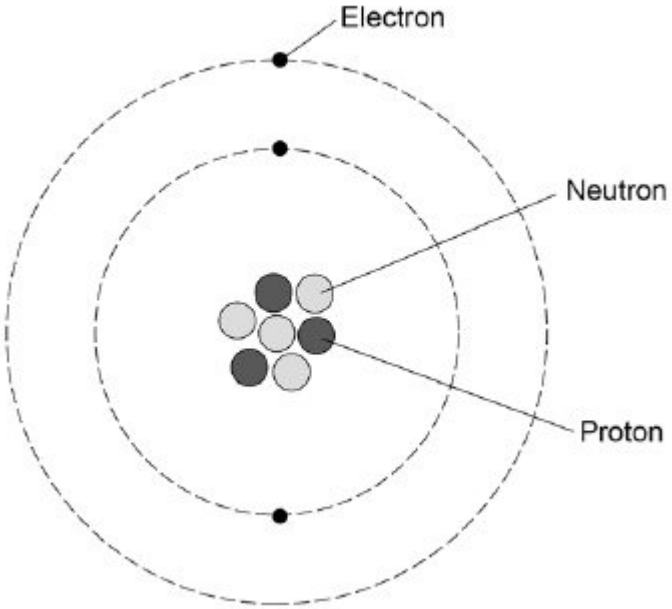
Half-life = _____ years

(1)

(Total 4 marks)

Q2.

The diagram shows a lithium atom.



(a) What is the mass number of this lithium atom?

Tick **one** box.

3 ☐ 4 ☐ 7 ☐ 10 ☐

(1)

(b) What is the atomic number of a lithium atom?

Tick **one** box.

3 ☐ 4 ☐ 7 ☐ 10 ☐

Give a reason for your answer.

_____

_____

(2)

(c) Complete the sentence.

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Choose the answer from the box.

circles	levels	rings

The electrons in an atom orbit in different energy _____ .

(1)

(d) Some atomic nuclei are unstable and decay by emitting an alpha particle or a beta particle.

Complete the symbols for an alpha particle and a beta particle.

Use answers from the box.

–1	0	1	2	4

Alpha $\square^{\square}_{\square}He$

Beta $\square^{0}_{\square}e$

(3)

(e) Doctors may use nuclear radiation to diagnose certain types of illness.

The table below gives data about three radiation sources used.

Each source emits beta radiation.

Radiation source	Half-life in minutes
Carbon-11	20
Nitrogen-13	10
Oxygen-15	2

Explain why oxygen-15 is likely to pose the least risk to a patient.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2)

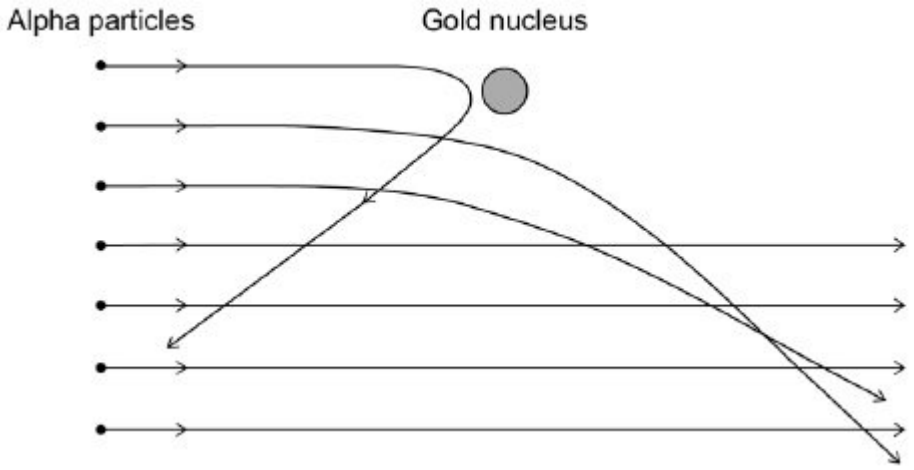
(Total 9 marks)

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Q3.

In the early 20th century, scientists developed an alpha particle scattering experiment using gold foil.

The diagram shows the paths of some of the alpha particles in the alpha particle scattering experiment.



(a) Explain how the paths of the alpha particles were used to develop the nuclear model of the atom.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(4)

(b) Niels Bohr adapted the nuclear model by suggesting electrons orbited the nucleus at specific distances.

Explain how the distance at which an electron orbits the nucleus may be changed.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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(3)

(Total 7 marks)

Q4.

Scientists sometimes replace one scientific model with a different model.

For example, in the early 20th Century the plum pudding model of the atom was replaced by the nuclear model of the atom.

Explain what led to the plum pudding model of the atom being replaced by the nuclear model of the atom.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Total 6 marks)

Q5.

A student models the random nature of radioactive decay using 100 dice.

He rolls the dice and removes any that land with the number 6 facing upwards.

He rolls the remaining dice again.

The student repeats this process a number of times.

The table below shows his results.

Roll number	Number of dice remaining
0	100
1	84
2	70
3	59
4	46

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5	40
6	32
7	27
8	23

(a) Give **two** reasons why this is a good model for the random nature of radioactive decay.

1. _____

_____

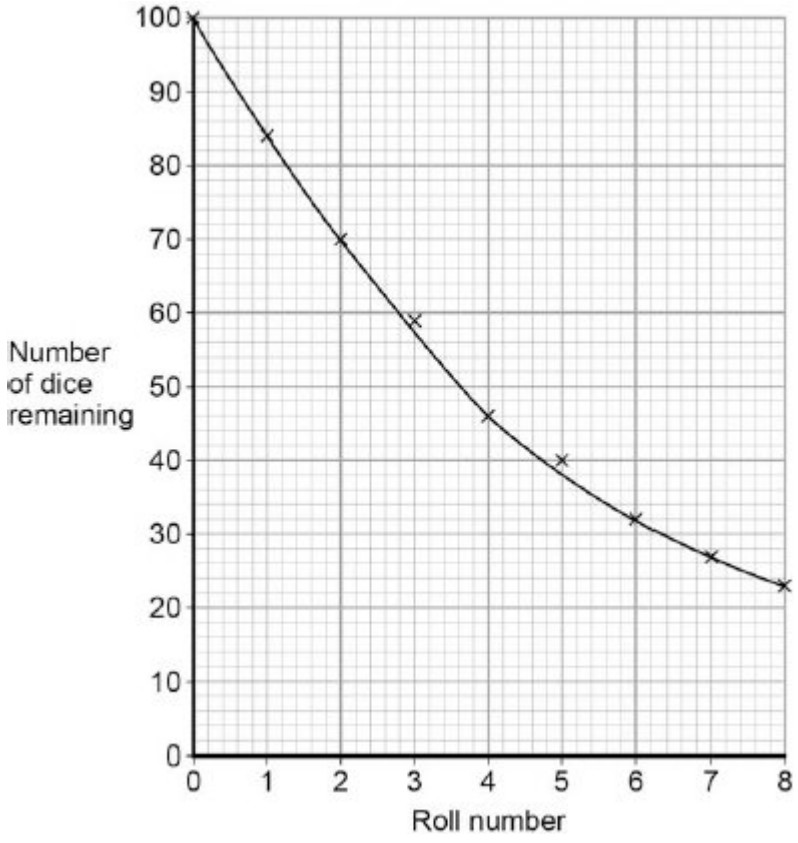
2. _____

_____

(2)

(b) The student's results are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1



Use **Figure 1** to determine the half-life for these dice using this model.

Show on **Figure 1** how you work out your answer.

Half-life = _____ rolls

(2)

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(c) A teacher uses a protactinium (Pa) generator to produce a sample of radioactive material that has a half-life of 70 seconds.

In the first stage in the protactinium generator, uranium (U) decays into thorium (Th) and alpha (α) radiation is emitted.

The decay can be represented by the equation shown in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2

$$^{238}_{92}U \longrightarrow \boxed{}^{234}Th + \alpha$$

Determine the atomic number of thorium (Th) 234.

Atomic number = _____

(1)

(d) When protactinium decays, a new element is formed and radiation is emitted.

The decay can be represented by the equation shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3

$$^{234}_{91}Pa \rightarrow {}^{234}_{92}X + radiation$$

When protactinium decays, a new element, **X**, is formed.

Use information from **Figure 2** and **Figure 3** to determine the name of element **X**.

_____

(1)

(e) Determine the type of radiation emitted as protactinium decays into a new element.

Give a reason for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2)

(f) The teacher wears polythene gloves as a safety precaution when handling radioactive materials.

The polythene gloves do **not** stop the teacher's hands from being irradiated.

Explain why the teacher wears polythene gloves.

_____

_____

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_____

_____

(2)

(Total 10 marks)

Q6.

Atoms are different sizes.

One of the heaviest naturally occurring stable elements is lead.

Two of its isotopes are lead-206 ($^{206}_{82}Pb$) and lead-208 ($^{208}_{82}Pb$).

(a) (i) What is meant by 'isotopes'?

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2)

(ii) How many protons are in the nucleus of a $^{206}_{82}Pb$ atom?

_____

(1)

(iii) How many neutrons are in the nucleus of a $^{206}_{82}Pb$ atom?

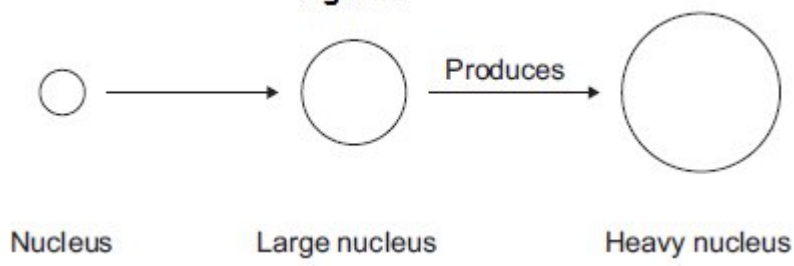
_____

(1)

(b) A nucleus can be accelerated in a particle accelerator and directed at a large nucleus. This produces a heavy nucleus that will decay after a short time.

This is shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1



(i) In 1984, nuclei of iron (Fe) were directed at nuclei of lead (Pb). This produced nuclei of hassium (Hs).

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Complete the equation for this reaction by writing numbers in the empty boxes.

$$\square^{58}Fe + \frac{\square}{\square}Pb = {}^{265}_{108}Hs + {}^{1}_{0}X$$

(3)

(ii) Use the correct answer from the box to complete the sentence.

an electron	**a proton**	**a neutron**

The particle **X** in part (b)(i) is _____ .

(1)

(iii) After acceleration the iron nuclei travel at a steady speed of one-tenth of the speed of light.

The speed of light is 3.00×10^8 m/s.

Calculate the time taken for the iron nuclei to travel a distance of 12 000 m.

_____

_____

Time taken = _____ s

(2)

(iv) Linear accelerators, in which particles are accelerated in a straight line, are **not** used for these experiments. Circular particle accelerators are used.

Suggest why.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(3)

(c) Hassium-265 ($^{265}_{108}Hs$) decays by alpha emission with a half-life of 0.002 seconds.

(i) What is meant by 'half-life'?

Tick (✓) **two** boxes.

	Tick (✓)

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The average time for the number of nuclei to halve	
The time for count rate to be equal to background count	
The time for background count to halve	
The time for count rate to halve	

(2)

(ii) Complete the equation for the decay of Hs-265 by writing numbers in the empty boxes.

$$^{265}_{108}\text{Hs} = \frac{\square}{\square}\text{Sg} + \frac{\square}{\square}\alpha$$

(2)

(d) The table below shows how the atomic radius of some atoms varies with atomic number.

Atomic number	**Atomic radius in picometres (pm)**
15	100
35	115
50	130
70	150
95	170

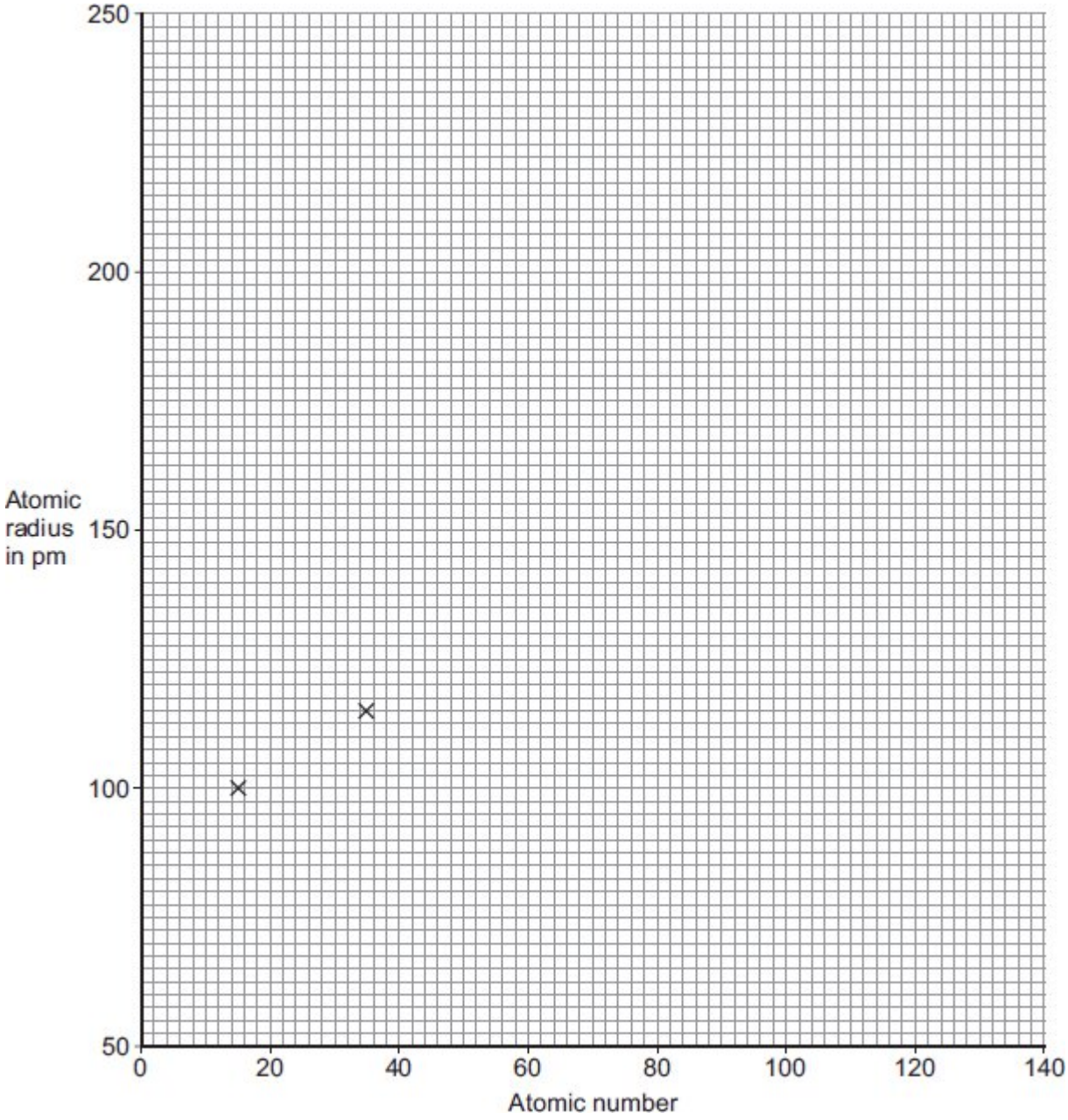
1 pm = 10^{-12} m

(i) On **Figure 2**, use the data from the table above to plot a graph of atomic radius against atomic number and draw a line of best fit.

Two points have been plotted for you.

Figure 2

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(2)

(ii) Scientists believe that the element with atomic number 126 can be produced and that it will be stable.

Use your graph in **Figure 2** to predict the atomic radius of an atom with atomic number 126.

Atomic radius = _____ pm

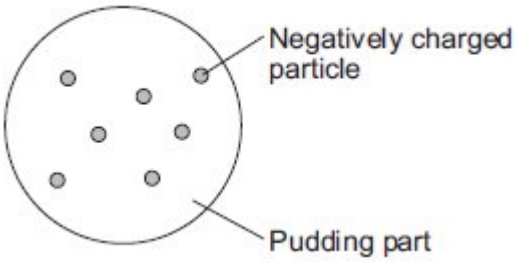
(1)

(Total 20 marks)

Q7.

(a) Over 100 years ago, scientists thought the atom was like a 'plum pudding'.
The diagram below shows the plum pudding model of the atom.

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The scientists knew that an atom has negatively charged particles. They also knew that an atom has no overall charge.

What did the scientists conclude about the **charge** on the 'pudding part' of the atom?

_____

_____

(1)

(b) Two scientists named Rutherford and Marsden devised an experiment to investigate the plum pudding model of the atom. The experiment involved firing alpha particles at a thin sheet of gold. The scientists measured how many of the alpha particles were scattered.

Using the plum pudding model, the scientists predicted that only a few of the alpha particles would be scattered by more than 4°.

Over several months, more than 100 000 measurements were made.

(i) The results from this experiment caused the plum pudding model to be replaced by a new model of the atom.

Explain why.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2)

(ii) Suggest **one** reason why other scientists thought this experiment provided valid evidence for a new model of the atom.

_____

_____

_____

(1)

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(c) **In this question you will be assessed on using good English, organising information clearly and using specialist terms where appropriate.**

Describe the model now used for the structure of an atom.

In your answer you should:
- give details of the individual particles that make up an atom
- include the relative masses and relative charges of these particles.

Do **not** include a diagram in your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(6)

(Total 10 marks)

Q8.

Atoms contain three types of particle.

(a) Draw a ring around the correct answer to complete the sentence.

The particles in the nucleus of the atom are

electrons and neutrons.
electrons and protons.
neutrons and protons.

(1)

(b) Complete the table to show the relative charges of the atomic particles.

Particle	Relative charge
Electron	–1
Neutron	
Proton	

(2)

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(c) (i) A neutral atom has no overall charge.

Explain this in terms of its particles.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2)

(ii) Complete the sentence.

An atom that loses an electron is called an _____

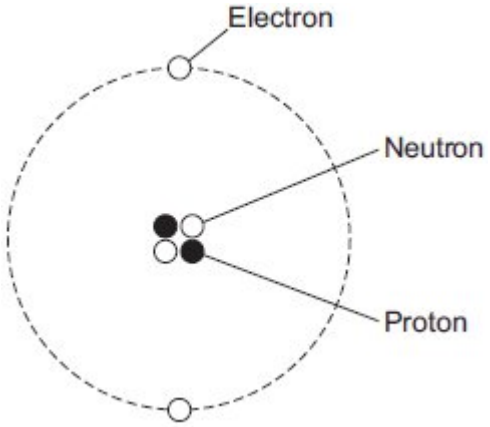
and has an overall _____ charge.

(2)

(Total 7 marks)

Q9.

(a) The figure below shows a helium atom.



(i) Which **one** of the particles in the atom is **not** charged?

Draw a ring around the correct answer.

electron **neutron** **proton**

(1)

(ii) Which **two** types of particle in the atom have the same mass?

_____ and _____

(1)

(iii) What is the atomic number of a helium atom?

Draw a ring around the correct answer.

2 **4** **6**

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Give a reason for your answer.

_____

_____

(2)

(b) Alpha particles are one type of nuclear radiation.

(i) Name **one** other type of nuclear radiation.

_____

(1)

(ii) Use the correct answer from the box to complete the sentence.

electrons	**neutrons**	**protons**

The difference between an alpha particle and a helium atom is that the alpha particle does **not** have any _____ .

(1)

(iii) Which **one** of the following is a property of alpha particles?

Tick (✓) **one** box.

Have a long range in air ☐

Are highly ionising ☐

Will pass through metals ☐

(1)

(c) Doctors may use nuclear radiation to treat certain types of illness.

Treating an illness with radiation may also harm a patient.

(i) Complete the following sentence.

The risk from treating a patient with radiation is that the radiation may _____ healthy body cells.

(1)

(ii) Draw a ring around the correct answer to complete the sentence.

Radiation may be used to treat a patient if the risk from the radiation is

much bigger than
about the same as

the possible benefit of having

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much smaller than

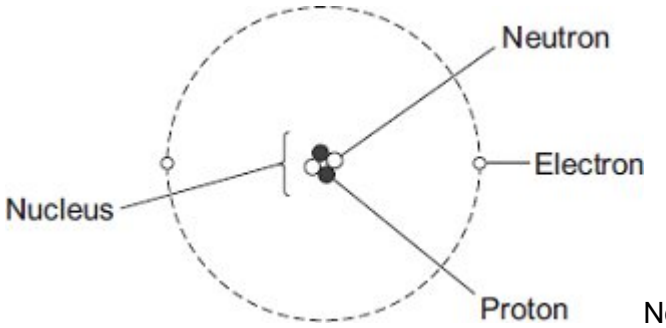
the treatment.

(1)

(Total 9 marks)

Q10.

The diagram shows the structure of an atom.



Not drawn to scale

(a) In 1931 scientists thought that atoms contained **only** protons and electrons.

Suggest what happened in 1932 to change the idea that atoms contained only protons and electrons.

_____

_____

(1)

(b) The table gives information about the particles in an atom.

Complete the table by adding the names of the particles.

Particle	Relative Mass	Relative Charge
	1	0
	very small	–1
	1	+1

(2)

(Total 3 marks)

Q11.

There are many different isotopes of gold. The isotope, gold-198, is radioactive.
An atom of gold-198 decays by emitting a beta particle.

(a) Complete the following sentences.

All atoms of gold have the same number of _____

and the same number of _____ .

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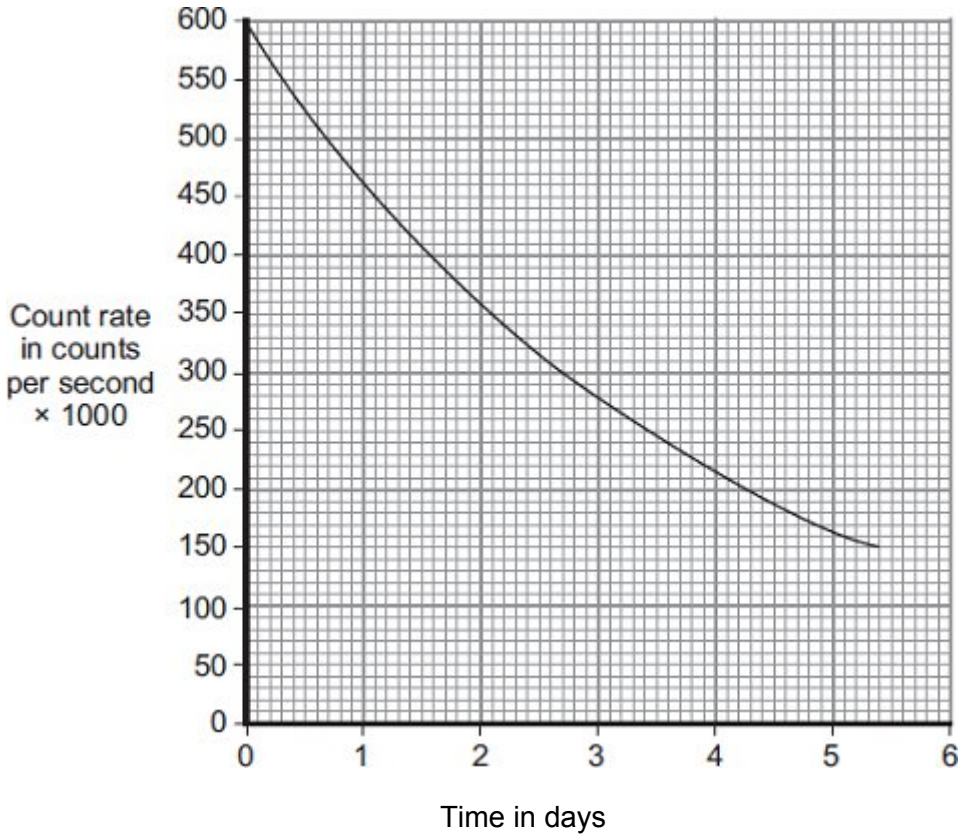
The atoms from different isotopes of gold have different numbers of _____ .

A beta particle is an _____ emitted

from the _____ of an atom.

(3)

(b) The graph shows how the count rate from a sample of gold-198 changes with time.



Use the graph to calculate the half-life of gold-198.

Show clearly on the graph how you obtain your answer.

_____

_____

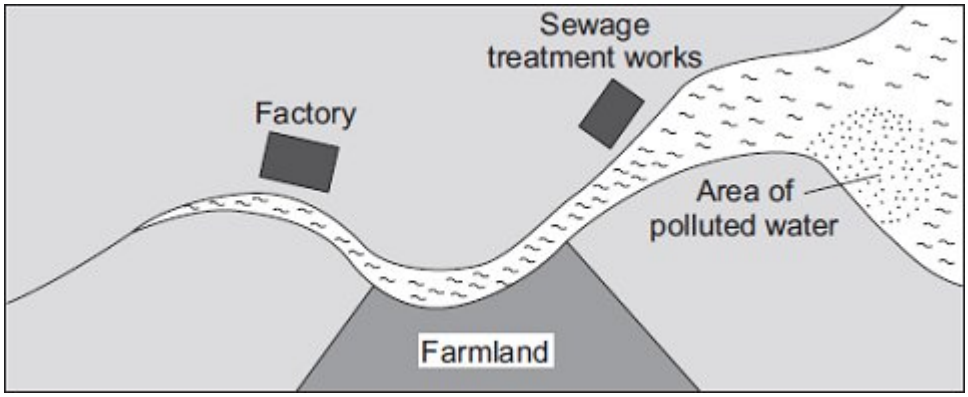
Half-life = _____ days

(2)

(c) The diagram shows a map of a river and the river estuary.

Environmental scientists have found that water flowing into one part of the river estuary is polluted. To find where the pollution is coming from, the scientists use a radioactive isotope, gold-198.

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The gold-198 is used to find where the pollution is coming from.

Explain how.

_____

_____

_____

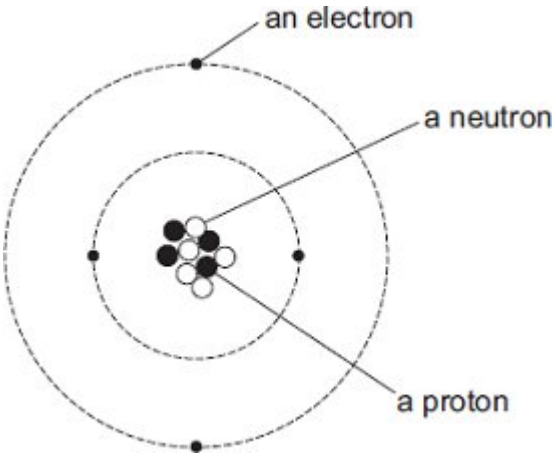
_____

(2)

(Total 7 marks)

Q12.

The diagram represents an atom of beryllium. The three types of particle that make up the atom have been labelled.



(a) Use the labels from the diagram to complete the following statements.

Each label should be used once.

The particle with a positive charge is _____ .

The particle with the smallest mass is _____ .

The particle with no charge is _____ .

(2)

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(b) What is the mass number of a beryllium atom?

Draw a ring around your answer.

4	**5**	**9**	**13**

Give a reason for your answer.

_____

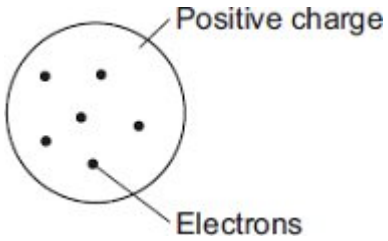
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(2)

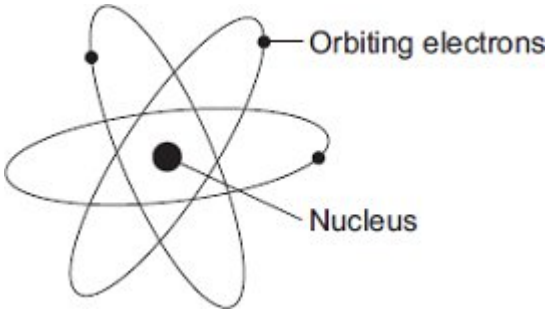
(Total 4 marks)

Q13.

In the early part of the 20th century, scientists used the 'plum pudding' model to explain the structure of the atom.



Following work by Rutherford and Marsden, a new model of the atom, called the 'nuclear' model, was suggested.



Describe the differences between the two models of the atom.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

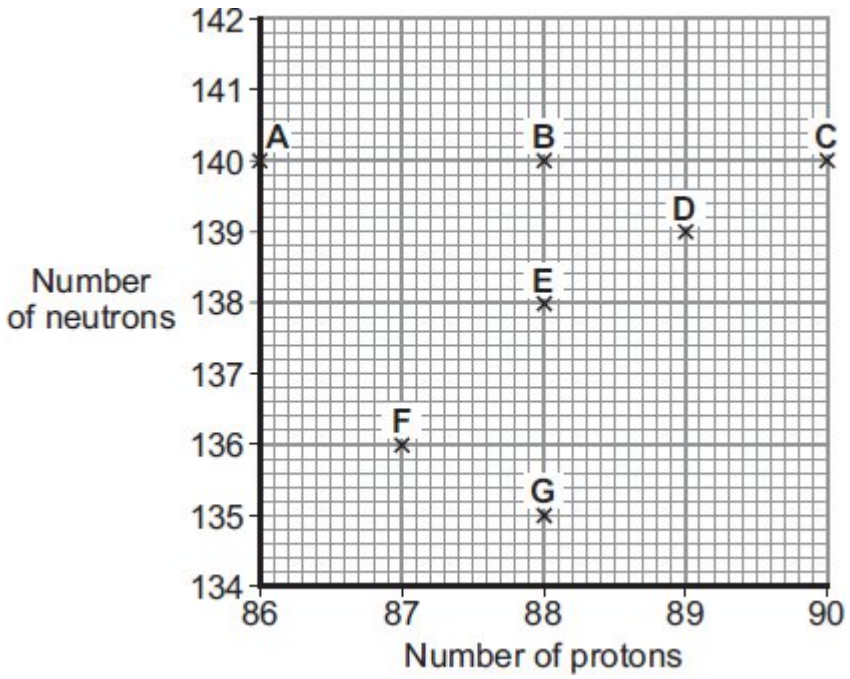
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_____

(Total 4 marks)

Q14.

(a) The chart gives the number of protons and neutrons within the nuclei of 7 different atoms, **A – G**.



Which of these atoms are isotopes of the same element?

_____

Give a reason for your answer.

_____

_____

(2)

(b) Radium-226 is a radioactive isotope that decays into radon gas by emitting alpha particles.

The decay can be represented by the equation below.

$$^{226}_{88}\text{Ra} \longrightarrow \square\!\!\square \text{ Rn + alpha particle}$$

(i) Complete the equation by writing the correct number in each of the boxes.

(2)

(ii) A sample of radium-226 has a count rate of 400 counts per second.
The half-life of radium-226 is 1600 years.

How long will it be before the count rate has fallen to 50 counts per second?

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Show clearly how you work out your answer.

_____

_____

_____

Length of time = _____ years

(2)

(c) In 1927, a group of women who had been employed to paint watch faces with a luminous paint sued their former employer over the illnesses caused by the paint. The women had been told that the paint, which contained radium, was harmless.

The company owners and the scientists working for the company knew that radium was harmful and took precautions to protect themselves from the radiation. The women were given no protection.

What important issue did the treatment of the women by the company owners and scientists raise?

Draw a ring around your answer.

economic **environmental** **ethical** **social**

Give a reason for your answer.

_____

_____

(2)

(d) In the 1920s, many people, including doctors, thought that radium could be used as a treatment for a wide range of illnesses. Medical records that suggested radium could be harmful were generally ignored. When some of the women who had used the luminous paint died, their deaths were not blamed on radium.

Suggest a reason why the evidence suggesting that radium was harmful was generally ignored.

_____

_____

_____

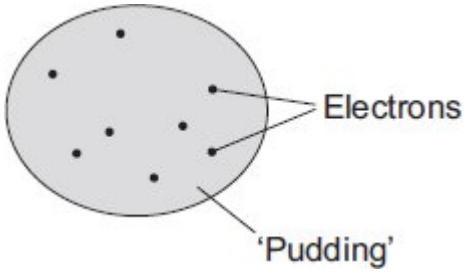
(1)

(Total 9 marks)

Q15.

The ‘plum pudding’ model of the atom was used by scientists in the early part of the 20th century to explain atomic structure.

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(a) Those scientists knew that atoms contained electrons and that the electrons had a negative charge. They also knew that an atom was electrically neutral overall.

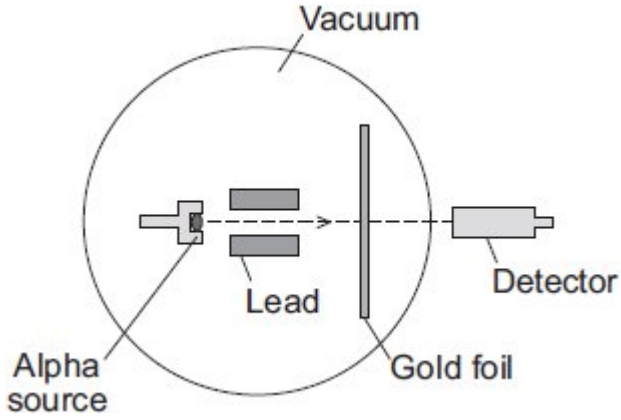
What did this allow the scientists to deduce about the 'pudding' part of the atom?

_____

_____

(1)

(b) An experiment, designed to investigate the 'plum pudding' model, involved firing alpha particles at a thin gold foil.



If the 'plum pudding' model was correct, then most of the alpha particles would go straight through the gold foil. A few would be deflected, but by less than 4°.

The results of the experiment were unexpected. Although most of the alpha particles did go straight through the gold foil, about 1 in every 8 000 was deflected by more than 90°.

Why did this experiment lead to a new model of the atom, called the nuclear model, replacing the 'plum pudding' model?

_____

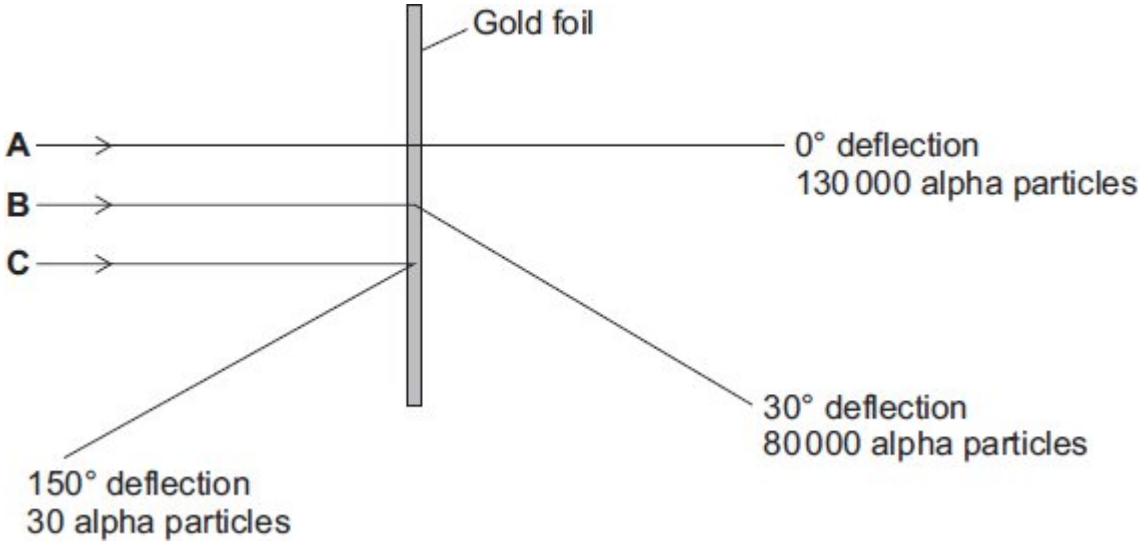
_____

_____

(1)

(c) The diagram shows the paths, **A**, **B** and **C**, of three alpha particles. The total number of alpha particles deflected through each angle is also given.

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(i) Using the nuclear model of the atom, explain the three paths, **A**, **B** and **C**.

A _____

_____

B _____

_____

C _____

_____

(3)

(ii) Using the nuclear model, the scientist E. Rutherford devised an equation to predict the proportion of alpha particles that would be deflected through various angles.

The results of the experiment were the same as the predictions made by Rutherford.

What was the importance of the experimental results and the predictions being the same?

_____

_____

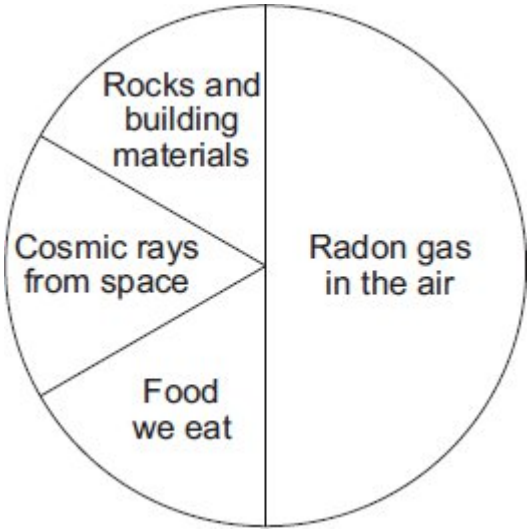
(1)

(Total 6 marks)

Q16.

The pie chart shows the average proportions of natural background radiation from various sources in the UK.

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(a) (i) Complete the following sentence.

On average, _____ of the natural background radiation in the UK comes from radon gas.

(1)

(ii) Radon gas is found inside homes.

The table shows the results from measuring the level of radon gas inside four homes in one area of the UK.

Home	Level of radon gas in Bq per m^3 of air
1	25
2	75
3	210
4	46
Mean	89

One of the homes has a much higher level of radon gas than the other three homes.

What should be done to give a more reliable mean for the homes in this area of the UK?

Put a tick (✓) in the box next to your answer.

ignore the data for home number 3 ☐

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measure the radon gas level in more homes in this area ☐

include data for homes from different areas of the UK ☐

(1)

(b) Each atom of radon has 86 protons and 136 neutrons.

(i) How many electrons does each atom of radon have?

Draw a ring around your answer.

50 **86** **136** **222**

(1)

(ii) How many particles are there in the nucleus of a radon atom?

Draw a ring around your answer.

50 **86** **136** **222**

(1)

(Total 4 marks)

Q17.

(a) Atoms of the isotope bismuth-212 decay by emitting either an alpha particle or a beta particle.
The equation represents what happens when an atom of bismuth-212 decays by beta emission into an atom of polonium-212.

$$^{212}_{83}\text{Bi} \longrightarrow {}^{212}_{84}\text{Po} + \text{beta particle}$$

(i) The bismuth atom and the polonium atom have the same mass number (212).

What is the *mass number* of an atom?

_____

(1)

(ii) Beta decay does **not** cause the mass number of an atom to change.

Explain why not.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2)

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(b) When an atom of bismuth-212 emits an alpha particle, the atom decays into an atom of thallium.

An alpha particle is the same as a helium nucleus.
The symbol below represents an alpha particle.

$$^{4}_{2}He$$

(i) The equation below represents the alpha decay of bismuth-212.

Complete the equation by writing the correct number in each of the two boxes.

$$^{212}_{83}Bi \longrightarrow \square \; Tl \; + \; ^{4}_{2}He \quad \square$$

(2)

(ii) It is impossible for the alpha decay of bismuth-212 to produce the same element as the beta decay of bismuth-212.

Explain why.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2)

(Total 7 marks)

Q18.

The names of three different processes are given in **List A**.
Where these processes happen is given in **List B**.

Draw a line to link each process in **List A** to where the process happens in **List B**.

Draw only **three** lines.

List A	**List B**
Process	**Where it happens**
	in a star
fusion	

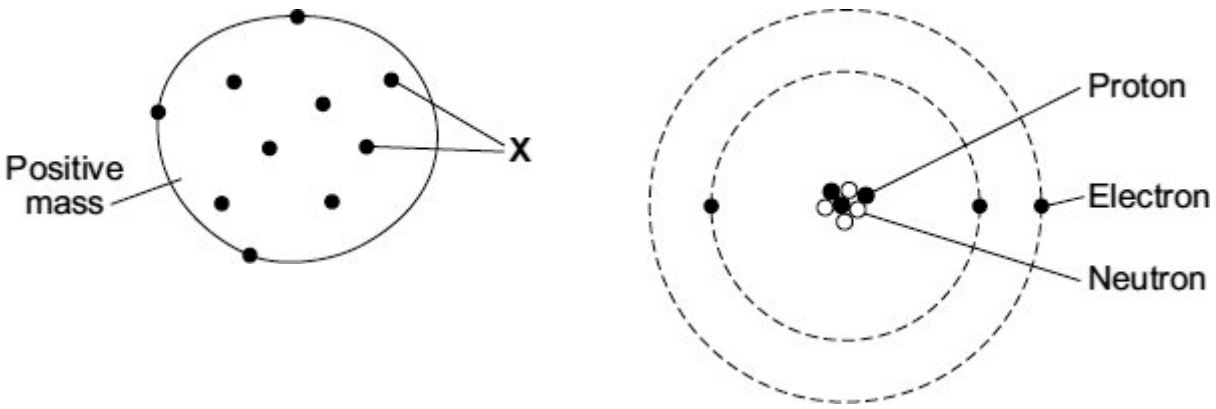
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	in a nuclear reactor
chain reaction	
	in a smoke precipitator
alpha decay	
	in the nucleus of an atom

(Total 3 marks)

Q19.

The diagrams show two different models of an atom.



'Plum pudding' model **Model used today**

(a) The particles labelled '**X**□ in the plum pudding model are also included in the model of the atom used today.

What are the particles labelled '**X**' ?

_____

(1)

(b) Scientists decided that the 'plum pudding' model was wrong and needed replacing.

Which **one** of the following statements gives a reason for deciding that a scientific model needs replacing?

Tick (✓) **one** box.

The model is too simple. ☐

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The model has been used by scientists for a long time. ☐

The model cannot explain the results from a new experiment. ☐

(1)

(c) The table gives information about the three types of particle that are in the model of the atom used today.

Particle	Relative mass	Relative charge
	1	+1
	very small	–1
	1	0

Complete the table by adding the names of the particles.

(2)
(Total 4 marks)

Q20.

(a) Background radiation is all around us all the time.

(i) Radon is a natural source of background radiation.

Name another natural source of background radiation.

_____

(1)

(ii) X-rays are an artificial source of background radiation.

Name another artificial source of background radiation.

_____

(1)

(iii) An atom of radon-222 decays by emitting an alpha particle.
The equation representing the decay is shown below.

$$^{222}_{86}Rn \longrightarrow {}^{218}_{84}X + \text{alpha particle}$$

How can you tell from the equation that 'X' is not an atom of radon?

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_____

_____

(1)

(b) Having an X-ray taken increases your exposure to radiation.

The table gives:

- the radiation doses received for 6 different medical X-rays;
- the number of days' of exposure to natural background radiation each dose is equivalent to.

Medical X-ray	Radiation dose received (in arbitrary units)	Equivalent number of days of exposure to natural background radiation
Chest	2	2.4
Skull	7	8.4
Pelvis	22	26.4
Hip	44	52.8
Spine	140	
CT head scan	200	240

A hospital patient has an X-ray of the spine taken.
Calculate the number of days of exposure to natural background radiation that an X-ray of the spine is equivalent to.

Show how you work out your answer.

_____

_____

_____

Equivalent number of days = _____

(2)

(c) Scientists have shown that X-rays increase the risk of developing cancer.
The scientists came to this conclusion by studying the medical history of people placed in one of two groups, **A** or **B**.
The group into which people were put depended on their X-ray record.

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(i) Person **J** has been placed into group **A**.
Place each of the people, **K**, **L**, **M**, **N** and **O**, into the appropriate group, **A** or **B**.

Person	**J**	**K**	**L**	**M**	**N**	**O**
						
Medical X-ray record	3 arm	None	None	2 skull	None	4 leg

Group A	**Group B**
J	

(1)

(ii) To be able to make a fair comparison, what is important about the number of people in each of the two groups studied by the scientists?

_____

_____

(1)

(iii) What data would the scientists have compared in order to come to the conclusion that X-rays increase the risk of developing cancer?

_____

_____

(1)

(iv) The chance of developing cancer due to a CT head scan is about 1 in 10 000.
The chance of developing cancer naturally is about 1 in 4.

A hospital patient is advised by a doctor that she needs to have a CT head scan.
The doctor explains to the patient the risks involved.

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Do you think that the patient should give her permission for the CT scan to be taken?

Draw a ring around your answer.

Yes **No**

Give a reason for your answer.

_____

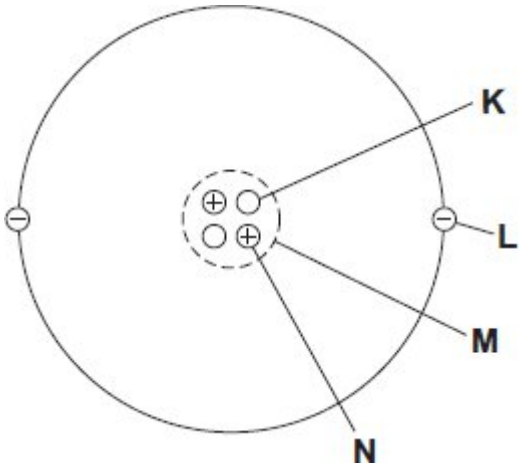
_____

(1)

(Total 9 marks)

Q21.

(a) The diagram represents a helium atom.



(i) Which part of the atom, **K**, **L**, **M** or **N**, is an electron?

Part ☐

(1)

(ii) Which part of the atom, **K**, **L**, **M** or **N**, is the same as an alpha particle?

Part ☐

(1)

(b) A radioactive source emits alpha particles.

What might this source be used for?

Put a tick (✓) in the box next to your answer.

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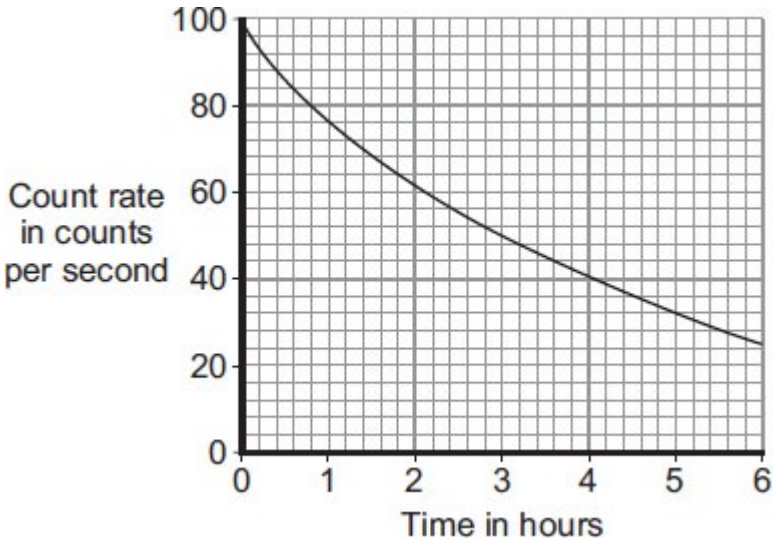
to monitor the thickness of aluminium foil as it is made in a factory ☐

to make a smoke detector work ☐

to inject into a person as a medical tracer ☐

(1)

(c) The graph shows how the count rate from a source of alpha radiation changes with time.



What is the count rate after 4 hours?

_____ counts per second

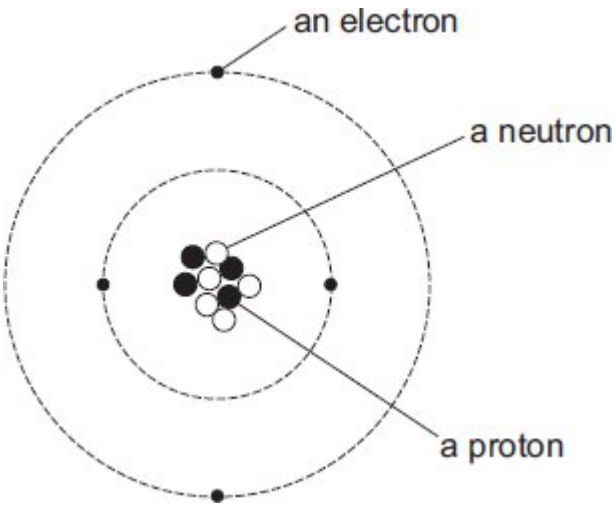
(1)

(Total 4 marks)

Q22.

The diagram represents an atom of beryllium. The three types of particle that make up the atom have been labelled.

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(a) Use the labels from the diagram to complete the following statements.

Each label should be used once.

The particle with a positive charge is _____

The particle with the smallest mass is _____

The particle with no charge is _____

(2)

(b) What is the atomic number of a beryllium atom?

Draw a ring around your answer.

4	**5**	**9**	**13**

Give a reason for your answer.

_____

_____

(2)

(c) Which **one** of the following statements describes what can happen to an atom to change it into an ion?

Tick (✓) **one** box.

The atom loses a neutron. ☐

The atom loses an electron. ☐

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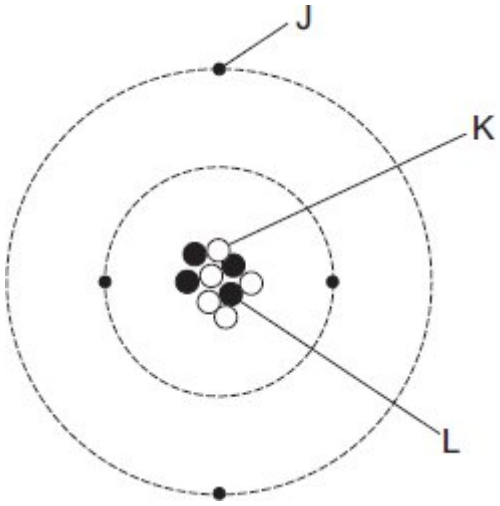
The atom loses a proton. ☐

(1)

(Total 5 marks)

Q23.

The diagram represents an atom of beryllium.



(a) Complete the following statements by writing one of the letters, **J**, **K** or **L**, in each box.

Each letter should be used only **once**.

The particle with a positive charge is ☐

The particle with the smallest mass is ☐

The particle with no charge is ☐

(2)

(b) Give the reason why all atoms have a total charge of zero.

_____

_____

(1)

(c) Complete the following sentence.

There are several isotopes of beryllium. Atoms of different beryllium

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isotopes will have different numbers of _____

(1)

(d) What happens to the structure of an atom to change it into an ion?

_____

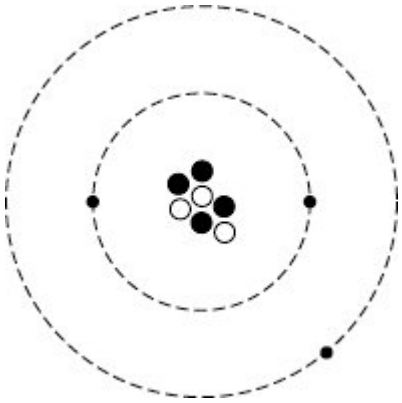
_____

(1)

(Total 5 marks)

Q24.

The diagram represents an atom of lithium.



(a) (i) Complete the following table of information for an atom of lithium.

Number of protons	
Number of electrons	
Number of neutrons	

(2)

(ii) What is the mass number of a lithium atom?

Draw a ring around your answer.

3	**4**	**7**	**10**

Give a reason for your answer.

_____

_____

(2)

(b) Complete the following sentence by drawing a ring around the correct line in the box.

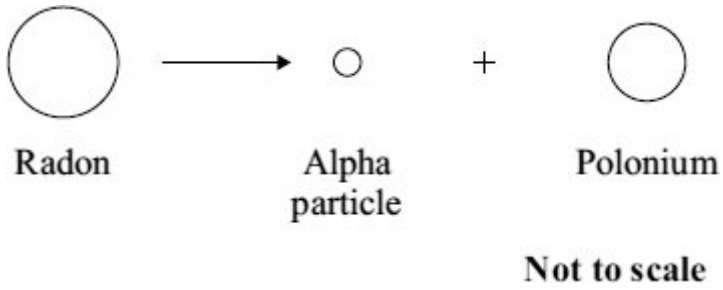
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An atom that has lost an electron is called

an ion
an isotope
a positive atom

(1)

(c) When an alpha particle is emitted from the nucleus of a radon atom, the radon changes into polonium.



Not to scale

An alpha particle consists of 2 protons and 2 neutrons.

(i) Complete the following sentence by drawing a ring around the correct line in the box.

The mass of a polonium atom is

greater than
the same as
smaller than

the mass of a radon atom.

(1)

(ii) Give a reason for your answer to part (c)(i).

_____

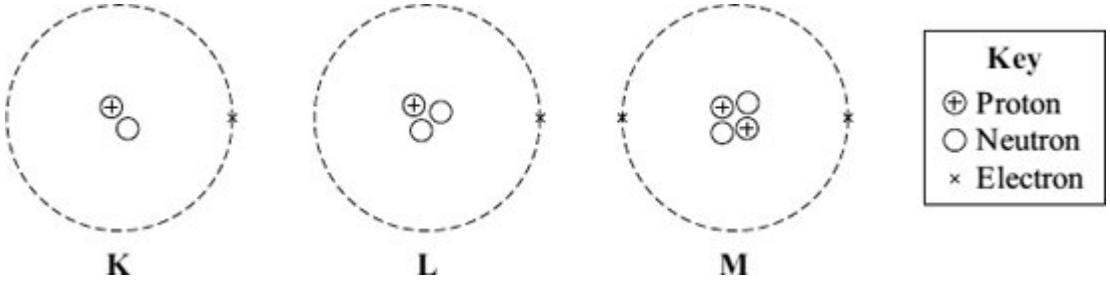
_____

(1)

(Total 7 marks)

Q25.

(a) The diagram represents 3 atoms, **K**, **L** and **M**.



(i) Which **two** of the atoms are isotopes of the same element?

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_____ and _____

(1)

(ii) Give a reason why the **two** atoms that you chose in part (a)(i) are:

(1) atoms of the same element _____

_____

(2) different isotopes of the same element. _____

_____

_____

(2)

(b) The table gives some information about the radioactive isotope thorium-230.

mass number	230
atomic number	90

(i) How many electrons are there in an atom of thorium-230?

_____

(1)

(ii) How many neutrons are there in an atom of thorium-230?

_____

(1)

(c) When a thorium-230 nucleus decays, it emits radiation and changes into radium-226.

$$^{230}_{90}\text{Th} \longrightarrow {}^{226}_{88}\text{Ra} + \boxed{\text{Radiation}}$$

What type of radiation, alpha, beta or gamma, is emitted by thorium-230?

_____

Explain the reason for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(3)

(Total 8 marks)

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Q26.

Most elements have some *isotopes* which are *radioactive*.

(a) What is meant by the terms:

(i) *isotopes*

_____

_____

(1)

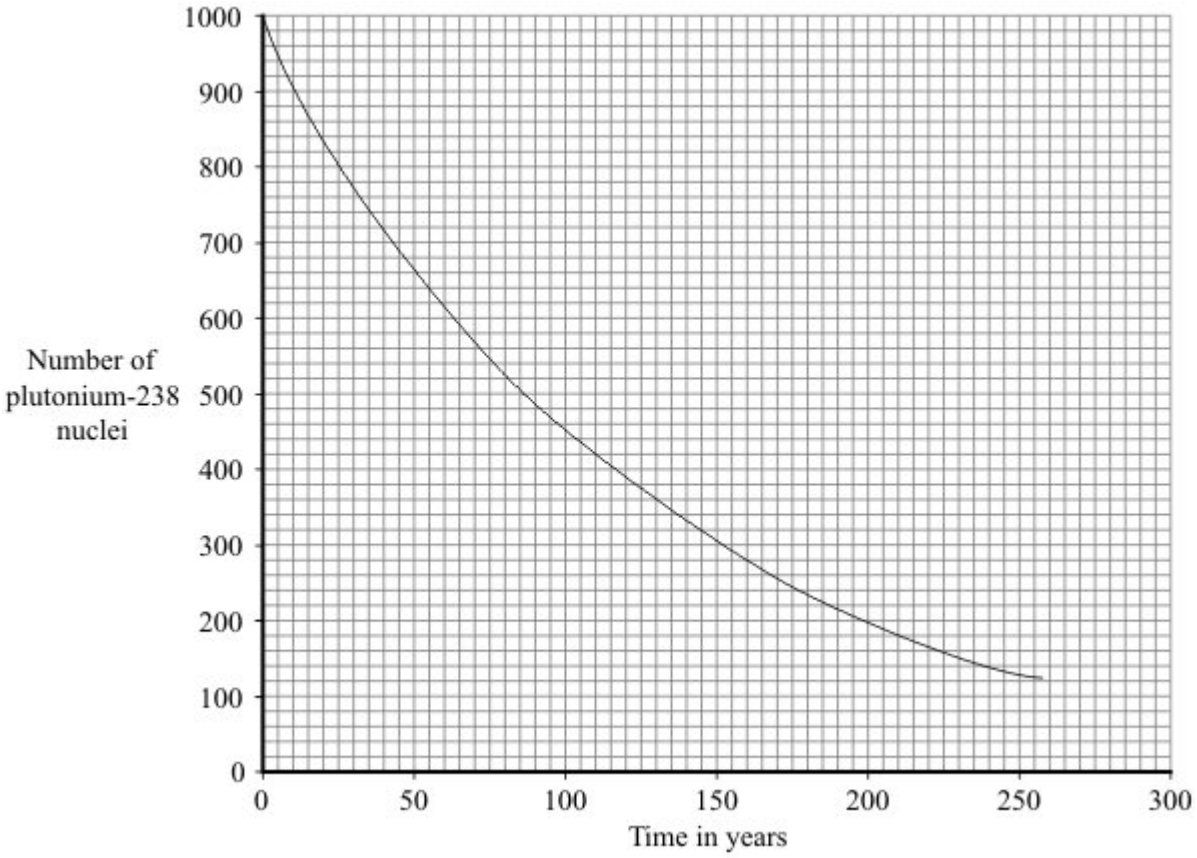
(ii) *radioactive*?

_____

_____

(1)

(b) The graph shows how the number of nuclei in a sample of the radioactive isotope plutonium-238 changes with time.



Use the graph to find the half-life of plutonium-238.

Show clearly on the graph how you obtain your answer.

Half-life = _____ years

(2)

(c) The Cassini spacecraft launched in 1997 took seven years to reach Saturn.

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The electricity to power the instruments on board the spacecraft is generated using the heat produced from the decay of plutonium-238.

(i) Plutonium-238 decays by emitting alpha particles.

What is an alpha particle?

_____

(1)

(ii) During the 11 years that Cassini will orbit Saturn, the output from the generators will decrease.

Explain why.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2)

(d) Plutonium-238 is highly dangerous. A tiny amount taken into the body is enough to kill a human.

(i) Plutonium-238 is unlikely to cause any harm if it is outside the body but is likely to kill if it is inside the body.

Explain why.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2)

(ii) In 1964, a satellite powered by plutonium-238 was destroyed, causing the release of radioactive material into the atmosphere.

Suggest why some environmental groups protested about the launch of Cassini.

_____

_____

(1)

(Total 10 marks)

Q27.

(a) Complete the following table for an atom of uranium-238 ($^{238}_{92}U$)

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mass number	238
number of protons	92
number of neutrons	

(1)

(b) Complete the following sentence.

The name given to the number of protons in an atom is the proton number or the

_____ .

(1)

(c) An atom of uranium-238 ($^{238}_{92}U$) decays to form an atom of thorium-234 ($^{234}_{90}Th$).

(i) What type of radiation, alpha, beta or gamma, is emitted by uranium-238?

_____

(1)

(ii) Why does an atom that decays by emitting alpha or beta radiation become an atom of a different element?

_____

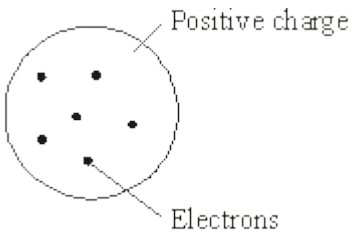
_____

(1)

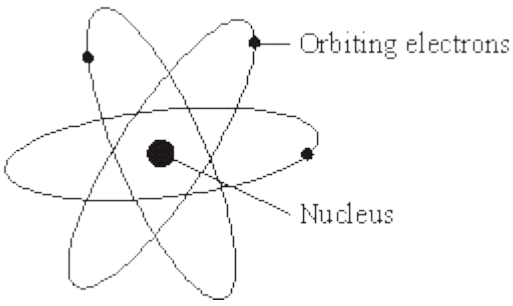
(Total 4 marks)

Q28.

In the early part of the 20th century, scientists used the 'plum pudding' model to explain the structure of the atom.



Following work by Rutherford and Marsden, a new model of the atom, called the 'nuclear' model, was suggested.



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(a) Describe the differences between the two models of the atom.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(4)

(b) In their investigation, Rutherford and Marsden fired positively charged alpha particles at a very thin sheet of gold. Over a period of several months, the scientists made over 100 000 measurements. These measurements showed that:

- a very small number of alpha particles were deflected backwards from the gold foil.

Use the nuclear model to explain this experimental result.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2)

(c) Why did the work of Rutherford and Marsden convince many scientists that the 'plum pudding' model of the atom was incorrect?

_____

_____

_____

_____

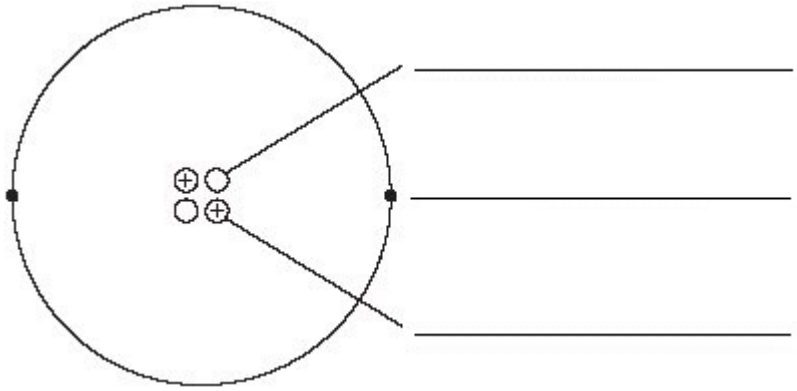
(2)

(Total 8 marks)

Q29.

The diagram shows a helium atom.

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(a) (i) Use the words in the box to label the diagram.

electron	**neutron**	**proton**

(2)

(ii) An alpha particle is the same as the nucleus of a helium atom.

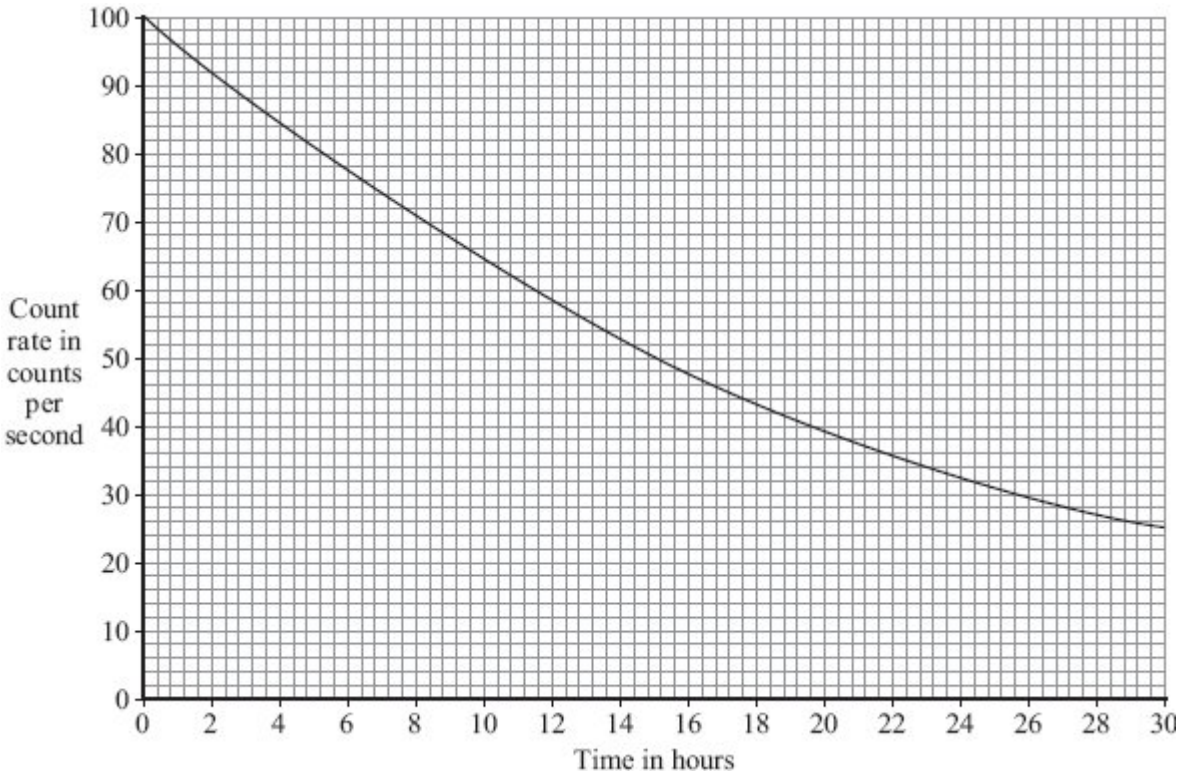
How is an alpha particle different from a helium atom?

_____

_____

(1)

(b) The graph shows how the count rate from a sample of radioactive sodium-24 changes with time.



(i) How many hours does it take for the count rate to fall from 100 counts per second to 50 counts per second?

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Time = _____ hours

(1)

(ii) What is the half-life of sodium-24?

Half-life = _____ hours

(1)

(c) A smoke detector contains a small amount of americium-241.

Americium-241 is a radioactive substance which emits alpha particles. It has a half-life of 432 years.

(i) Which **one** of the following statements gives a reason why the americium-241 inside the smoke detector will **not** need replacing?

Put a tick (✓) in the box next to your answer.

The alpha particles have a low energy.	☐
People replace smoke detectors every few years.	☐
Americium-241 has a long half-life.	☐

(1)

(ii) The diagram shows the label on the back of the smoke detector.



Why do people need to know that the smoke detector contains a radioactive material?

_____

_____

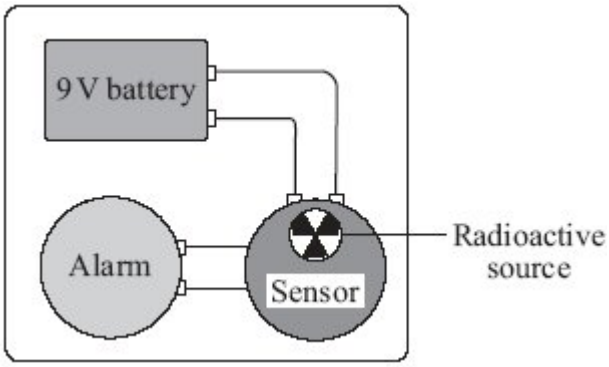
(1)

(Total 7 marks)

Q30.

(a) The diagram shows the parts of a smoke detector. The radioactive source emits alpha particles.

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The alpha particles ionise the air inside the sensor which causes a small electric current. Any smoke getting into the sensor changes the current. The change in current sets the alarm off.

(i) The smoke detector would **not** work if a radioactive source that emitted only gamma rays was used.

Why not?

_____

_____

(1)

(ii) Curium-242 is a radioactive isotope with a half-life of 160 days. It emits alpha particles.

Why is curium-242 **not** suitable for use inside smoke detectors?

_____

_____

(1)

(iii) Curium-242 and curium-244 are two of the isotopes of the element curium.

How is an atom of curium-242 different from an atom of curium-244?

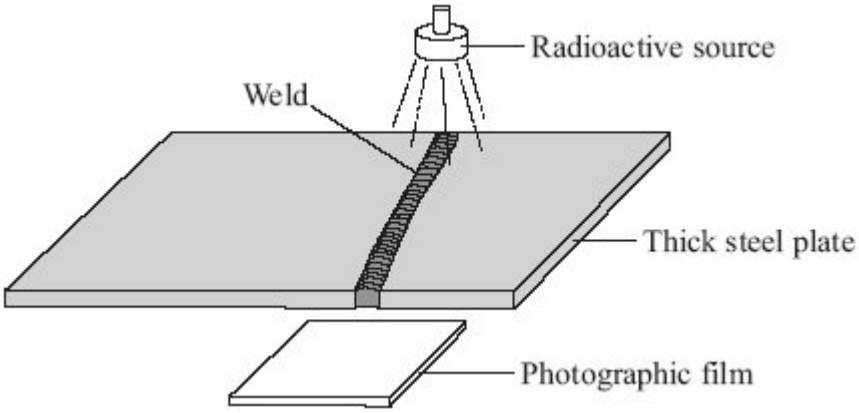
_____

_____

(1)

(b) Sections of steel are often joined by welding them together. The diagram shows how a radioactive source can be used to check for tiny cracks in the weld.

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Cracks in the weld will be shown up on the photographic film below the thick steel plate.

(i) Which type of source, alpha, beta or gamma, should be used to check the weld?

_____

(1)

(ii) Give a reason why the other two types of source **cannot** be used.

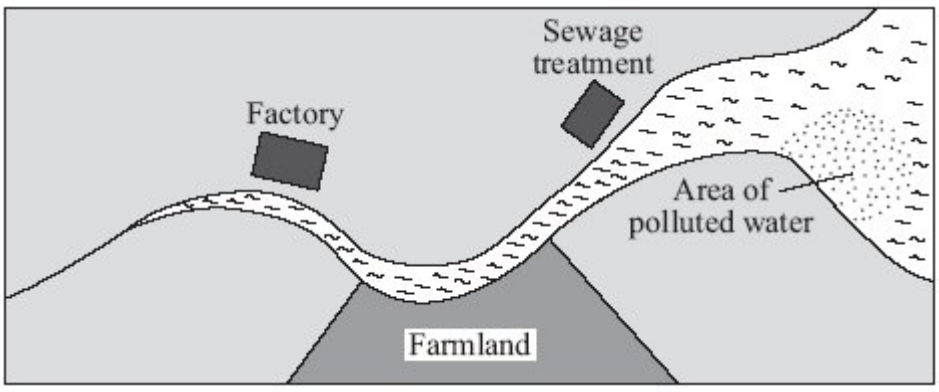
_____

_____

(1)

(c) The diagram shows a map of a river and its estuary.

Environmental scientists have found that the water flowing into one part of the river estuary is polluted. To find where the pollution is coming from, the scientists use a radioactive isotope, gold-198.



(i) Explain how the gold-198 is used to find where the pollution is coming from.

_____

_____

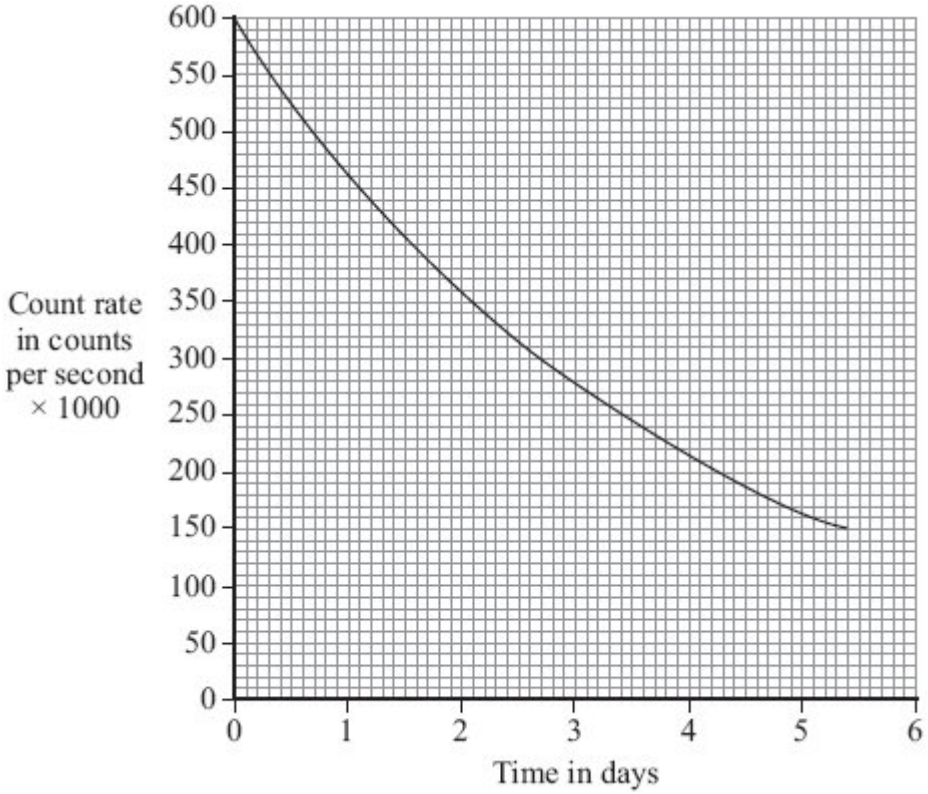
_____

_____

(2)

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(ii) The graph shows how the count rate from a sample of gold-198 changes with time.



Use the graph to calculate the half-life of gold-198.

Show clearly on the graph how you obtain your answer.

_____

_____

Half-life = _____ days

(2)

(Total 9 marks)

Q31.

The table gives information about the three types of particle that make up an atom.

Particle	Relative mass	Relative charge
Proton		+1
Neutron	1	
Electron	very small	–1

(a) Complete the table by adding the **two** missing values.

(2)

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(b) Use the information in the table to explain why an atom has no overall electrical charge.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2)

(c) Uranium has two natural isotopes, uranium-235 and uranium-238.
Uranium-235 is used as a fuel inside a nuclear reactor.
Inside the reactor, atoms of uranium-235 are split and energy is released.

(i) How is the structure of an atom of uranium-235 different from the structure of an atom of uranium-238?

_____

_____

(1)

(ii) The nucleus of a uranium-235 atom must absorb a particle before the atom is able to split.

What type of particle is absorbed?

_____

(1)

(iii) The nucleus of an atom splits into smaller parts in a reactor.

What name is given to this process?

_____

(1)

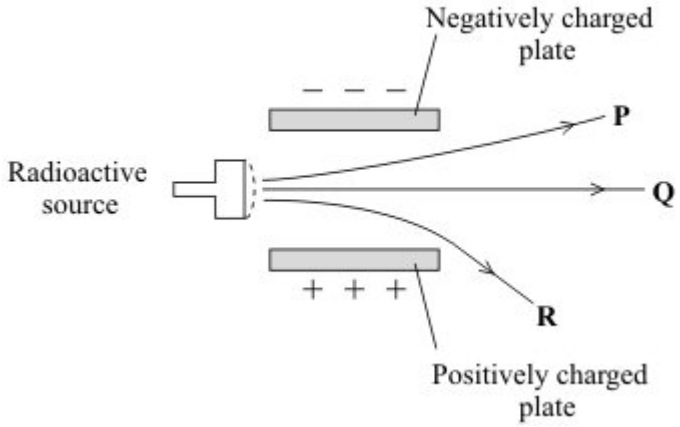
(Total 7 marks)

Q32.

A radioactive source emits alpha (α), beta (β) and gamma (γ) radiation. The diagram shows what happens to the radiation as it passes between two charged metal plates.

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Diagram 1



(a) Which line **P**, **Q** or **R** shows the path taken by:

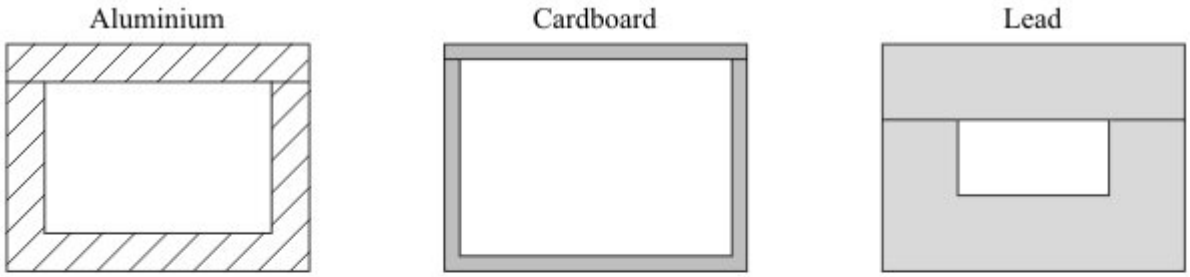
(i) alpha radiation _____

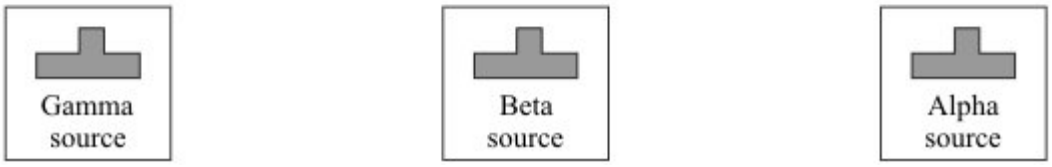
(1)

(ii) gamma radiation? _____

(1)

(b) The diagram shows three different boxes and three radioactive sources. Each source emits only one type of radiation and is stored in a different box. The box reduces the amount of radiation getting into the air.



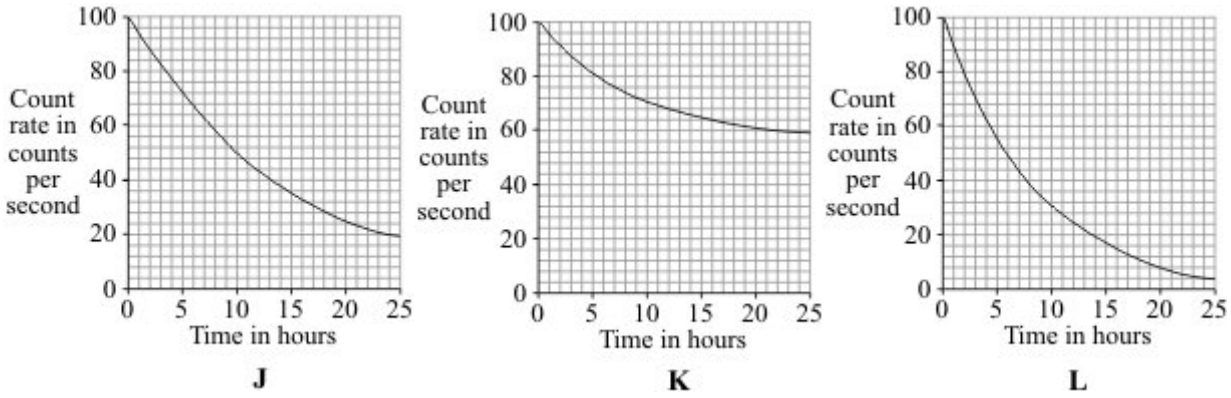


Draw **three** lines to show which source should be stored in which box so that the minimum amount of radiation gets into the air.

(2)

(c) The graphs show how the count rates from three different radioactive sources, **J**, **K**, and **L**, change with time.

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(i) Which source, **J, K**, or **L**, has the highest count rate after 24 hours?

_____

(1)

(ii) For source **L**, what is the count rate after 5 hours?

_____ counts per second

(1)

(iii) Which source, **J, K,** or **L**, has the longest half-life?

_____

(1)

(iv) A radioactive source has a half-life of 6 hours.

What might this source be used for?

Put a tick (✓) in the box next to your choice.

To monitor the thickness of paper as it is made in a factory ☐

To inject into a person as a medical tracer ☐

To make a smoke alarm work ☐

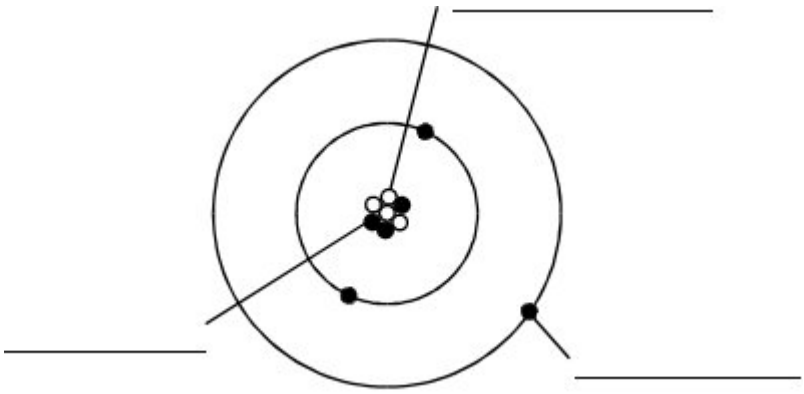
(1)

(Total 8 marks)

Q33.

The diagram represents an atom of lithium.

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(i) Complete the diagram by writing in the spaces the name of each type of particle. Use only words given in the box. Each word may be used once or not at all.

electron	**neutron**	**nucleus**	**proton**

(3)

(ii) Which type of particle found inside the atom is uncharged?

_____

(1)

(iii) What is the mass number of this atom, 3, 4, 7 or 10?

_____

Give a reason for your choice.

_____

_____

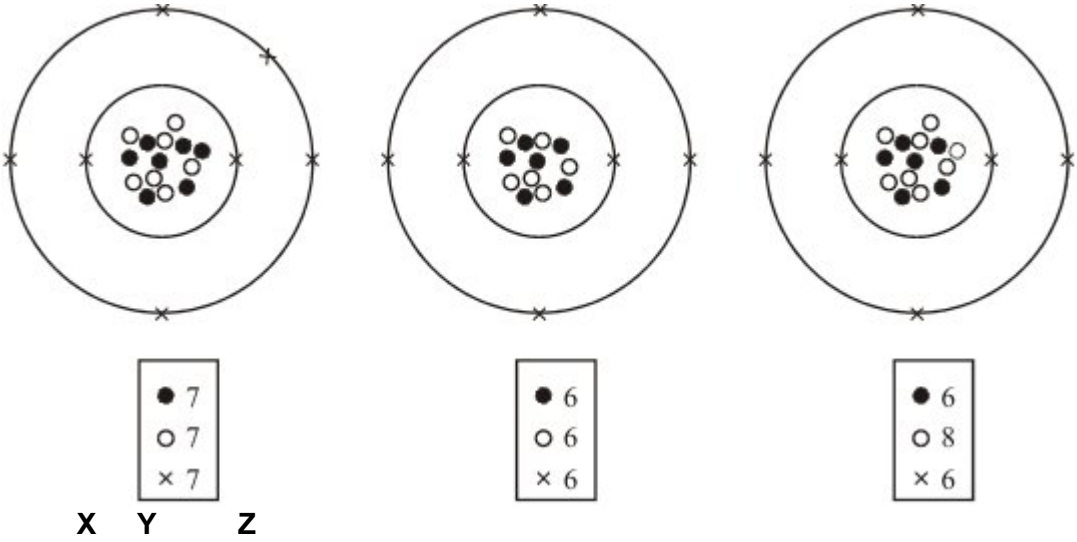
(2)

(Total 6 marks)

Q34.

(a) The diagrams represent three atoms **X**, **Y** and **Z**.

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Which **two** of the atoms are from the same element?

_____

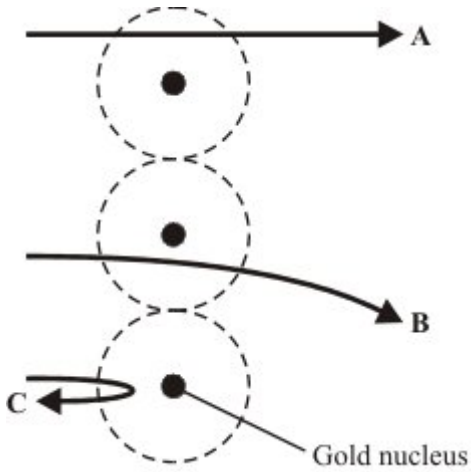
Give a reason for your answer.

_____

_____

(2)

(b) In the early part of the 20th century some scientists investigated the paths taken by positively charged alpha particles into and out of a very thin piece of gold foil. The diagram shows the paths of three alpha particles.



Explain the different paths **A**, **B** and **C** of the alpha particles.

To gain full marks in this question you should write your ideas in good English. Put them into a sensible order and use the correct scientific words.

_____

_____

_____

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_____

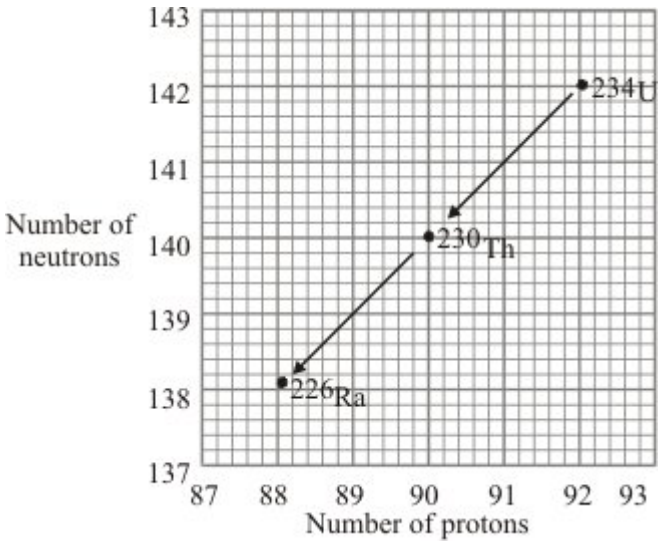
_____

(3)

(Total 5 marks)

Q35.

(a) Uranium-234 (^{234}U) is a radioactive element. The graph shows the number of protons and neutrons in the nuclei of the elements formed when uranium-234 decays.



(i) How does the graph show that uranium-234 (^{234}U) and thorium-230 (^{230}Th) emit alpha particles?

_____

(1)

(ii) What makes uranium and thorium different elements?

_____

(1)

(iii) Radioactive decay may also produce gamma radiation.

Why does the emission of gamma radiation **not** cause a new element to be formed?

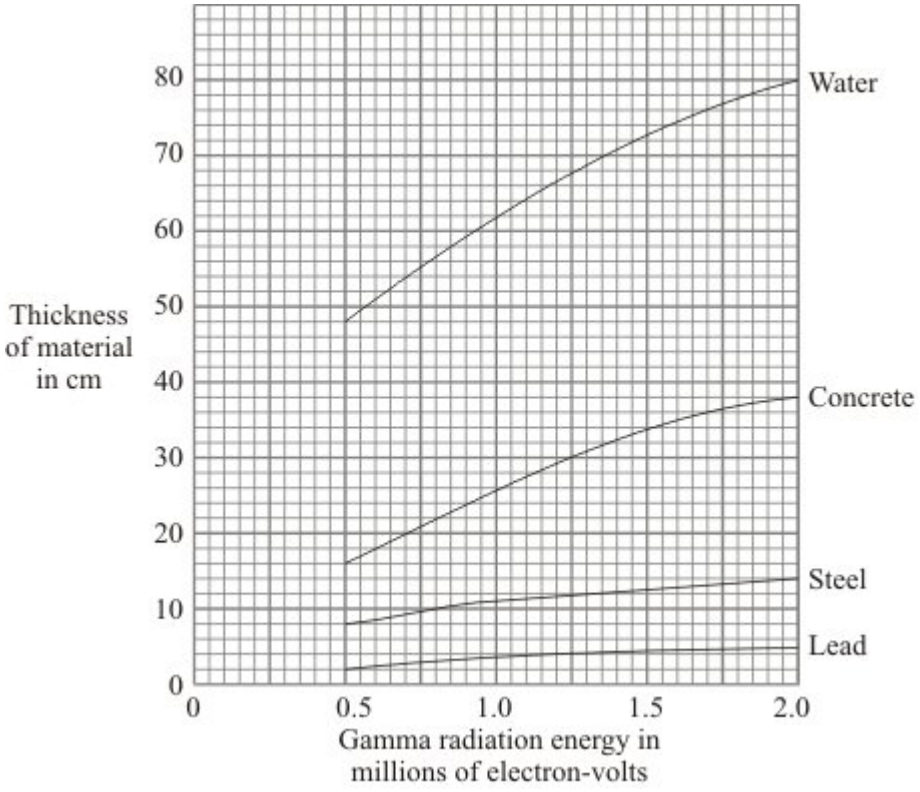
_____

_____

(1)

(b) The graph shows how the thickness of different materials needed to absorb 90% of the gamma radiation emitted by a source depends on the energy of the radiation. The energy of the gamma radiation is given in units called electron-volts.

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(i) Which of the materials shown is least effective at absorbing gamma radiation? Use the information in the graph to give a reason for your answer.

_____

_____

(1)

(ii) For gamma radiation of energy 1.5 million electron-volts, how many times more effective is steel than water at absorbing the radiation? Show clearly how you obtain your answer.

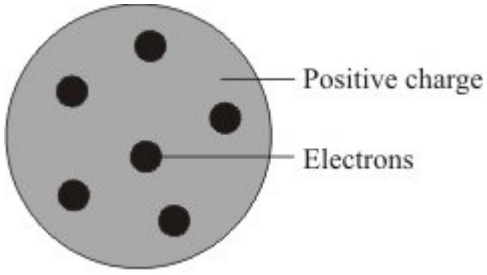
_____

_____

_____

(2)

(c) Scientists in the early twentieth century thought that atoms were made up of electrons scattered inside a ball of positive charge. This was called the 'plum-pudding' model of the atom.



Plum pudding model

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Rutherford and Marsden did an experiment, in which a beam of alpha particles was aimed at a thin sheet of gold.
Explain how the results of this experiment led to a new model of the atom.
You may include one or more diagrams in your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(3)

(Total 9 marks)

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