

Pre A-Level key questions to bridge the gap

- These questions are GCSE questions taken from GCSE exam papers.
- However, they have been carefully selected to bridge the gap to A-Level Physics topics that you will be taught at the beginning of the course.
- The expectation is that you should be able to answer of these correctly to be in a strong position starting the course.
- If you come across a question you can't complete, it is worth reviewing that area of the GCSE specification before having a second attempt.
- It is **not** essential you complete these and submission is **not** necessary. However, if you wish to effectively prepare yourself for A-Level Physics then this is a good starting point (pages 1-24)
- You will find the markscheme at the end of this document (pages 24-33).

SCALARS AND VECTORS, FORCES AND MOTION

Q1.

Quantities in physics are either scalars or vectors.

- (a) Use the correct answers from the box to complete the sentence.

acceleration	direction	distance	speed	time
---------------------	------------------	-----------------	--------------	-------------

Velocity is _____ in a given _____ .

(2)

- (b) Complete the table to show which quantities are scalars and which quantities are vectors.

Put **one** tick (✓) in each row.

The first row has been completed for you.

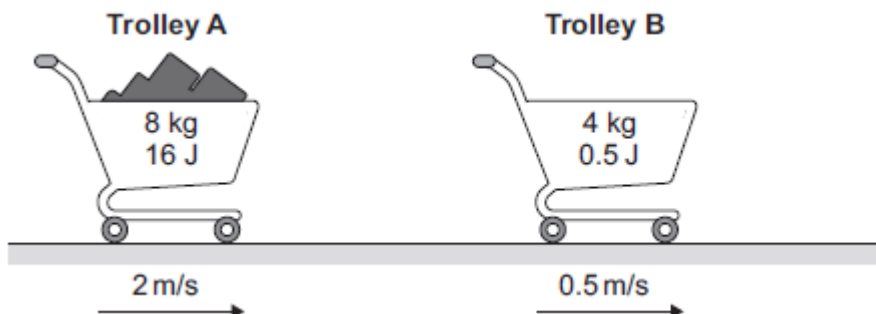
Quantity	Scalar	Vector
Momentum		✓
Acceleration		
Distance		
Force		
Time		

(3)

- (c) The diagram shows two supermarket trolleys moving in the same direction.

Trolley **A** is full of shopping, has a total mass of 8 kg and is moving at a velocity of 2 m / s with a kinetic energy of 16 J.

Trolley **B** is empty, has a mass of 4 kg and is moving at a velocity of 0.5 m / s with a kinetic energy of 0.5 J.



- (i) Calculate the momentum of both trolley **A** and trolley **B**.

Give the unit.

Momentum of trolley **A** = _____

Momentum of trolley **B** = _____

Unit _____

(4)

- (ii) The trolleys in the diagram collide and join together. They move off together.

Calculate the velocity with which they move off together.

Velocity = _____ m / s

(3)

- (iii) In a different situation, the trolleys in the diagram move at the same speeds as before but now move towards each other.

Calculate the total momentum and the total kinetic energy of the two trolleys before they collide.

Total momentum = _____

Total kinetic energy = _____ J

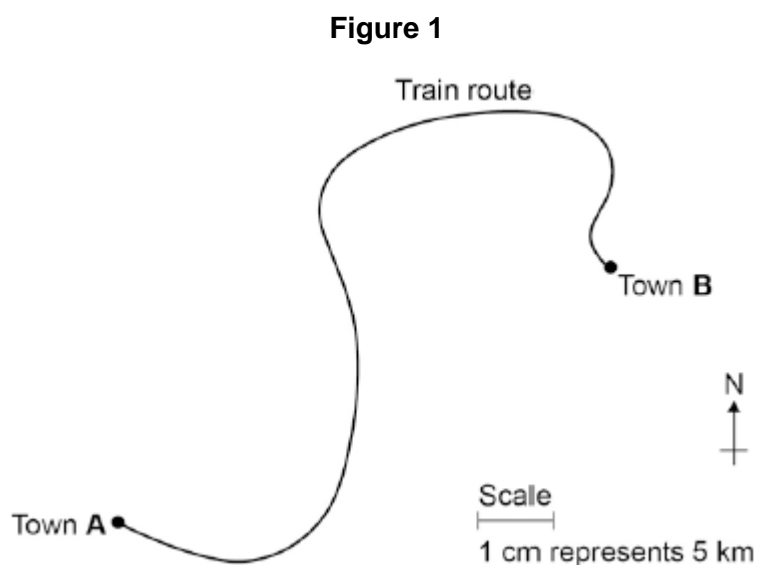
(2)
(Total 14 marks)

Q2.

A train travels from town **A** to town **B**.

Figure 1 shows the route taken by the train.

Figure 1 has been drawn to scale.



- (a) The distance the train travels between **A** and **B** is not the same as the displacement of the train.

What is the difference between distance and displacement?

(1)

- (b) Use **Figure 1** to determine the displacement of the train in travelling from **A** to **B**.

Show how you obtain your answer.

Displacement = _____ km

Direction = _____

(2)

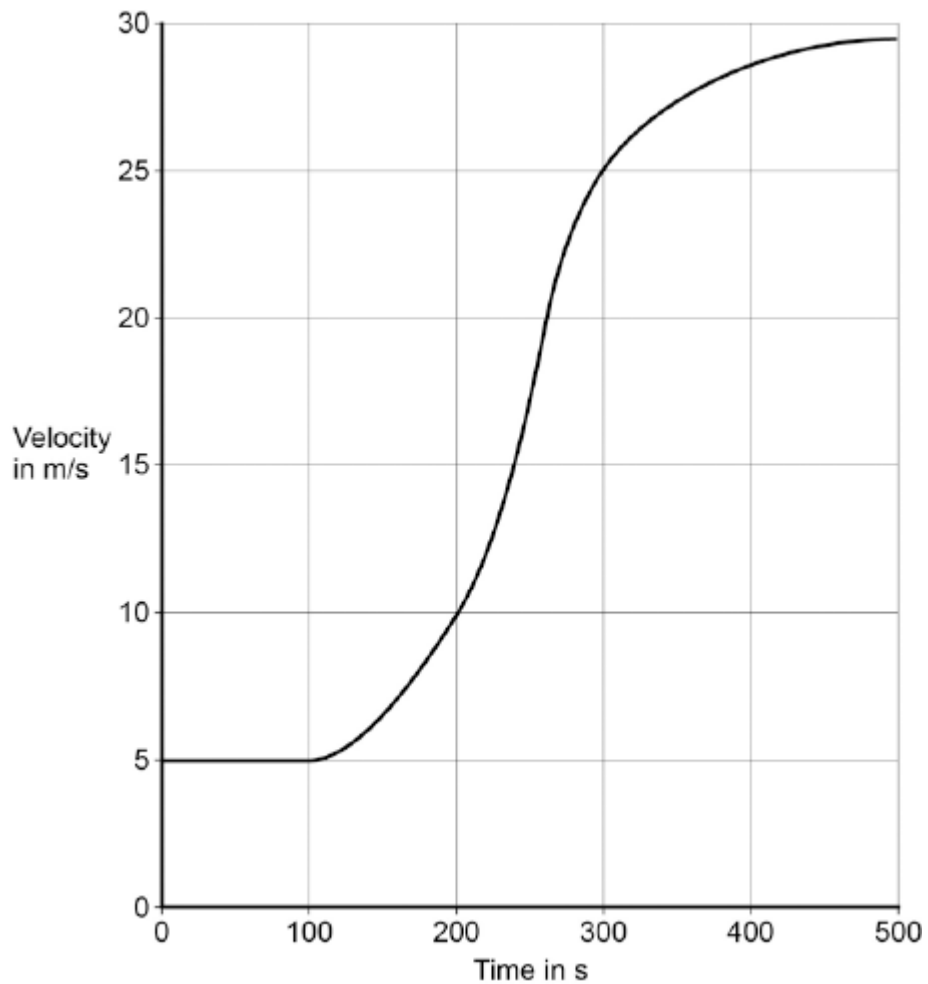
- (c) There are places on the journey where the train accelerates without changing speed.

Explain how this can happen.

(2)

- (d) **Figure 2** shows how the velocity of the train changes with time as the train travels along a straight section of the journey.

Figure 2



Estimate the distance travelled by the train along the section of the journey shown in **Figure 2**.

To gain full marks you must show how you worked out your answer.

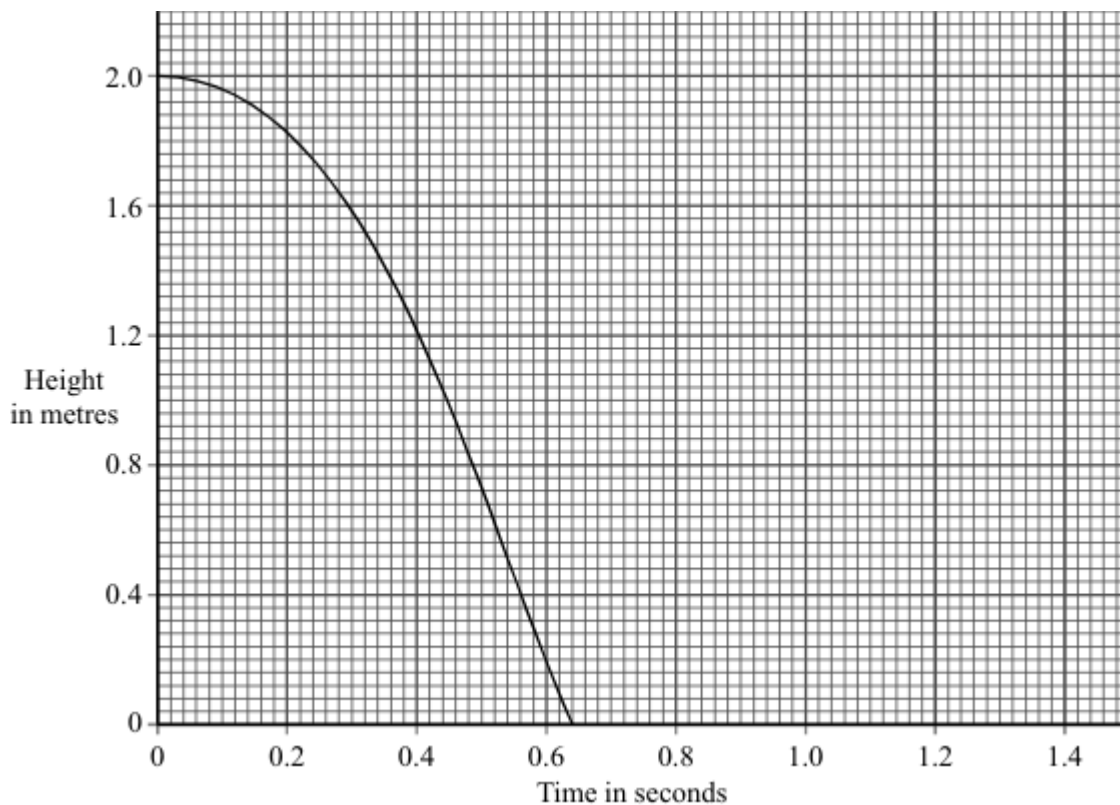
Distance = _____ m

(3)

(Total 8 marks)

Q3.

A bouncy ball is dropped vertically from a height of 2.00 m onto the floor. The graph shows the height of the ball above the floor at different times during its fall until it hits the floor after 0.64 s.



- (a) What is the average speed of the ball over the first 0.64 s? Show clearly how you work out your answer.

Average speed = _____ m/s

(1)

(b) After it hits the floor the ball bounces back to a height of 1.25 m. It reaches this height 1.16 s after it was dropped. Plot this point on the grid above and sketch a graph to show the height of the ball above the floor between 0.64 s and 1.16 s.

(3)

(c) (i) The ball bounces on the floor 0.64 s after being dropped. How long after being dropped will it be before it bounces a second time?

(1)

(ii) What distance will the ball travel between its first and second bounce?

(1)

(d) The ball was held stationary before being dropped. On the graph and your sketch mark **two** other points X_1 and X_2 , where the ball is stationary, and in each case explain why the ball is not moving.

X_1 _____

X_2 _____

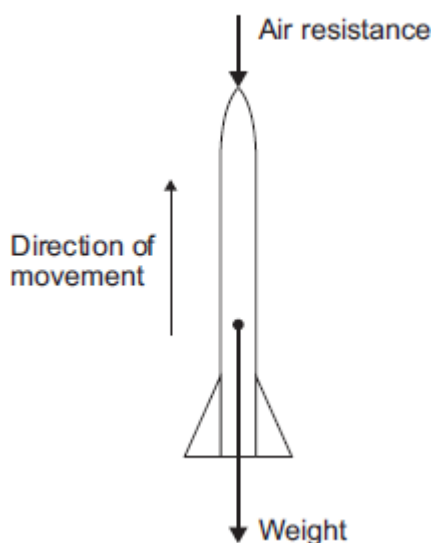
(2)

(Total 8 marks)

Q4.

(a) **Figure 1** shows the forces acting on a model air-powered rocket just after it has been launched vertically upwards.

Figure 1



- (i) How does the velocity of the rocket change as the rocket moves **upwards**?

Give a reason for your answer.

(2)

- (ii) The velocity of the rocket is not the same as the speed of the rocket.

What is the difference between the velocity of an object and the speed of an object?

(1)

- (b) The speed of the rocket just after being launched is 12 m / s.
The mass of the rocket is 0.05 kg.

- (i) Calculate the kinetic energy of the rocket just after being launched.

Kinetic energy = _____ J

(2)

- (ii) As the rocket moves upwards, it gains gravitational potential energy.

State the maximum gravitational potential energy gained by the rocket.

Ignore the effect of air resistance.

Maximum gravitational potential energy = _____ J

(1)

- (iii) Calculate the maximum height the rocket will reach.

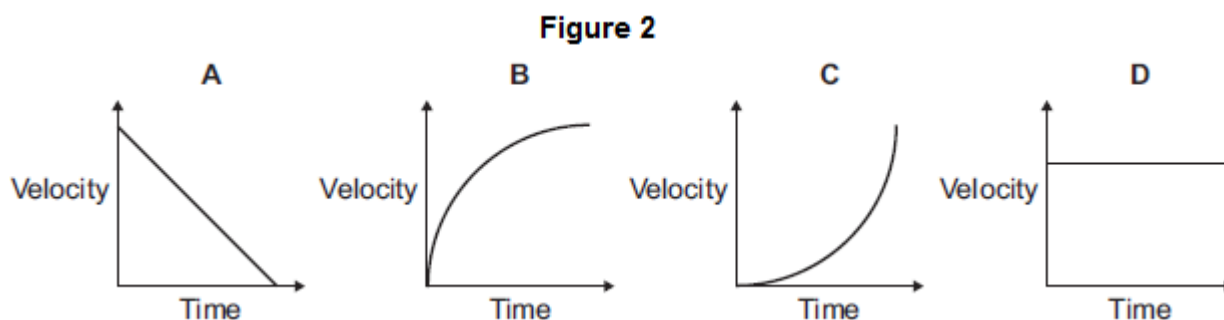
Ignore the effect of air resistance.

Gravitational field strength = 10 N/kg.

Maximum height = _____ m

(2)

(iv) **Figure 2** shows four velocity–time graphs.



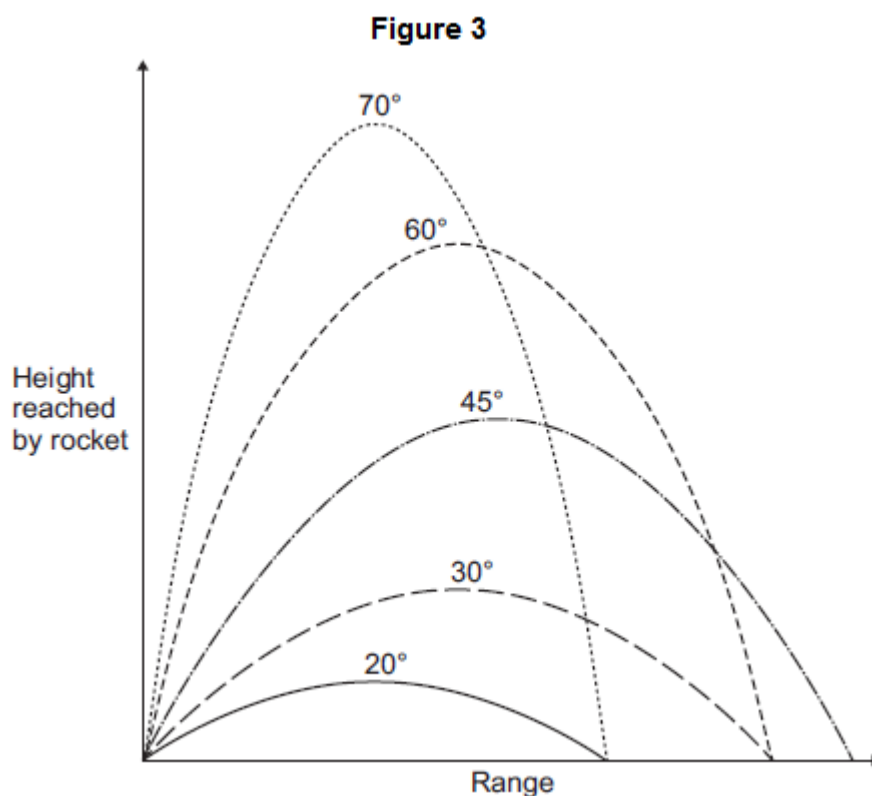
Taking air resistance into account, which graph, **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**, shows how the velocity of the rocket changes as it **falls** from the maximum height it reached until it just hits the ground?

Write the correct answer in the box.

(1)

(c) The rocket can be launched at different angles to the horizontal. The horizontal distance the rocket travels is called the range.

Figure 3 shows the paths taken by the rocket when launched at different angles. Air resistance has been ignored.



What pattern links the angle at which the rocket is launched and the range of the rocket?

(2)
(Total 11 marks)

Q5.

When two objects interact, they exert forces on each other.

(a) Which statement about the forces is correct?

Tick (✓) **one** box.

	Tick (✓)
The forces are equal in size and act in the same direction.	
The forces are unequal in size and act in the same direction.	
The forces are equal in size and act in opposite directions.	
The forces are unequal in size and act in opposite directions.	

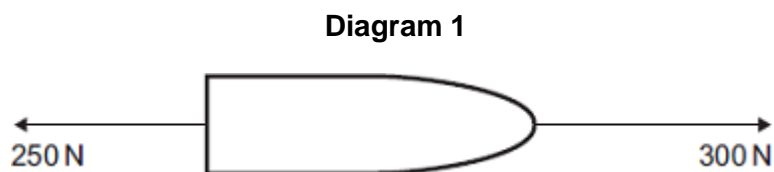
(1)

(b) A fisherman pulls a boat towards land.

The forces acting on the boat are shown in **Diagram 1**.

The fisherman exerts a force of 300 N on the boat.

The sea exerts a resistive force of 250 N on the boat.



(i) Describe the motion of the boat.

(2)

- (ii) When the boat reaches land, the resistive force increases to 300 N. The fisherman continues to exert a force of 300 N.

Describe the motion of the boat.

Tick (✓) **one** box.

Accelerating to the right

Constant velocity to the right

Stationary

(1)

- (iii) Explain your answer to part (b)(ii).

(2)

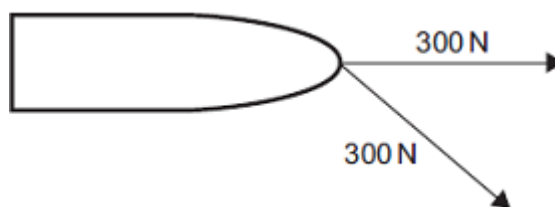
- (iv) Another fisherman comes to help pull the boat. Each fisherman pulls with a force of 300 N, as shown in **Diagram 2**.

Diagram 2 is drawn to scale.

Add to **Diagram 2** to show the single force that has the same effect as the two 300 N forces.

Determine the value of this resultant force.

Diagram 2




Resultant force = _____ N

(4)

(Total 10 marks)

Q6.

The table contains typical data for an oil tanker.

	Mass	56 000 000 kg
	Cruising speed	12 m/s
	Deceleration force	392 000 N
	Stopping distance	10 000 m

- (i) Write down the equation which links acceleration, force and mass.

_____ (1)

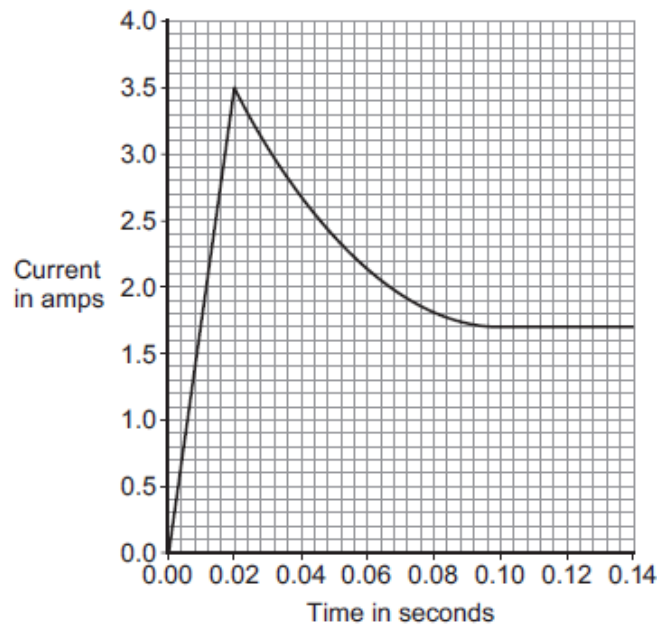
- (ii) Calculate the deceleration of the oil tanker. Show clearly how you work out your answer.

Deceleration = _____ m/s² (2)
(Total 3 marks)

DIRECT CURRENT CIRCUITS

Q7.

A 12 V filament bulb is connected to a 12 V power supply.
 The graph shows how the current changes after the bulb is switched on.



- (a) (i) After 0.10 seconds, the bulb works at its normal brightness.

What is the current through the bulb when it is working at normal brightness?

Current = _____ A

(1)

- (ii) The bulb works at normal brightness for 30 seconds before it is switched off.

Calculate the charge that flows through the bulb in the 30 seconds before it is switched off. Give the unit.

Charge = _____ unit _____

(3)

- (iii) Calculate the energy transferred by the 12 V bulb when it is working at normal brightness for 30 seconds.

Energy transferred = _____ J

(2)

- (b) Between 0.02 seconds and 0.08 seconds, there is an increase in both the resistance and the temperature of the metal filament inside the bulb.

Explain, in terms of the electrons and ions inside the filament, why both the temperature and the resistance increase.

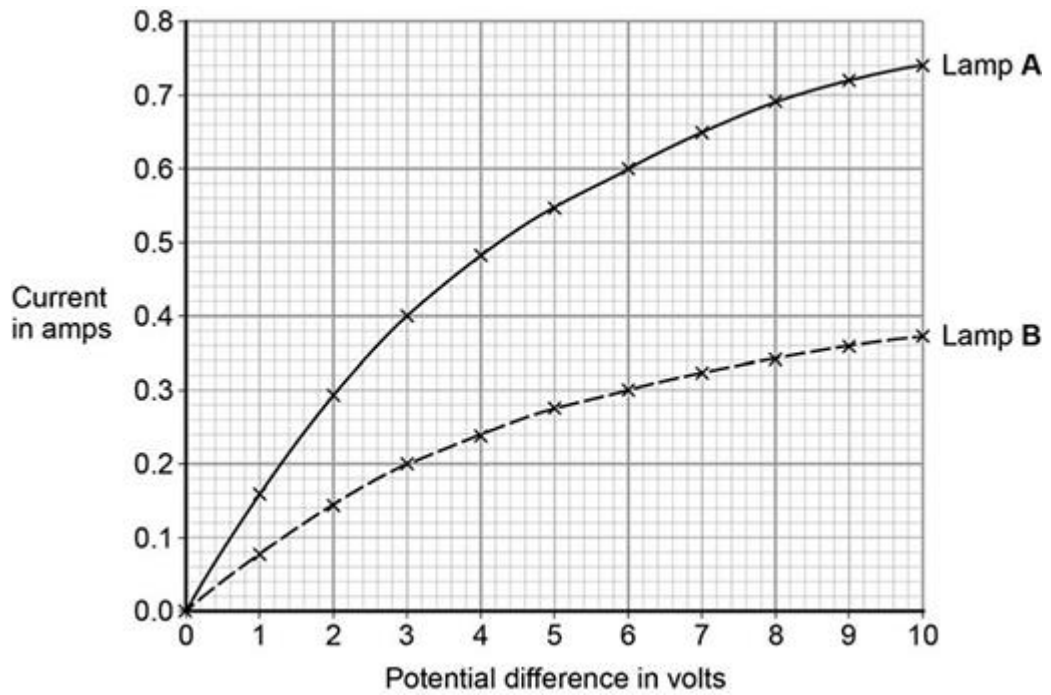
(2)

(Total 8 marks)

Q8.

A student investigated how current varies with potential difference for two different lamps.

Her results are shown in the figure below.



- (a) Complete the circuit diagram for the circuit that the student could have used to obtain the results shown in the figure above.



(3)

- (b) Which lamp will be brighter at any potential difference?

Explain your answer.

Use the figure above to aid your explanation

(2)

- (c) Lamp **B** has the higher resistance at any potential difference.

Explain how the figure above shows this.

(2)

- (d) Both lamps behave like ohmic conductors through a range of values of potential difference.

Use the figure above to determine the range for these lamps.

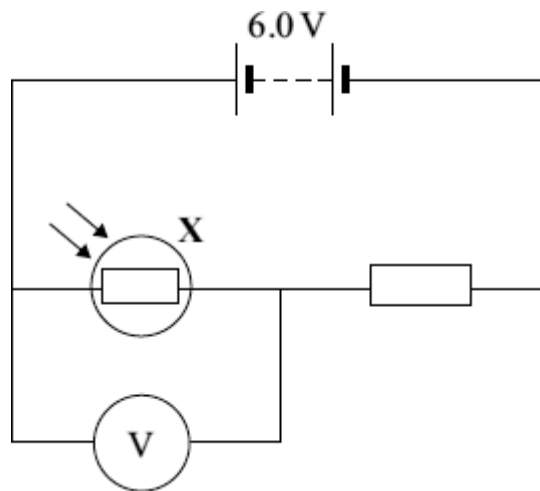
Explain your answer.

(3)

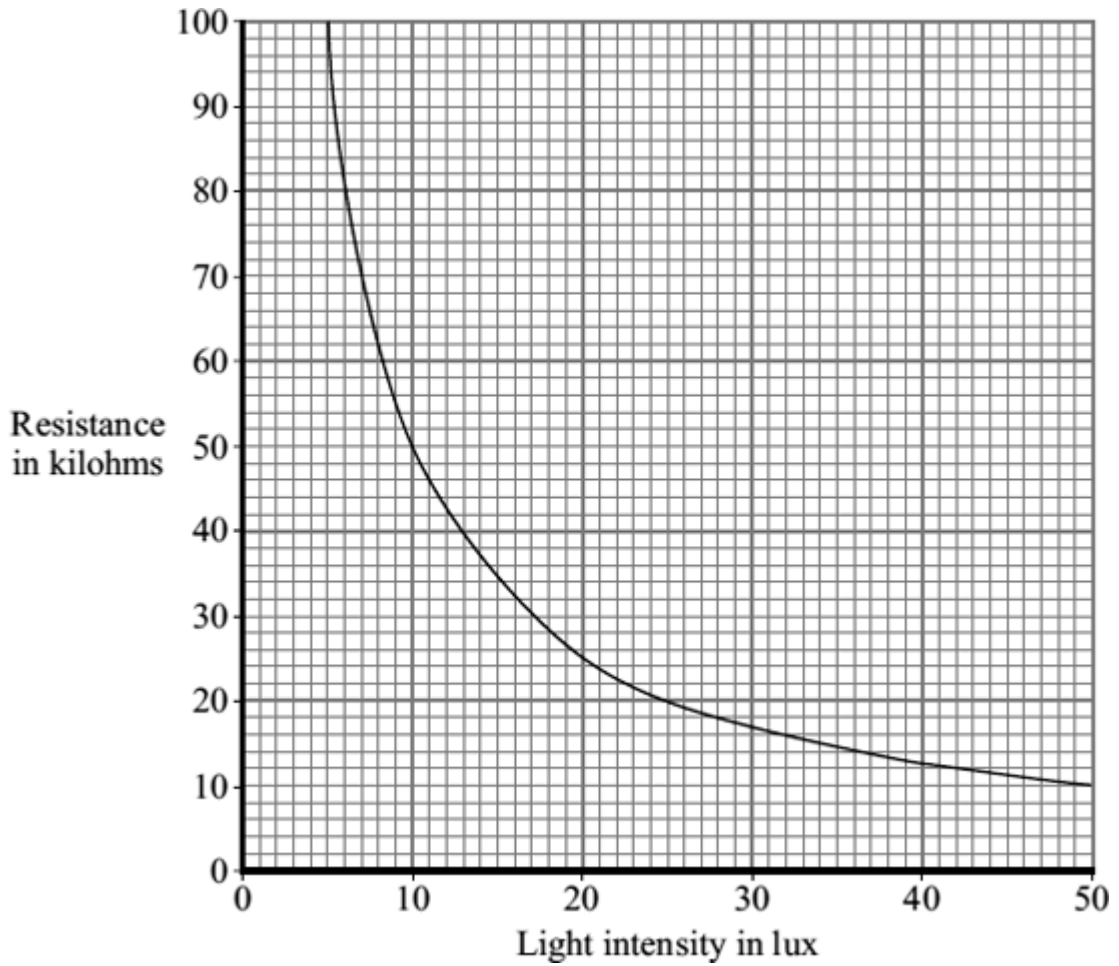
(Total 10 marks)

Q9.

The diagram shows a simple light-sensing circuit.



- (a) The graph, supplied by the manufacturer, shows how the resistance of the component labelled **X** varies with light intensity.



(i) What is component **X**?

(1)

(ii) Use the graph to find the resistance of component **X** when the light intensity is 20 lux.

(1)

(iii) When the light intensity is 20 lux, the current through the circuit is 0.0002 A.

Calculate the reading on the voltmeter when the light intensity is 20 lux.

Show clearly how you work out your answer.

Voltmeter reading = _____ volts

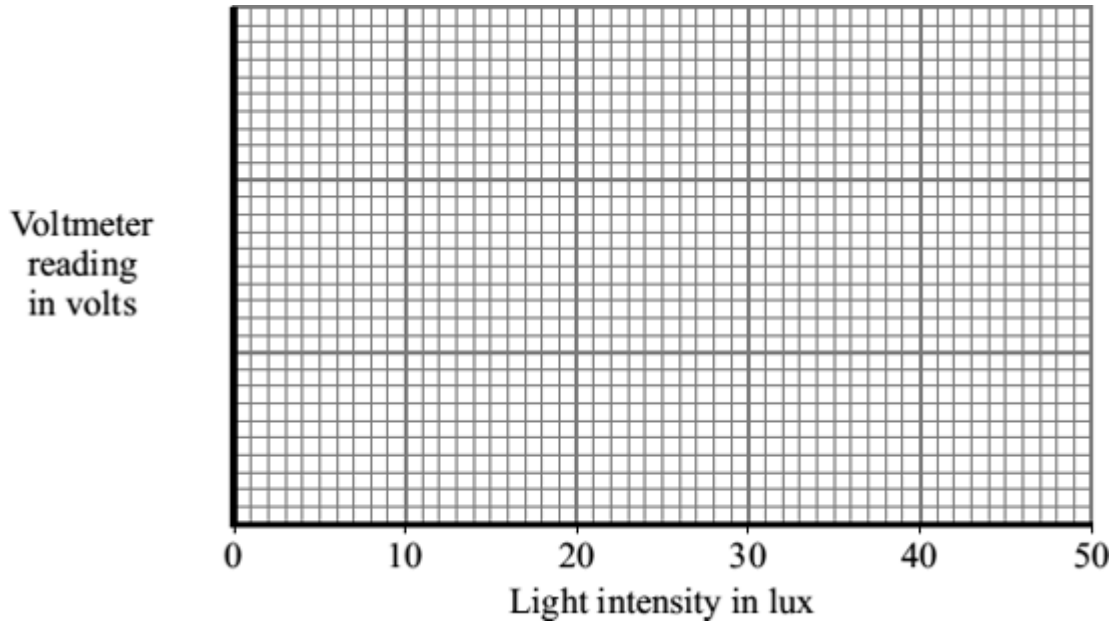
(2)

(b) Use the grid below to show how the voltmeter reading in the light-sensing circuit varies with light intensity.

(i) Add a suitable scale to the y-axis (vertical axis).

(1)

(ii) Complete the sketch graph by drawing a line on the grid to show how the voltmeter reading will vary with light intensity.



(2)

(c) The following passage is taken from the technical data supplied for component **X** by the manufacturer.

For any given light intensity, the resistance of this component can vary by plus or minus 50% of the value shown on the **graph of light intensity and resistance**.

(i) Calculate the maximum resistance that component **X** could have at 20 lux light intensity.

Maximum resistance = _____ kilohms

(1)

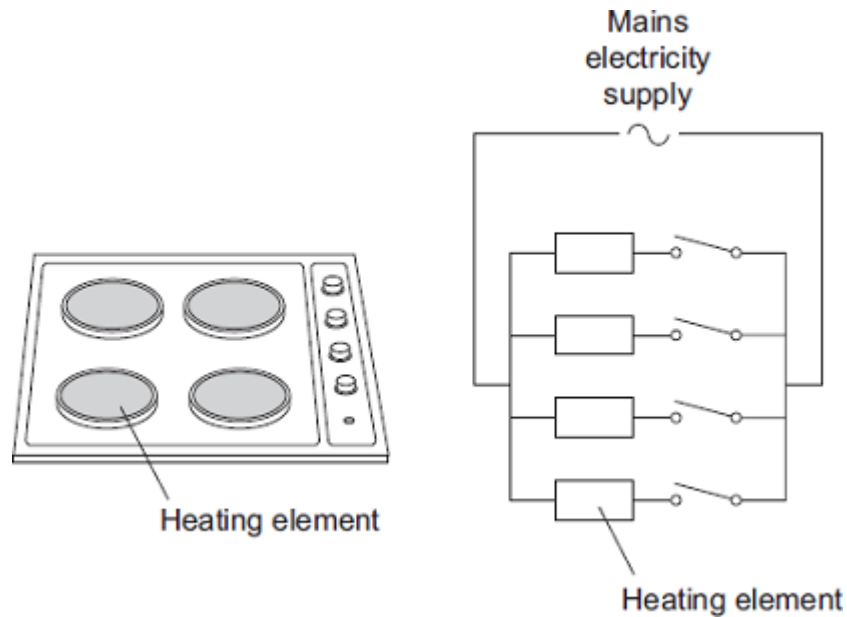
(ii) Explain why this light-sensing circuit would **not** be used to measure values of light intensity.

(2)

(Total 10 marks)

Q10.

The picture shows an electric cooker hob. The simplified circuit diagram shows how the four heating elements connect to the mains electricity supply. The heating elements are identical.



When all four heating elements are switched on at full power the hob draws a current of 26 A from the 230 V mains electricity supply.

- (a) Calculate the resistance of one heating element when the hob is switched on at full power.

Give your answer to 2 significant figures.

Resistance = _____ Ω

(3)

- (b) The table gives the maximum current that can safely pass through copper wires of different cross-sectional area.

Cross-sectional area in mm ²	Maximum safe current in amps
1.0	11.5
2.5	20.0
4.0	27.0
6.0	34.0

The power sockets in a home are wired to the mains electricity supply using cables

containing 2.5 mm² copper wires. Most electrical appliances are connected to the mains electricity supply by plugging them into a standard power socket.

It would **not** be safe to connect the electric cooker hob to the mains electricity supply by plugging it into a standard power socket.

Why?

(2)

- (c) Mains electricity is an alternating current supply. Batteries supply a direct current.

What is the difference between an alternating current and a direct current?

(2)

(Total 7 marks)

STATIC ELECTRICITY

Q11.

Figure 1 shows a Van de Graaff generator that is used to investigate static electricity.

Before it is switched on, the metal dome has no net charge.

After it is switched on, the metal dome becomes positively charged.

Figure 1



© Michael Priest

(a) Explain how an uncharged object may become positively charged.

(3)

(b) **Figure 2** shows a plan view of the positively charged metal dome of a Van de Graaff generator.

Draw the electric field pattern around the metal dome when it is isolated from its surroundings.

Use arrows to show the direction of the electric field.

Figure 2

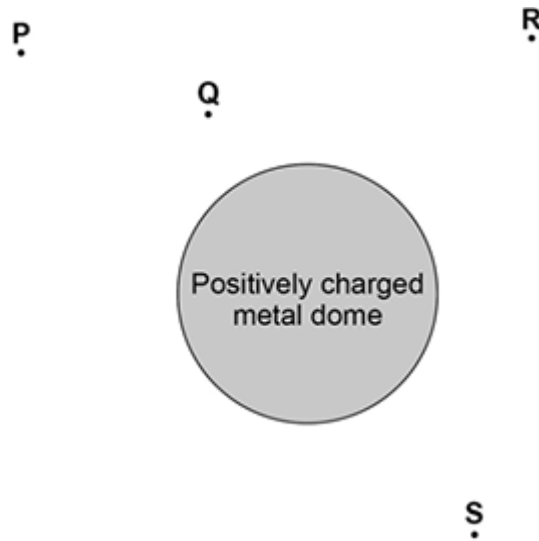


(2)

(c) Another positively charged object is placed in the electric field.

Look at **Figure 3**.

Figure 3



In which position would the object experience the greatest force?

Tick **one** box.

P

Q

R

S

(1)
(Total 6 marks)

WAVES

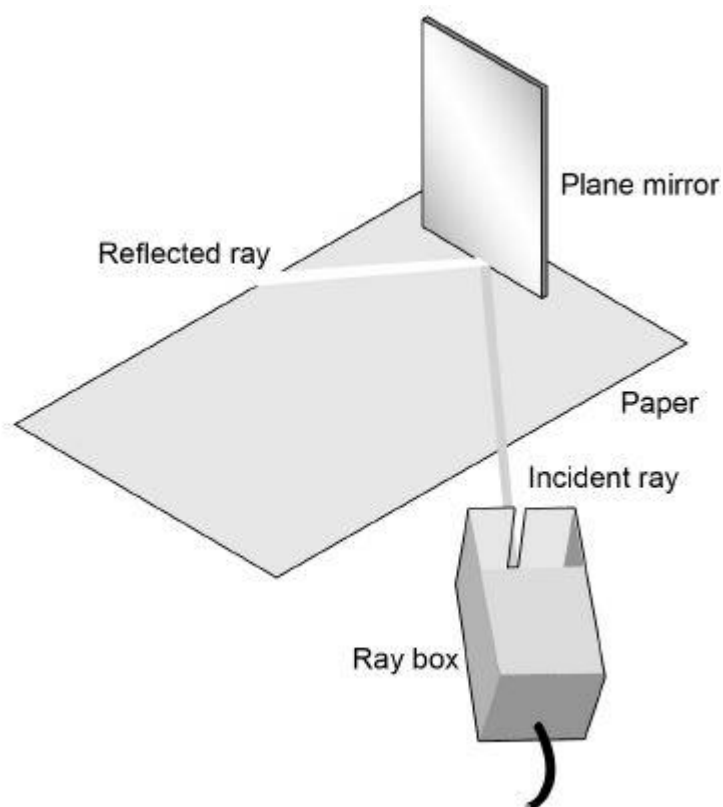
Q12.

The diagram below shows the apparatus a student used to investigate the reflection of light by a plane mirror.

The student drew four ray diagrams for each angle of incidence.

The student measured the angle of reflection from each diagram.

The table below gives the student's results.



Angle of incidence	Angle of reflection			
	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4
20°	19°	22°	20°	19°
30°	31°	28°	32°	30°
40°	42°	40°	43°	41°
50°	56°	49°	53°	46°

- (a) For each angle of incidence, the angle of reflection has a range of values.

This is caused by an error.

What type of error will have caused each angle of reflection to have a range of values?

(1)

- (b) Suggest what the student may have done during the investigation to cause each angle of reflection to have a range of values.

(1)

- (c) Estimate the uncertainty in the angle of reflection when the angle of incidence is 50° .
Show how you determine your estimate.

Uncertainty = \pm _____ $^\circ$

(2)

- (d) The student concluded that for a plane mirror, the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflection.

Explain whether you agree with this conclusion.

Use examples from the results in the table below in your answer.

(2)

- (e) What extra evidence could be collected to support the student's conclusion?

(1)

- (f) State **one** change the student should make to the apparatus if he wants to use the same method to investigate diffuse reflection.

(1)

(Total 8 marks)

Q13.

- (a) The wavelengths of four different types of electromagnetic wave, including visible light waves, are given in the table.

Type of wave	Wavelength
Visible light	0.0005 mm
A	1.1 km
B	100 mm
C	0.18 mm

Which of the waves, **A**, **B**, or **C**, is an infra red wave?

_____ (1)

- (b) A TV station broadcasts at 500 000 kHz. The waves travel through the air at 300 000 000 m/s.

Calculate the wavelength of the waves broadcast by this station.

Show clearly how you work out your answer.

Wavelength = _____ m (2)

- (c) What happens when a metal aerial absorbs radio waves?

_____ (2)

- (d) Stars emit all types of electromagnetic waves. Telescopes that monitor X-rays are mounted on satellites in space.

Why would an X-ray telescope based on Earth **not** be able to detect X-rays emitted from distant stars?

_____ (1)
(Total 6 marks)

Mark schemes

Q1.

(a) speed

must be in correct order

1

direction

1

(b)

Quantity	Scalar	Vector
Momentum		✓
Acceleration		✓
Distance	✓	
Force		✓
Time	✓	

any three correct scores 2 marks

any two correct scores 1 mark

only one correct scores zero

3

(c) (i) 16 and 2

16 or 2 scores 2 marks

allow 1 mark for correct substitution, ie

$$8 \times 2$$

or

$$4 \times 0.5$$

3

kg m / s **or** N s

1

(ii) 1.5 (m / s)

or

their $p_A + p_B = 12 \times v$ correctly calculated

allow 2 marks for correct substitution, ie

$$18 = 12 \times v$$

or

their $p_A + p_B = 12 \times v$

18 or their $p_A + p_B$ scores 1 mark if no other mark awarded

3

(iii) 14 (kg m / s)

or

their $p_A - p_B$

1

Q2.

- (a) distance is a scalar and displacement is a vector

or

distance has magnitude only, displacement has magnitude and direction

1

- (b) 37.5 km

accept any value between 37.0 and 38.0 inclusive

1

062° or N62°E

accept 62° to the right of the vertical

1

*accept an angle in the range 60° – 64°**accept the angle correctly measured and marked on the diagram*

- (c) train changes direction so velocity changes

1

acceleration is the rate of change of velocity

1

- (d) number of squares below line = 17

accept any number between 16 and 18 inclusive

1

each square represents 500 m

1

distance = number of squares × value of each square correctly calculated – 8500 m

1

[8]**Q3.**

- (a) 3.125

accept 3.1 or 3.12

1

- (b) plotted at 1.15 – 1.17, 1.24 – 1.28

across on the second from 1.2, up between first and second line

1

sketch curve steeper near 0.64 s fairly smooth curve bending

1

to become pretty well horizontal at 1.16, 1.25

1

- (c) (i) 1.68 **or** 1.7
working is $2(1.16 - 0.64) + 0.64 =$
- (ii) 2.5 m unit required
consequential marking applies here

1

- (d) **X**₁ at 0.64 s, 0 m

it is in contact with the floor **or** the ball changes direction **or** the downward force is balanced by the reaction of the floor

*accept the ball is hitting the floor
do not credit it has hit the floor*

1

- X**₂ at 1.16 s, 1.25m it is at the top of its bounce

accept the ball changes direction or has run out of KE

2

[8]

Q4.

- (a) (i) decreases (to zero)

1

resultant force acts in opposite direction to motion

*accept air resistance and weight for resultant force
accept resultant force acts downwards
do **not** accept air resistance increases*

1

- (ii) velocity includes direction
or
velocity is a vector (quantity)

1

- (b) (i) 3.6
*allow 1 mark for correct substitution i.e.
 $\frac{1}{2} \times 0.05 \times 12^2$ provided no subsequent step*

2

- (ii) 3.6 **or** their (i)

1

- (iii) 7.2
or
their (ii) $\div 0.5$ correctly calculated
*allow 1 mark for correct substitution i.e.
3.6 or their (ii) = $0.05 \times 10 \times h$*

2

- (iv) **B**

1

(c) range increases up to 45°

1

range decreases from 45°

*the range is a maximum at 45° gains both marks
for any two angles that add up
to 90° the range is the same gains both marks
the range increases then decreases gains 1 mark*

1

[11]

Q5.

(a) the forces are equal in size and act in opposite directions

1

(b) (i) forwards / to the right / in the direction of the 300 N force
answers in either order

1

accelerating

1

(ii) constant velocity to the right

1

(iii) resultant force is zero

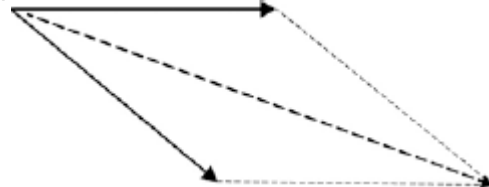
accept forces are equal / balanced

1

so boat continues in the same direction at the same speed

1

(iv) parallelogram or triangle is correctly drawn with resultant



3

value of resultant in the range 545 N – 595 N

parallelogram drawn without resultant gains 1 mark

If no triangle or parallelogram drawn:

*drawn resultant line is **between** the two 300 N forces gains 1 mark*

drawn resultant line is between and longer than the two 300 N forces gains 2 marks

1

[10]

Q6.

(i) force = mass × acceleration

accept $F = m \times a$

accept upper **or** lower case letters
accept equation using correct units
accept



if subsequent method correct

1

(ii) 0.007

allow 1 mark for correct transformation or substitution

2

[3]

Q7.

(a) (i) 1.7

1

(ii) 51
or
30 × their (i) correctly calculated

allow 1 mark for correct substitution i.e. $1.7 \frac{= Q}{30}$

or their (i) $\frac{= Q}{30}$

2

coulomb / C

do **not** accept c

1

(iii) 612
or
their (ii) × 12 correctly calculated
or
their (i) × 360 correctly calculated

allow 1 mark for correct substitution i.e. $E = 12 \times 51$

or $12 \times$ their (ii)

or their (i) × 360

2

(b) ions vibrate faster

or
ions vibrate with a bigger amplitude
accept atoms for ions throughout
accept ions gain energy
accept ions vibrate more
ions start to vibrate is insufficient

1

electrons collide more (frequently) with the ions

or
(drift) velocity of electrons decreases

electrons start to collide is insufficient

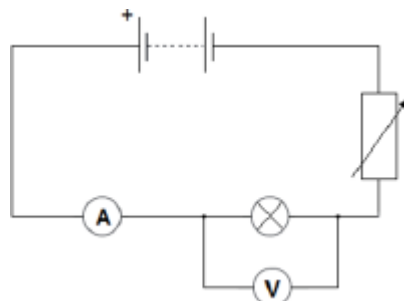
there are more collisions is insufficient, unless both electrons and ions are implied

1

[8]

Q8.

(a)



battery in series with bulb and ammeter

1

voltmeter in parallel with bulb

1

variable resistor

or

variable power pack

or

potentiometer

1

(b) A is brighter because it has a higher current (than lamp B at any p.d.)

1

(therefore A has a) higher power output (than bulb B)

accept higher energy output per second

1

(c) lower current (than lamp A) for the same potential difference

accept answer in terms of $R = V / I$

1

lower gradient (than lamp A)

1

(d) 0 – 2 Volts

allow a range from 0 V up to any value between 1 and 2 V.

1

(for an ohmic conductor) current is directly proportional to potential difference

allow lines (of best fit) are straight and pass through the origin

1

(so) resistance is constant

1

[10]

Q9.

- (a) (i) light dependent resistor / LDR
accept ldr 1
- (ii) 25 (kilo)ohms
accept 24 - 26 inclusive
accept 25 000 Ω 1
- (iii) 5 (V) or their (a)(ii) correctly converted to ohms $\times 0.0002$ correctly calculated
allow 1 mark for converting 25 k Ω /
their (a)(ii) to ohms
or
allow 1 mark for correct substitution
ie 0.0002 \times 25(000)
or 0.0002 \times their (a)(ii)
allow an incorrect conversion from kiloohms providing this is
clearly shown 2
- (b) (i) linear scale
using all of the available axis
must cover the range 4 - 6 v
or their (a)(iii) - 6 v and lie within the range 0 - 15 inc. 1
- (ii) negative gradient line
*do **not** allow lines with both positive and negative gradients* 1
- passing through 20 lux and their (a)(iii)
only scores if the first mark is awarded
only scores if line does not go above 6 volts 1
- (c) (i) 37.5 (k Ω) or their (a)(ii) + 50 % (a)(ii) correctly calculated 1
- (ii) light intensity value would be unreliable / not accurate 1
- due to variation in resistance value
accept because resistance varies by ± 50 %
accept tolerance of resistor is too great
*do **not** accept results are not accurate* 1

[10]

Q10.

- (a) 35
an answer with more than 2 sig figs that rounds to 35 gains 2 marks

allow **2** marks for correct method, ie $\frac{230}{6.5}$

allow **1** mark for $I = 6.5$ (A) **or** $R = \frac{230}{26}$

an answer 8.8 gains **2** marks

an answer with more than 2 sig figs that rounds to 8.8 gains **1** mark

3

- (b) (maximum) current exceeds maximum safe current for a 2.5 mm² wire
accept power exceeds maximum safe power for a 2.5 mm² wire

or

- (maximum) current exceeds 20 (A)
(maximum) current = 26 (A) is insufficient

1

- a 2.5 mm² wire would overheat / melt
accept socket for wire
*do **not** accept plug for wire*

1

- (c) a.c. is constantly changing direction
accept a.c. flows in two directions
accept a.c. changes direction
a.c. travels in different directions is insufficient

1

- d.c. flows in one direction only

1

[7]

Q11.

- (a) negatively charged

1

electrons are transferred

1

from the (neutral) object

1

- (b) minimum of four lines drawn perpendicular to surface of sphere
judge by eye

1

minimum of one arrow shown pointing away from sphere
*do **not** accept any arrow pointing inwards.*

1

- (c) Q

1

[6]

Q12.

- (a) random

human error is insufficient

1

- (b) accept any practical suggestion that could cause a range of values
e.g. misjudging the centre of the ray
e.g. not replacing mirror / ray box in the same position

*measuring the angle incorrectly is insufficient
moving the mirror / ray box is insufficient*

1

- (c) range = 10

or

mean of 51 calculated

1

5(°)

an answer of 5(°) scores 2 marks

1

- (d) within experimental accuracy the angle of incidence and the angle of reflection are the same

*allow the angle of incidence is nearly the same
as the angle of reflection*

or

the angle of reflection is usually different to the angle of incidence

*allow only a few of the values are the same /
similar*

allow the idea of a range of values

1

relevant use of data

e.g.

at 20° / 30° / 40° there is at least one measurement of angle of reflection that is exactly the same

or

at 50° there are big differences

allow 50° includes anomalous results

*an answer in terms of calculated mean(s) may
score both marks*

e.g.

*mean calculated for one or more angle of
reflection (1)*

*conclusion correctly stating angle $i = / \neq$ angle r
(1)*

1

- (e) results could be collected for angles (of incidence) not yet measured

allow a stated angle of incidence e.g. 10° or 60°

changing the mirror is insufficient

ignore repeat the measurements

1

- (f) replace the mirror with an irregular reflecting surface

*allow use an irregular reflecting surface
replace mirror with paper is insufficient
do **not** accept use a glass block*

1

[8]

Q13.

(a) C or 0.18 mm

1

(b) 0.6 (m)

*allow 1 mark for correct substitution and/or transformation **or**
1 mark for changing frequency to Hz
answer 600 gains 1 mark*

2

(c) creates an alternating current

*accept 'ac' for alternating current
accept alternating voltage*

1

with the same frequency as the radio wave

accept signal for radio wave

*accept it gets hotter for 1 mark provided no other marks
scored*

1

(d) X-rays cannot penetrate the atmosphere

accept atmosphere stops X-rays

*do **not** accept atmosphere in the way*

or

X-rays are absorbed (by the atmosphere) before reaching Earth

ignore explanations

1

[6]