

**Astrophysics Constants and Formulae**

Available for examinations in the Natural Sciences Tripos Part II – Astrophysics

**Physical Constants**

velocity of light	$c = 2.998 \times 10^8 \text{ms}^{-1}$
Newtonian gravitational constant	$G = 6.673 \times 10^{-11} \text{m}^3 \text{kg}^{-1} \text{s}^{-2}$
Planck's constant	$h = 6.626 \times 10^{-34} \text{Js}$ $\hbar = 1.055 \times 10^{-34} \text{Js} = h/2\pi$
Stefan – Boltzmann constant	$\sigma = 5.671 \times 10^{-8} \text{Wm}^{-2} \text{K}^{-4} = ac/4$
gas constant	$\mathcal{R} = 8.314 \text{Jmol}^{-1} \text{K}^{-1}$ $\mathcal{R}^* = 10^3 \mathcal{R}$
Avogadro's number	$N_A = 6.022 \times 10^{23} \text{mol}^{-1}$
Boltzmann's constant	$k = 1.381 \times 10^{-23} \text{JK}^{-1} = \mathcal{R}/N_A$
atomic mass unit	$m_u = 1.661 \times 10^{-27} \text{kg}$
proton rest mass	$m_p = 1.673 \times 10^{-27} \text{kg}$ $= 938 \text{MeV}$
neutron rest mass	$m_n = 1.675 \times 10^{-27} \text{kg}$ ( $m_n - m_p = 1.29 \text{MeV}$ ) $= 939 \text{MeV}$
electron rest mass	$m_e = 9.109 \times 10^{-31} \text{kg}$ ( $m_p/m_e = 1836$ ) $= 0.511 \text{MeV}$
classical electron radius	$r_e = 2.818 \times 10^{-15} \text{m}$
Compton wavelength	$\lambda_C = 2.426 \times 10^{-12} \text{m} = h/m_e c$
Thomson cross section	$\sigma_T = 6.652 \times 10^{-29} \text{m}^2 = (8\pi/3)r_e^2$
inverse fine-structure constant	$\alpha^{-1} = 137.0$
radiation density constant	$a = 7.566 \times 10^{-16} \text{Jm}^{-3} \text{K}^{-4} = 8\pi^5 k^4 / 15c^3 h^3$
electronic charge	$e = 1.602 \times 10^{-19} \text{C}$
Bohr radius	$a_0 = 5.292 \times 10^{-11} \text{m} = h^2 / \pi \mu_0 c^2 m_e e^2$
temperature of triple point of water	$T_{\text{tr}} = 273.16 \text{K}$
vacuum magnetic permeability	$\mu_0 = 4\pi \times 10^{-7} \text{Hm}^{-1}$ (exact)
vacuum electrical permittivity	$\epsilon_0 = 8.854 \times 10^{-12} \text{Fm}^{-1} = c^{-2} \mu_0^{-1}$
ionization potential of hydrogen	$\chi_H = 13.598 \text{eV}$

## Conversion Factors

electron volt	$1\text{eV} = 1.602 \times 10^{-19}\text{J}$
erg	$1\text{ erg} = 10^{-7}\text{J}$
year	$1\text{ yr} = 3.156 \times 10^7\text{s}$

## Astronomical Measures

astronomical unit	$1\text{ au} = 1.496 \times 10^{11}\text{m}$
parsec	$1\text{ pc} = 3.086 \times 10^{16}\text{m}$
light year	$1\text{ ly} = 9.461 \times 10^{15}\text{m}$
solar mass	$1\text{ M}_{\odot} = 1.989 \times 10^{30}\text{kg}$
solar radius	$1\text{ R}_{\odot} = 6.960 \times 10^8\text{m}$
solar luminosity	$1\text{ L}_{\odot} = 3.90 \times 10^{26}\text{W}$
solar effective temperature	$5780\text{K}$
absolute magnitude of sun	$M_V = 4.83$
distance modulus	$m - M = 5 \log_{10} D - 5$
Earth mass	$1\text{M}_{\oplus} = 5.976 \times 10^{24}\text{kg}$
Earth radius	$1\text{R}_{\oplus} = 6.371 \times 10^6\text{m}$

## Vector Relations

$$\mathbf{A} \wedge (\mathbf{B} \wedge \mathbf{C}) = \mathbf{B} (\mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{C}) - \mathbf{C} (\mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{B})$$

$$\nabla \cdot (\phi \mathbf{A}) = \phi \nabla \cdot \mathbf{A} + \mathbf{A} \cdot \nabla \phi$$

$$\nabla \wedge (\phi \mathbf{A}) = \phi \nabla \wedge \mathbf{A} - \mathbf{A} \wedge \nabla \phi$$

$$\nabla (\mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{B}) = (\mathbf{A} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{B} + (\mathbf{B} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{A} + \mathbf{A} \wedge (\nabla \wedge \mathbf{B}) + \mathbf{B} \wedge (\nabla \wedge \mathbf{A})$$

$$\nabla \cdot (\mathbf{A} \wedge \mathbf{B}) = \mathbf{B} \cdot \nabla \wedge \mathbf{A} - \mathbf{A} \cdot \nabla \wedge \mathbf{B}$$

$$\nabla \wedge (\mathbf{A} \wedge \mathbf{B}) = (\mathbf{B} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{A} - (\mathbf{A} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{B} + \mathbf{A} (\nabla \cdot \mathbf{B}) - \mathbf{B} (\nabla \cdot \mathbf{A})$$

$$\nabla \wedge (\nabla \phi) = 0$$

$$\nabla \cdot (\nabla \wedge \mathbf{A}) = 0$$

$$\nabla \wedge (\nabla \wedge \mathbf{A}) = \nabla (\nabla \cdot \mathbf{A}) - \nabla^2 \mathbf{A}$$

$$\mathbf{A} \wedge (\nabla \wedge \mathbf{A}) = \frac{1}{2} \nabla (\mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{A}) - (\mathbf{A} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{A}$$

Stirling's formula:

$$\ln n! \sim n(\ln n - 1) \text{ as } n \rightarrow \infty$$

## Maxwell's Equations (*in vacuo*)

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0$$

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{E} = \rho/\epsilon_0$$

$$\nabla \wedge \mathbf{E} = -\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t}$$

$$\mu_0^{-1} \nabla \wedge \mathbf{B} = \epsilon_0 \frac{\partial \mathbf{E}}{\partial t} + \mathbf{J}$$

Lorentz force density:

$$\mathbf{f} = \rho \mathbf{E} + \mathbf{J} \wedge \mathbf{B}$$

Electromagnetic energy density:

$$W = \frac{1}{2} (\epsilon_0 E^2 + \mu_0^{-1} B^2)$$

Poynting's Vector:

$$\mathbf{S} = \mathbf{E} \wedge \mathbf{B} / \mu_0$$

Poynting's Theorem:

$$\frac{\partial W}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot \mathbf{S} = -\mathbf{J} \cdot \mathbf{E}$$

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*Candidates may be asked to derive any of the subsequent formulae in this booklet.*

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## Theory of Relativity

Contravariant tensor:

$$T'^{mn} = T^{rs} \frac{\partial x'^m}{\partial x^r} \frac{\partial x'^n}{\partial x^s}$$

Covariant tensor:

$$T'_{mn} = T_{rs} \frac{\partial x^r}{\partial x'^m} \frac{\partial x^s}{\partial x'^n}$$

Mixed tensor:

$$T_n'^m = T_s^r \frac{\partial x'^m}{\partial x^r} \frac{\partial x^s}{\partial x'^n}$$

Invariant:

$$T' = T$$

Kronecker delta:

$$\delta_s^r = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } r = s \\ 0 & \text{if } r \neq s \end{cases}$$

Interval:

$$ds^2 = g_{mn} dx^m dx^n$$

Metric tensor:

$$g_{mn} = g_{nm}, \quad g_{mr} g^{ms} = \delta_r^s$$

Magnitude of a vector:

$$X^2 = g_{mn} X^m X^n$$

Orthogonality condition:

$$g_{mn} X^m Y^n = 0$$

Raising and lowering indices:

$$X^m = g^{mn} X_n, \quad X_m = g_{mn} X^n$$

Christoffel symbols:

$$[mn, r] = \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{\partial g_{mr}}{\partial x^n} + \frac{\partial g_{nr}}{\partial x^m} - \frac{\partial g_{mn}}{\partial x^r} \right)$$

$$\Gamma_{mn}^r = g^{rs} [mn, s]$$

Christoffel symbols for diagonal metric  $g_{mn}$ :

( $m \neq n \neq r$ , no sums over repeated indices)

$$\Gamma_{nr}^m = 0, \quad \Gamma_{mm}^n = -\frac{1}{2g_{nn}} \frac{\partial g_{mm}}{\partial x^n}, \quad \Gamma_{nm}^m = \Gamma_{mn}^m = \frac{1}{2g_{mm}} \frac{\partial g_{mm}}{\partial x^n},$$

$$\Gamma_{mm}^m = \frac{1}{2g_{mm}} \frac{\partial g_{mm}}{\partial x^m}.$$

Geodesic:

$$\frac{d^2 x^r}{ds^2} + \Gamma_{mn}^r \frac{dx^m}{ds} \frac{dx^n}{ds} = 0$$

or

$$\frac{du_i}{ds} = \frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial g_{jk}}{\partial x^i} u^j u^k$$

where  $u^i = \frac{dx^i}{ds}$ .

Absolute derivative:

$$\frac{DT^i}{Ds} = \frac{dT^i}{ds} + \Gamma_{jk}^i T^j \frac{dx^k}{ds}$$

Parallel propagation:

$$\frac{DT^i}{Ds} = 0$$

Covariant derivative:

$$T^r_{;s} = \frac{\partial T^r}{\partial x^s} + \Gamma_{ms}^r T^m$$

$$T_{r;s} = \frac{\partial T_r}{\partial x^s} - \Gamma_{rs}^m T_m$$

$$g_{rs;t} = 0$$

Mixed curvature tensor:

$$R^s_{rmn} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x^m} \Gamma_{rn}^s - \frac{\partial}{\partial x^n} \Gamma_{rm}^s + \Gamma_{rn}^p \Gamma_{pm}^s - \Gamma_{rm}^p \Gamma_{pn}^s$$

Non-commutative covariant differentiation:

$$T_{r;mn} - T_{r;nm} = R^s{}_{rmn} T_s$$

Covariant curvature tensor:

$$R_{rsmn} = \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{\partial^2 g_{rn}}{\partial x^s \partial x^m} + \frac{\partial^2 g_{sm}}{\partial x^r \partial x^n} - \frac{\partial^2 g_{rm}}{\partial x^s \partial x^n} - \frac{\partial^2 g_{sn}}{\partial x^r \partial x^m} \right) + g^{pq} ([rn, p][sm, q] - [rm, p][sn, q])$$

Identities:

$$R_{rsmn} = -R_{srnm} = -R_{rsmn} = R_{mnr s}$$

$$R_{rsmn} + R_{rmns} + R_{rns m} = 0$$

Conditions for flatness:

$$R_{rsmn} = 0$$

Bianchi identity:

$$R_{rsmn;t} + R_{rsnt;m} + R_{rstm;n} = 0$$

Ricci tensor:

$$R_{rm} = R_{mr} = R^n{}_{rmn}$$

Curvature invariant:

$$R = R^n{}_n$$

Einstein tensor:

$$G^n{}_t = R^n{}_t - \frac{1}{2} \delta_t^n R$$

$$G^n{}_{t;n} = 0$$

Geodesic Deviation:

$$\frac{D^2 \xi^i}{Ds^2} + R^i{}_{jkl} \xi^k \frac{dx^j}{ds} \frac{dx^l}{ds} = 0$$

Schwarzschild metric:

$$ds^2 = \left(1 - \frac{2GM}{rc^2}\right) c^2 dt^2 - \left(1 - \frac{2GM}{rc^2}\right)^{-1} dr^2 - r^2 (d\theta^2 + \sin^2 \theta d\phi^2)$$

## Astrophysical Fluid Dynamics

Mass:

$$\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho \mathbf{u}) = 0$$

Momentum:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial \mathbf{u}}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla \mathbf{u} &= -\frac{1}{\rho} \nabla p - \nabla \Phi \\ &+ \frac{1}{\rho} \mathbf{J} \wedge \mathbf{B} \end{aligned}$$

Energy:

$$\frac{\partial E}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot [(E + p)\mathbf{u}] = -\rho \dot{Q}$$

where

$$E = \rho \left( \frac{1}{2} u^2 + \Phi + e \right), \quad e = \frac{1}{\gamma - 1} \frac{p}{\rho}.$$

Poisson's Equation:

$$\nabla^2 \Phi = 4\pi G \rho$$

Induction:

$$\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t} = \nabla \wedge (\mathbf{u} \wedge \mathbf{B})$$

Rankine-Hugoniot Conditions:

$$\begin{aligned} \rho_1 u_1 &= \rho_2 u_2 \\ p_1 + \rho_1 u_1^2 &= p_2 + \rho_2 u_2^2 \\ \frac{1}{2} u_1^2 + e_1 + \frac{p_1}{\rho_1} &= \frac{1}{2} u_2^2 + e_2 + \frac{p_2}{\rho_2} \end{aligned}$$

Bernoulli's constant:

$$H = \frac{1}{2} u^2 + \int \frac{dp}{\rho} + \Phi$$

Schwarzschild criterion:

$$\text{Stability requires } \frac{d}{dr} \left( \frac{p}{\rho^\gamma} \right) > 0$$

## Statistical Physics

$$Tds = du + pdv, \quad v = \rho^{-1}$$

$$h = u + pv$$

$$f = u - Ts$$

$$g = u - Ts + pv$$

$$\gamma_1 = \left( \frac{\partial \ln p}{\partial \ln \rho} \right)_s, \quad 1 - \gamma_2^{-1} = \left( \frac{\partial \ln T}{\partial \ln p} \right)_s, \quad \gamma_3 - 1 = \left( \frac{\partial \ln T}{\partial \ln \rho} \right)_s$$

$$S = k \ln W, \quad S = kN \ln Z + U/T$$

Boltzmann statistics:

$$W = N! \prod_i \left( \frac{g_i^{n_i}}{n_i!} \right), \quad n_i = NZ^{-1} g_i e^{-\beta \epsilon_i}, \quad \beta = (kT)^{-1}$$

Bose-Einstein statistics:

$$W = \prod_i \left[ \frac{(g_i + n_i - 1)!}{(g_i - 1)! n_i!} \right], \quad n_i = \frac{g_i}{e^{\beta(\epsilon_i - \mu)} - 1}$$

Fermi-Dirac statistics:

$$W = \prod_i \left[ \frac{g_i!}{n_i! (g_i - n_i)!} \right], \quad n_i = \frac{g_i}{e^{\beta(\epsilon_i - \mu)} + 1}$$

Density of states is  $h^{-3}$ .

Maxwell-Boltzmann distribution:

$$F(p)dp = 4\pi n (2\pi mkT)^{-3/2} e^{-p^2/2mkT} p^2 dp$$

Planck radiation law:

$$u_\nu d\nu = \frac{8\pi h}{c^3} \frac{\nu^3 d\nu}{e^{h\nu/kT} - 1}$$

Perfect gas:

$$p = \frac{\mathcal{R}^* \rho T}{\mu} \quad \text{where} \quad \mathcal{R}^* = 10^3 \mathcal{R}$$

$$h = \frac{\gamma}{\gamma - 1} \frac{p}{\rho}, \quad \gamma = c_p/c_v$$

Radiation:

$$u = aT^4, \quad p = \frac{1}{3}u$$

Mean free path  $l$  satisfies  $n\sigma l = 1$ .

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## Cosmology

Robertson-Walker metric:

$$ds^2 = c^2 dt^2 - R^2(t) \left[ \frac{dr^2}{1 - kr^2} + r^2 (d\theta^2 + \sin^2 \theta d\phi^2) \right]$$

Friedmann equations:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\dot{R}^2}{R^2} + \frac{kc^2}{R^2} &= \frac{8\pi G}{3} \rho + \frac{\Lambda c^2}{3} \\ \frac{2\ddot{R}}{R} + \frac{\dot{R}^2}{R^2} + \frac{kc^2}{R^2} &= -\frac{8\pi G}{c^2} p + \Lambda c^2 \end{aligned}$$

Conservation laws:

$$\text{Dust: } \rho R^3 = \text{constant}$$

$$\text{Radiation: } T^4 R^4 = \text{constant}$$

Hubble constant:

$$H_0 = \left. \frac{\dot{R}}{R} \right|_0$$

Deceleration parameter:

$$q_0 = - \left. \frac{\ddot{R}R}{\dot{R}^2} \right|_0$$

Proper distance:

$$d_{prop}(t) = R(t) \int_0^{r_1} \frac{dr}{\sqrt{1 - kr^2}}$$

Luminosity distance for  $\Lambda = 0$ :

$$d_L = R^2(t_0) \frac{r_1}{R(t_1)} = \frac{c}{H_0 q_0^2} \left\{ q_0 z + (q_0 - 1) \left[ (1 + 2q_0 z)^{1/2} - 1 \right] \right\}.$$

Angular diameter distance:

$$d_\theta = R(t_1) r_1 = d_L (1 + z)^{-2}$$

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## Equations of Stellar Structure

$$\frac{dp}{dr} = -\frac{Gm\rho}{r^2}$$

$$\frac{dm}{dr} = 4\pi r^2 \rho$$

$$\frac{dL_r}{dr} = 4\pi r^2 \rho \epsilon$$

$$\frac{dT}{dr} = -\frac{3\kappa\rho L}{16\pi a c r^2 T^3} \quad (\text{radiative})$$

$$\frac{dT}{dr} = \left(1 - \frac{1}{\gamma}\right) \frac{T}{P} \frac{dp}{dr} \quad (\text{convective})$$

Energy released in conversion of hydrogen to helium:  $0.007 mc^2$

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## Stellar Dynamics

The Collisionless Boltzmann Equation:

$$\frac{Df}{Dt} = 0 = \frac{\partial f}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i} \frac{dx_i}{dt} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial v_i} \frac{dv_i}{dt}$$

Cartesian coordinates:  $(x, y, z)$

$$\dot{\mathbf{r}} = \dot{x}\mathbf{i} + \dot{y}\mathbf{j} + \dot{z}\mathbf{k} = v_x\mathbf{i} + v_y\mathbf{j} + v_z\mathbf{k}$$

$$\ddot{\mathbf{r}} = \dot{v}_x\mathbf{i} + \dot{v}_y\mathbf{j} + \dot{v}_z\mathbf{k}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{Df}{Dt} = 0 &= \frac{\partial f}{\partial t} + v_x \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} + v_y \frac{\partial f}{\partial y} + v_z \frac{\partial f}{\partial z} - \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x} \frac{\partial f}{\partial v_x} - \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial y} \frac{\partial f}{\partial v_y} - \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial z} \frac{\partial f}{\partial v_z} \\ &= \frac{\partial f}{\partial t} + \mathbf{v} \cdot \frac{\partial f}{\partial \mathbf{x}} - \nabla \Phi \cdot \frac{\partial f}{\partial \mathbf{v}} \end{aligned}$$

Jeans equations:

$$\frac{\partial \nu}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial(\nu \bar{v}_i)}{\partial x_i} = 0 \quad \text{where} \quad \nu = \int f d^3\mathbf{v}$$

$$\bar{v}_i = \frac{1}{\nu} \int f v_i d^3\mathbf{v}.$$

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\nu \bar{v}_j) + \frac{\partial(\nu \bar{v}_i \bar{v}_j)}{\partial x_i} + \nu \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x_j} = 0 \quad \text{where} \quad \bar{v}_i \bar{v}_j = \frac{1}{\nu} \int v_i v_j f d^3\mathbf{v}$$

$$\nu \frac{\partial \bar{v}_j}{\partial t} + \nu \bar{v}_i \frac{\partial \bar{v}_j}{\partial x_i} = -\nu \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x_j} - \frac{\partial(\nu \sigma_{ij}^2)}{\partial x_i} \quad \text{where} \quad \sigma_{ij}^2 = \frac{1}{\nu} \int (v_i - \bar{v}_i)(v_j - \bar{v}_j) f d^3\mathbf{v}$$

Bound orbit in point mass potential:

$$r = \frac{a(1 - e^2)}{1 + e \cos \phi}$$

Oort's constants:

$$A \equiv \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{v_c}{R} - \frac{dv_c}{dR} \right) \Bigg|_{R_0}$$

$$B \equiv -\frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{v_c}{R} + \frac{dv_c}{dR} \right) \Bigg|_{R_0}$$

$$\kappa^2 = -4B(A - B)$$

$$\frac{\kappa}{\Omega} = 2\sqrt{\frac{-B}{A - B}}$$