
VCE UNITS INFORMATION

VCE Chemistry Units 3 and 4

CONTENT

Unit 3

The global demand for energy and materials is increasing with world population growth. In this unit, students explore energy options and the chemical production of materials with reference to efficiencies, renewability and the minimisation of their impact on the environment. Students compare and evaluate different chemical energy resources, including fossil fuels, biofuels, galvanic cells and fuel cells. They investigate the combustion of fuels, including the energy transformations involved, the use of stoichiometry to calculate the amounts of reactants and products involved in the reactions, and calculations of the amounts of energy released and their representations. Students consider the purpose, design and operating principles of galvanic cells, fuel cells and electrolytic cells. In this context, they use the electrochemical series to predict and write half and overall redox equations, and apply Faraday's laws to calculate quantities in electrolytic reactions. Students analyse manufacturing processes with reference to factors that influence their reaction rates and extent. They investigate and apply the equilibrium law and Le Chatelier's principle to different reaction systems, including to predict and explain the conditions that will improve the efficiency and percentage yield of chemical processes. They use the language and conventions of chemistry including symbols, units, chemical formulas and equations to represent and explain observations and data collected from experiments, and to discuss chemical phenomena.

Unit 4

The carbon atom has unique characteristics that explain the diversity and number of organic compounds that not only constitute living tissues but are also found in the fuels, foods, medicines and many of the materials we use in everyday life. In this unit, students investigate the structural features, bonding, typical reactions and uses of the major families of organic compounds including those found in food. Students study the ways in which organic structures are represented and named. They process data from instrumental analyses of organic compounds to confirm or deduce organic structures, and perform volumetric analyses to determine the concentrations of organic chemicals in mixtures. Students consider the nature of the reactions involved to predict the products of reaction pathways and to design pathways to produce particular compounds from given starting materials. Students investigate key food molecules through an exploration of their chemical structures, the hydrolytic reactions in which they are broken down and the condensation reactions in which they are rebuilt to form new molecules. In this context, the role of enzymes and coenzymes in facilitating chemical reactions is explored. Students use calorimetry as an investigative tool to determine the energy released in the combustion of foods.