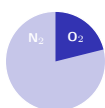


Chemistry of the Environment

IGCSE Chemistry ■ Topic 10

IGCSE Chemistry



Chemistry of the Environment

What we will cover

- 1 Water: testing & treating
- 2 Fertilisers
- 3 The composition of air
- 4 Air pollutants & their effects
- 5 The greenhouse effect
- 6 Reducing pollution

1 Water

Chemistry of the Environment

↳ Water

Water: testing and purity

is water present?

anhydrous 无水 cobalt chloride blue→pink; copper sulfate white→blue

is water pure?

pure water melts at exactly 0°C & boils at 100°C; impurities change these

Natural water carries dissolved O₂, minerals, **nitrates** 硝酸盐 & **phosphates** 磷酸盐 (which cause **deoxygenation** 缺氧), and microbes.

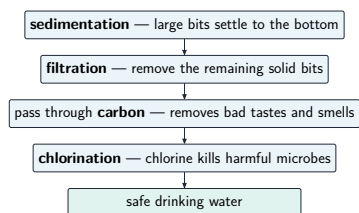


Air pollution harms health and the environment

Chemistry of the Environment

↳ Water

Treating drinking water



Steps to make water safe:

- **sedimentation** 沉降 & **filtration** 过滤 remove solids
- **carbon** 碳 removes tastes & smells
- **chlorination** 氯消毒 kills microbes

Fertilisers 肥料 (NPK) add nitrogen, phosphorus & potassium.

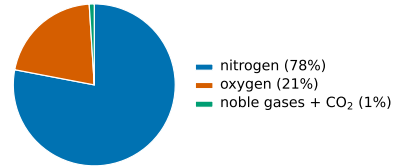
2 Air

The composition of air

Clean, dry air:

- 78% **nitrogen** 氮气 (N₂)
- 21% **oxygen** 氧气 (O₂)
- ~1% noble gases & CO₂

The composition of air, in detail



clean dry air ≈ 78% N₂, 21% O₂, 1% Ar/CO₂/others

Clean, dry air is 78% **nitrogen** 氮气 (N₂), 21% **oxygen** 氧气 (O₂), and about 1% noble gases and CO₂.

Air pollutants and their sources

CO₂ – complete **combustion** 燃烧 of carbon fuels (a greenhouse gas)

CO & particulates – **incomplete combustion** 不完全燃烧 of fuels

oxides of nitrogen – hot car engines

sulfur dioxide – burning fuels that contain **sulfur** 硫

Effects of pollutants

CO₂ & **methane** 甲烷: greenhouse → global warming

SO₂ & NO_x: **acid rain** 酸雨

carbon monoxide: a toxic gas

particulates 颗粒物: breathing problems

The pollutants, their sources and their effects

methane 甲烷 rotting plants, and waste gases from animal digestion – a strong greenhouse gas

carbon dioxide burning **fossil fuels** 化石燃料 – the main driver of climate change

sulfur dioxide burning fuels containing sulfur – causes **acid rain**

oxides of nitrogen formed in a hot car engine from the air's own nitrogen and oxygen

particulates increase the risk of **respiratory** 呼吸 problems and **cancer** 癌症

carbon monoxide toxic – it binds to haemoglobin in place of oxygen

A **catalytic converter** removes the oxides of nitrogen and carbon monoxide; **flue gas desulfurization** 烟气脱硫 removes sulfur dioxide at the power station.

The pollutants, and how each is dealt with

Oxides of nitrogen Cause acid rain, **photochemical smog** 光化学烟雾 and breathing problems. A catalytic converter turns them back into nitrogen.

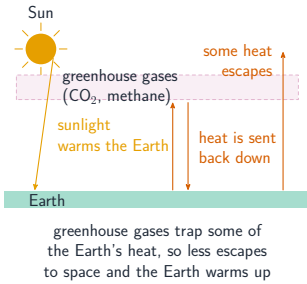
Sulfur dioxide Flue gas desulfurisation uses **calcium oxide** 氧化钙 to remove it before the gases leave the chimney – or switch to a low-sulfur fuel.

Water pollution Waste water may carry dissolved oxygen, metal compounds, plastics, **sewage** 污水, harmful **microbes** 微生物, and **nitrates** 硝酸盐 and **phosphates** 磷酸盐 from fertilisers and detergents.

Testing purity Pure water melts at exactly 0 °C and boils at exactly 100 °C – so the **melting point** 熔点 and boiling point are the test.

Name the pollutant, its source, its effect and the control. Four parts, and most questions here ask for two of them.

The greenhouse effect



Greenhouse gases 温室气体 let sunlight in but **absorb** the heat the Earth gives off.

Less heat escapes to space, so the Earth warms – driving **climate change** 气候变化.

Photosynthesis

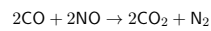
Photosynthesis 光合作用 is the opposite of combustion – it removes carbon dioxide from the air.

Plants use light energy and **chlorophyll** 叶绿素 to turn carbon dioxide and water into **glucose** 葡萄糖 and oxygen:

Reducing pollution



- climate: trees, less fossil fuel, **renewable energy** 可再生能源
- acid rain: **catalytic converters** 催化转化器, low-sulfur fuels



Slowing climate change, and what water contains

plant trees	photosynthesis removes carbon dioxide from the air
farm fewer animals	less methane from digestion, and less land cleared
burn fewer fossil fuels	the largest single lever
renewable energy 可再生能源	and hydrogen, where the hydrogen is made cleanly
dissolved oxygen	lets aquatic life 水生生物 – fish and plants – breathe
in the water too	metal compounds and nitrates from farming, and plastics, some of which harm aquatic life

Distilled water 蒸馏水 is used in experiments because tap water's dissolved salts would react. That is why the test uses it, not because it is cleaner.

Fertilisers

N nitrogen leaf and stem growth	P phosphorus strong roots	K potassium flowers and fruit
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NPK fertilisers contain all three – ammonium salts and nitrates supply the nitrogen

NPK fertilisers supply the three elements plants need most: nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium

Testing for water

is water present ? – a colour change	is it pure ? – fixed points
blue → pink cobalt(II) chloride: blue	melts at exactly 0 °C boils at exactly 100 °C
white → blue copper(II) sulfate: white both use the anhydrous (dry) solid	any dissolved substance changes these values

Colour-change tests show water is present; fixed melting and boiling points show it is pure

Exam tips

- Two tests show water is *present* (cobalt(II) chloride blue → pink; copper(II) sulfate white → blue), but only fixed melting and boiling points (0 °C and 100 °C) show it is *pure*.
- Clean, dry air is about **78% nitrogen**, **21% oxygen** and 1% other gases (mostly noble gases and carbon dioxide).
- Match each pollutant to its source and effect: **carbon monoxide** (incomplete combustion; toxic); **sulfur dioxide** and **oxides of nitrogen** (acid rain); **carbon dioxide** and **methane** (greenhouse gases → global warming).
- Greenhouse gases let sunlight through but absorb the heat the warm Earth gives off and send some back down, so the Earth warms up.

3

Recap

Worked example – stopping rust

Iron rusts but zinc-coated iron does not, even when the coating is scratched. Explain.

- Rusting needs **both** oxygen and water.
- A coat of paint or plastic works only as a **barrier** – scratch it and rust starts.
- Zinc is **more reactive** than iron, so it loses electrons in preference.
- The zinc corrodes instead ⇒ **sacrificial protection**, which still works when scratched.

Barrier methods fail once broken; **sacrificial protection** does not, because the more reactive metal is **oxidised instead**. Galvanising does both at once.

Topic 10 – key takeaways

1 Water

settle, filter, carbon, chlorinate

2 Air

78% N₂, 21% O₂, ~1% other

3 Pollutants

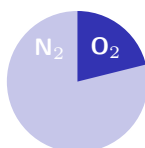
CO₂/CH₄ warm; SO₂/NO_x acid rain

4 Greenhouse

traps the heat the Earth gives off

Check yourself

- What step in water treatment kills microbes?
- What are the two main gases in clean air?
- Which two pollutants cause acid rain?
- Why does the greenhouse effect warm the Earth?



Answers 1. chlorination 2. nitrogen & oxygen 3. sulfur dioxide & oxides of nitrogen 4. it traps heat the Earth radiates