LAB #1: IDENTIFICATION OF CIRCUIT COMPONENTS

Breadboards:

In order to temporarily construct a circuit without damaging the components used to build it, we must have some sort of a platform that will both hold the components in place and provide the needed electrical connections. In the early days of electronics, most experimenters were amateur radio operators. They constructed their radio circuits on wooden breadboards. Although more sophisticated techniques and devices have been developed to make the assembly and testing of electronic circuits easier, the concept of the breadboard still remains in assembling components on a temporary platform.

(a)

(b)

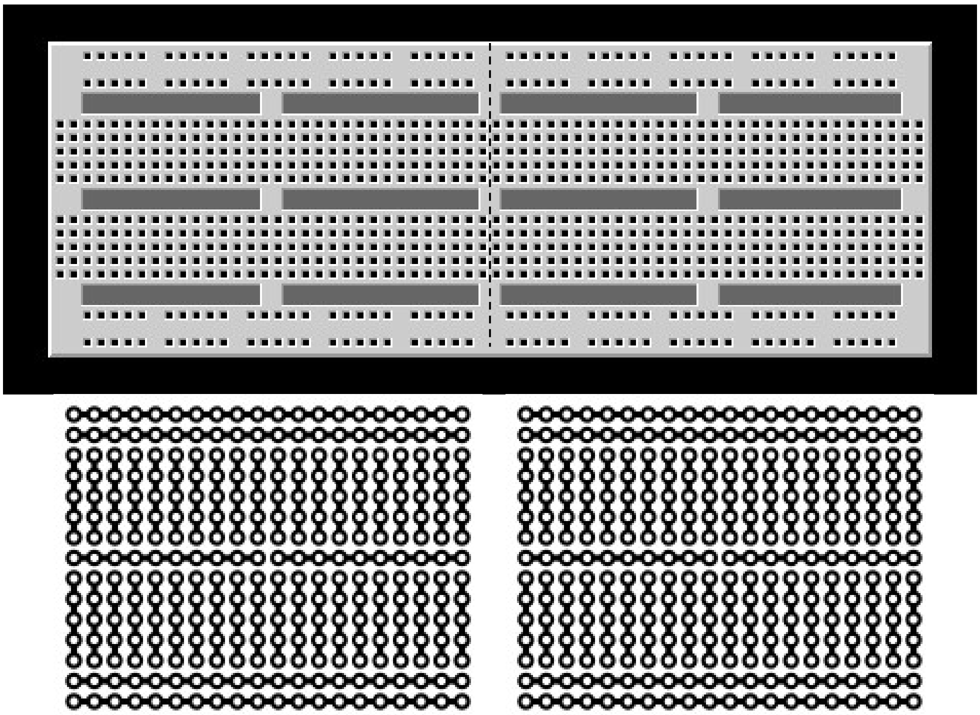


Fig. 1: (a) A typical Breadboard and (b) its connection details

A real breadboard is shown in Fig. 1(a) and the connection details on its rear side are shown in Fig. 1(b). The five holes in each individual column on either side of the central groove are electrically connected to each other, but remain insulated from all other sets of holes. In addition to the main columns of holes, however, you'll note four sets or groups of holes along the top and bottom. Each of these consists of five separate sets of five holes each, for a total of 25 holes. These groups of 25 holes are all connected together on either side of the dotted line indicated on Fig.1(a) and needs an external connection if one wishes the entire row to be connected. This makes them ideal for distributing power to multiple ICs or other circuits.

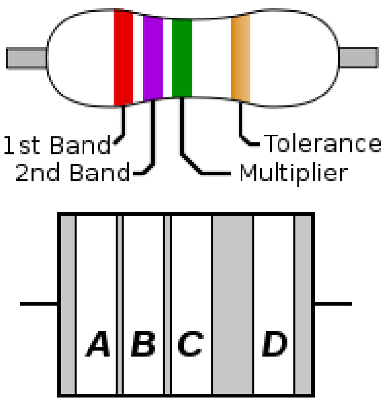
These breadboard sockets are sturdy and rugged, and can take quite a bit of handling. However, there are a few rules you need to observe, in order to extend the useful life of the electrical contacts and to avoid damage to components. These rules are:

- Always make sure power is disconnected when constructing or modifying your experimental circuit. It is possible to damage components or incur an electrical shock if you leave power connected when making changes.
- Never use larger wire as jumpers. #24 wire (used for normal telephone wiring) is an excellent choice for this application. Observe the same limitation with respect to the size of component leads.
- Whenever possible, use ¼ watt resistors in your circuits. ½ watt resistors may be used when necessary; resistors of higher power ratings should never be inserted directly into a breadboard socket.
- Never force component leads into contact holes on the breadboard socket. Doing so can damage the contact and make it useless.
- Do not insert stranded wire or soldered wire into the breadboard socket. If you must have stranded wire (as with an inductor or transformer lead), solder (or use a wire nut to connect) the stranded wire to a short length of solid hookup wire, and insert only the solid wire into the breadboard.

If you follow these basic rules, your breadboard will last indefinitely, and your experimental components will last a long time.

Resistors

Most axial resistors use a pattern of colored stripes to indicate resistance. A 4 band identification is the most commonly used color coding scheme on all resistors. It consists of four colored bands that are painted around the body of the resistor. Resistor values are always coded in ohms (Ω). The color codes are given in the following table in Fig. 1.



Band Color	Digit	Multiplier	Tolerance
Black	0	1	---
Brown	1	10	±1%
Red	2	100	±2%
Orange	3	1,000	±3%
Yellow	4	10,000	±4%
Green	5	100,000	---
Blue	6	1,000,000	---
Violet	7	10,000,000	---
Gray	8	100,000,000	---
White	9	---	---
Gold	---	0.1	±5%
Silver	---	0.01	±10%
None	---	---	±20%

Fig. 1: Color codes of Resistors

- band **A** is first significant figure of component value
- band **B** is the second significant figure
- band **C** is the decimal multiplier
- band **D** if present, indicates tolerance of value in percent (no color means 20%)

For example, a resistor with bands of *yellow, violet, red, and gold* will have first digit 4 (yellow in table below), second digit 7 (violet), followed by 2 (red) zeros: 4,700 ohms. Gold signifies that the tolerance is ±5%, so the real resistance could lie anywhere between 4,465 and 4,935 ohms.

Tight tolerance resistors may have three bands for significant figures rather than two, and/or an additional band indicating temperature coefficient, in units of ppm/K. For large power resistors and potentiometers, the value is usually written out implicitly as "10 kΩ", for instance.

Capacitors:

You will mostly use electrolytic and ceramic capacitors for your experiments.

Electrolytic capacitors

An **electrolytic capacitor** is a type of capacitor that uses an electrolyte, an ionic conducting liquid, as one of its plates, to achieve a larger capacitance per unit volume than other types. They are used in relatively high-current and low-frequency electrical circuits. However, the voltage applied to these capacitors must be polarized; one specified terminal must always have positive potential with respect to the other. These are of two types, axial and radial capacitors as shown in adjacent figure. The arrowed stripe indicates the polarity, with the arrows pointing towards the negative pin.

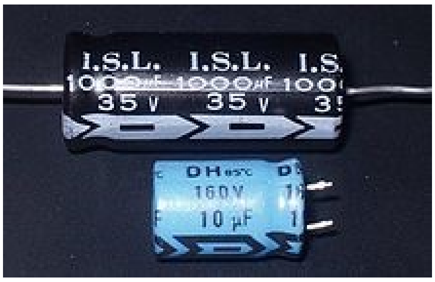


Fig. 2:Axial and Radial Electrolytic capacitors

Warning: connecting electrolytic capacitors in reverse polarity can easily damage or destroy the capacitor. Most large electrolytic capacitors have the voltage, capacitance, temperature ratings, and company name written on them without having any special color coding schemes.

Axial electrolytic capacitors have connections on both ends. These are most frequently used in devices where there is no space for vertically mounted capacitors.

Radial electrolytic capacitors are like axial electrolytic ones, except both pins come out the same end. Usually that end (the "bottom end") is mounted flat against the PCB and the capacitor rises perpendicular to the PCB it is mounted on. This type of capacitor probably accounts for at least 70% of capacitors in consumer electronics.

Ceramic capacitors are generally non-polarized and almost as common as radial electrolytic capacitors. Generally, they use an alphanumeric marking system. The number part is the same as for SMT resistors, except that the value represented is in pF. They may also be written out directly, for instance, 2n2 = 2.2 nF.

Fig. 3: Ceramic capacitors

Diodes:

A standard specification sheet usually has a brief description of the diode. Included in this description is the type of diode, the major area of application, and any special features. Of particular interest is the specific application for which the diode is suited. The manufacturer also provides a drawing of the diode which gives dimension, weight, and, if appropriate, any identification marks. In addition to the above data, the following information is also provided: a static operating table (giving spot values of parameters under fixed conditions), sometimes a characteristic curve (showing how parameters vary over the full operating range), and diode ratings (which are the limiting values of operating conditions outside which could cause diode damage). Manufacturers specify these various diode operating parameters and characteristics with "letter symbols" in accordance with fixed definitions. The following is a list, by letter symbol, of the major electrical characteristics for the rectifier and signal diodes.

RECTIFIER DIODES

DC BLOCKING VOLTAGE [V_R]—the maximum reverse dc voltage that will not cause breakdown.

AVERAGE FORWARD VOLTAGE DROP [$V_{F(AV)}$]—the average forward voltage drop across the rectifier given at a specified forward current and temperature.

AVERAGE RECTIFIER FORWARD CURRENT [$I_{F(AV)}$]—the average rectified forward current at a specified temperature, usually at 60 Hz with a resistive load.

AVERAGE REVERSE CURRENT [$I_{R(AV)}$]—the average reverse current at a specified temperature, usually at 60 Hz.

PEAK SURGE CURRENT [I_{SURGE}]—the peak current specified for a given number of cycles or portion of a cycle.

SIGNAL DIODES

PEAK REVERSE VOLTAGE [PRV]—the maximum reverse voltage that can be applied before reaching the breakdown point. (PRV also applies to the rectifier diode.)

REVERSE CURRENT [I_R]—the small value of direct current that flows when a semiconductor diode has reverse bias.

MAXIMUM FORWARD VOLTAGE DROP AT INDICATED FORWARD CURRENT [$V_F@I_F$]— the maximum forward voltage drop across the diode at the indicated forward current.

REVERSE RECOVERY TIME [t_{rr}]—the maximum time taken for the forward-bias diode to recover its reverse bias.

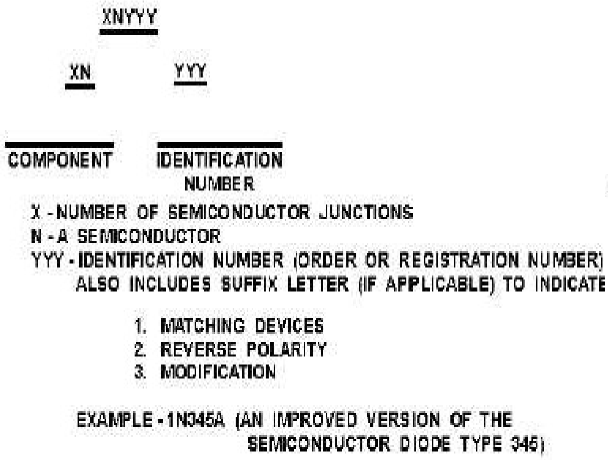
The ratings of a diode (as stated earlier) are the limiting values of operating conditions, which if exceeded could cause damage to a diode by either voltage breakdown or overheating.
The PN junction diodes are generally rated for: MAXIMUM AVERAGE FORWARD CURRENT, PEAK RECURRENT FORWARD CURRENT, MAXIMUM SURGE CURRENT, and PEAK REVERSE VOLTAGE

Maximum average forward current is usually given at a special temperature, usually 25º C, (77º F) and refers to the maximum amount of average current that can be permitted to flow in the forward direction. If this rating is exceeded, structure breakdown can occur.

Peak recurrent forward current is the maximum peak current that can be permitted to flow in the forward direction in the form of recurring pulses.
Maximum surge current is the maximum current permitted to flow in the forward direction in the form of nonrecurring pulses. Current should not equal this value for more than a few milliseconds.

Peak reverse voltage (PRV) is one of the most important ratings. PRV indicates the maximum reverse-bias voltage that may be applied to a diode without causing junction breakdown. All of the above ratings are subject to change with temperature variations. If, for example, the operating temperature is above that stated for the ratings, the ratings must be decreased.

There are many types of diodes varying in size from the size of a pinhead (used in subminiature circuitry) to large 250-ampere diodes (used in high-power circuits). Because there are so many different types of diodes, some system of identification is needed to distinguish one diode from another. This is accomplished with the semiconductor identification system shown in Fig. 4. This system is not only used for diodes but transistors and many other special semiconductor devices as well. As illustrated in this figure, the system uses numbers and letters to identify different types of semiconductor devices. The first number in the system indicates the number of junctions in the semiconductor device and is a number, one less than the number of active elements. Thus 1 designates a diode; 2 designates a transistor (which may be considered as made up of two diodes); and 3 designates a tetrode (a four-element transistor). The letter "N" following the first number indicates a semiconductor. The 2- or 3-digit number following the letter "N" is a serialized identification number. If needed, this number may contain a suffix letter after the last digit. For example, the suffix letter "M" may be used to describe matching pairs of separate semiconductor devices or the letter "R" may be used to indicate reverse polarity. Other letters are used to indicate modified versions of the device which can be substituted for the basic numbered unit. For example, a semiconductor diode designated as type 1N345A signifies a two-element diode (1) of semiconductor material (N) that is an improved version (A) of type 345.



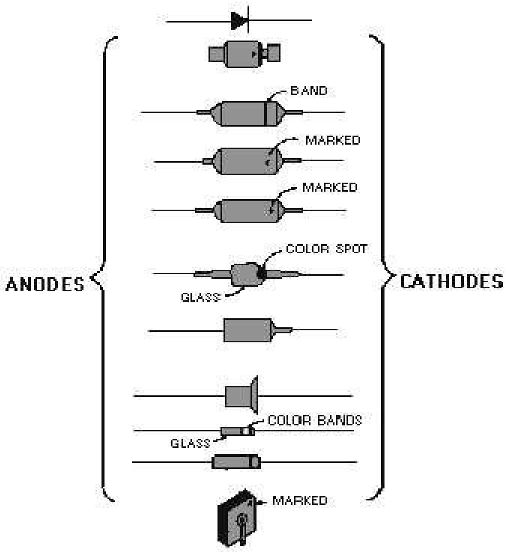


Fig. 4: Identification of Diode **Fig. 5: Identification of Cathode**

When working with different types of diodes, it is also necessary to distinguish one end of the diode from the other (anode from cathode). For this reason, manufacturers generally code the cathode end of the diode with a "k," "+," "cath," a color dot or band, or by an unusual shape (raised edge or taper) as shown in Fig. 5. In some cases, standard color code bands are placed on the cathode end of the diode. This serves two purposes: (1) it identifies the cathode end of the diode, and (2) it also serves to identify the diode by number.

Transistors:
Transistors are identified by a Joint Army-Navy (JAN) designation printed directly on the case of the transistor. If in doubt about a transistor's markings, always replace a transistor with one having identical markings, or consult an equipment or transistor manual to ensure that an identical replacement or substitute is used.

Example:

2	N	130	A
NUMBER OF JUNCTIONS (TRANSISTOR)	SEMICONDUCTOR	IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	FIRST MODIFICATION

There are three main series of transistor codes used:

- **Codes beginning with B (or A), for example BC108, BC478**
  The first letter B is for silicon, A is for germanium (rarely used now). The second letter indicates the type; for example C means low power audio frequency; D means high power audio frequency; F means low power high frequency. The rest of the code identifies the particular transistor. There is no obvious logic to the numbering system. Sometimes a letter is added to the end (eg BC108C) to identify a special version of the main type, for example a higher current gain or a different case style. If a project specifies a higher gain version (BC108C) it must be used, but if the general code is given (BC108) any transistor with that code is suitable.
- **Codes beginning with TIP, for example TIP31A**
  TIP refers to the manufacturer: Texas Instruments Power transistor. The letter at the end identifies versions with different voltage ratings.
- **Codes beginning with 2N, for example 2N3053**
  The initial '2N' identifies the part as a transistor and the rest of the code identifies the particular transistor. There is no obvious logic to the numbering system.

TESTING A TRANSISTOR to determine if it is good or bad can be done with an ohmmeter or transistor tester. PRECAUTIONS should be taken when working with transistors since they are susceptible to damage by electrical overloads, heat, humidity, and radiation. TRANSISTOR LEAD IDENTIFICATION plays an important part in transistor maintenance because before a transistor can be tested or replaced, its leads must be identified. Since there is NO standard method of identifying transistor leads, check some typical lead identification schemes or a transistor manual before attempting to replace a transistor. Identification of leads for some common case styles is shown in Fig. 6.

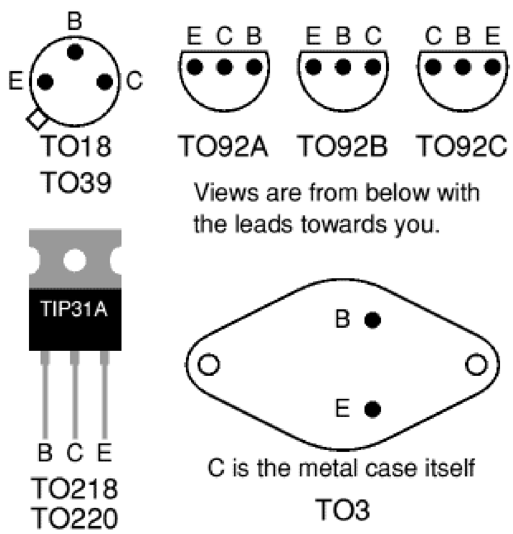


Fig. 6

Testing a transistor

Transistors are basically made up of two *Diodes* connected together back-to-back (Fig. 7). We can use this analogy to determine whether a transistor is of the type PNP or NPN by testing its Resistance between the three different leads, Emitter, Base and Collector.

Testing with a multimeter

Use a multimeter or a simple tester (battery, resistor and LED) to check each pair of leads for conduction. Set a digital multimeter to diode test and an analogue multimeter to a low resistance range.

Test each pair of leads both ways (six tests in total):

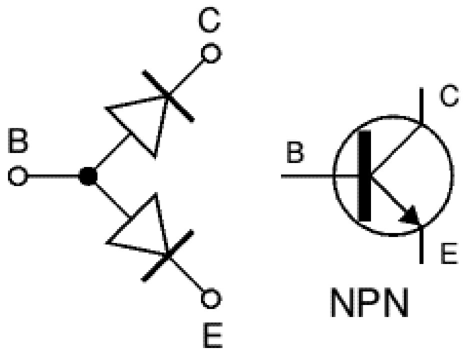


Fig. 7: Testing an NPN transistor

- The **base-emitter (BE)** junction should behave like a diode and conduct one way only.
- The **base-collector (BC)** junction should behave like a diode and conduct one way only.
- The **collector-emitter (CE)** should not conduct either way.

The diagram shows how the junctions behave in an NPN transistor. The diodes are reversed in a PNP transistor but the same test procedure can be used.

Transistor Resistance Values for the PNP and NPN transistor types

Between Transistor Terminals		PNP	NPN
Collector	Emitter	R_{HIGH}	R_{HIGH}
Collector	Base	R_{LOW}	R_{HIGH}
Emitter	Collector	R_{HIGH}	R_{HIGH}
Emitter	Base	R_{LOW}	R_{HIGH}
Base	Collector	R_{HIGH}	R_{LOW}
Base	Emitter	R_{HIGH}	R_{LOW}