

Electricity is generated from the motion of tiny charged atomic particles called electrons and protons. Electrons in different energy levels can jump from one atom to another. These jumps change the overall charge of the atoms. The changes in charge result in electricity.

Electric current is the flow of electric charges. Electric current is measured in amperes (A), or amps. The difference in potential energy from one location to another is called potential difference. This potential difference is known as voltage and is measured in volts (V). Electric charges will always flow from a region of higher potential energy to a region of lower potential energy. A battery is a device that converts chemical energy into electricity. In batteries the potential energy difference is created by the positive and negative terminals.

Ohm's law states that the current (I) in a wire is equal to the voltage (V) divided by the resistance (R).

$$\text{Current (I)} = \text{Voltage (V)} / \text{Resistance (R)}$$

A circuit is a path through which electricity can flow. Charges will flow in a circuit when there is potential difference.

A circuit needs an energy source to push a charge through the circuit.

- A battery creates a potential difference between its negative and positive terminals
- Electric charges are repelled by negative terminal and attracted toward the positive terminal

A load is a device in a circuit that operates by using the electrical energy.

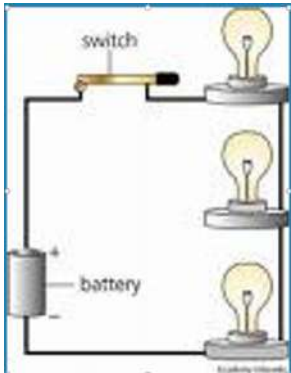
- Examples of loads are light bulbs, bells, radios, motors.

A conductor is a material that allows electrical energy to flow through it easily. Metals make good conductors, so wires from metals are most often the conductors.

A resistor is an object added to a circuit that restrict the flow of electrical energy. Resistors inhibit the flow of electric current by producing a voltage drop when current passes through them. Resistors can be used to produce a desired potential difference. They limit current and cause some electric energy to be given off as heat.

A switch is a device that is used to control the flow of current through a circuit. A switch works by separating, opening or bringing together, closing two conductors attached to the circuit. When a switch is open, the path is broken, so no electricity flows through the circuit. When a switch is closed, it creates a continuous path through which an electric charge can flow.

A series circuit is a circuit that provides only one possible path for the flow of current. In a series circuit, the loads are set up in a series, or one after another, that requires current to flow through one load before passing through the next.



A parallel circuit offers more than one path for the flow of electricity. Each load in a parallel circuit has its own closed circuit pathway to the energy source. Loads in a parallel circuit use the full voltage of the energy source.

