

Electrons meaning

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An electron is a subatomic particle with a negative electrical charge and the smallest mass of any charged particle. Learn about its origin, properties, inter...

Electrons are subatomic particles. Atoms are made of protons, neutrons, and electrons. Of these three particles, the electron has the smallest mass. Here is the definition of the electron, along with its word origin, history, and interesting facts.

An electron is a stable subatomic particle with a negative electrical charge. Unlike protons and neutrons, electrons are not constructed from even smaller components. Each electron carries one unit of negative charge (1.602×10^{-19} coulomb) and has a very small mass as compared with that of a neutron or proton. The mass of an electron is 9.10938×10^{-31} kg. This is about $1/1836$ the mass of a proton.

A common symbol for an electron is e^- . The electron's antiparticle, which carries a positive electric charge, is called a positron or antielectron. A positron is denoted using the symbol e^+ or ν^+ . When an electron and a positron collide, both particles are annihilated and energy is released in the form of gamma rays.

Electrons are found free in nature (free electrons) and bound within atoms. Electrons are responsible for the negatively-charged component of an atom. In an atom, electrons orbit around the positively-charged atomic nucleus.

In solids, electrons are the primary means of conducting current. This is because protons are bound within the nucleus, so they are not as mobile as electrons. In liquids, current carriers are more often ions. Interactions between the electrons of atoms and molecules produce chemical reactions. Chemical bonds form when electrons are shared between atoms.



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