

Common Ions and Their Charges

A mastery of the common ions, their formulas and their charges, is essential to success in Chemistry. You are expected to know all of these ions and be able to use them to create formulas for quizzes and test. You will always be allowed a periodic table, which makes indentifying the ions on the left “automatic.” For tips on learning these ions, see the next page.

From the table:	
Cations	Name
H ⁺	Hydrogen
Li ⁺	Lithium
Na ⁺	Sodium
K ⁺	Potassium
Rb ⁺	Rubidium
Cs ⁺	Cesium
Be ²⁺	Beryllium
Mg ²⁺	Magnesium
Ca ²⁺	Calcium
Ba ²⁺	Barium
Sr ²⁺	Strontium
Al ³⁺	Aluminum
Anions	Name
H ⁻	Hydride
F ⁻	Fluoride
Cl ⁻	Chloride
Br ⁻	Bromide
I ⁻	Iodide
O ²⁻	Oxide
S ²⁻	Sulfide
Se ²⁻	Selenide
N ³⁻	Nitride
P ³⁻	Phosphide
As ³⁻	Arsenide
Type II Cations	Name
Fe ³⁺	Iron(III)
Fe ²⁺	Iron(II)
Cu ²⁺	Copper(II)
Cu ⁺	Copper(I)
Co ³⁺	Cobalt(III)
Co ²⁺	Cobalt(II)
Sn ⁴⁺	Tin(IV)
Sn ²⁺	Tin(II)
Pb ⁴⁺	Lead(IV)
Pb ²⁺	Lead(II)
Hg ²⁺	Mercury(II)

Ions to Memorize	
Cations	Name
Ag ⁺	Silver
Zn ²⁺	Zinc
Hg ₂ ²⁺	Mercury(I)
NH ₄ ⁺	Ammonium
Anions	Name
NO ₂ ⁻	Nitrite
NO ₃ ⁻	Nitrate
SO ₃ ²⁻	Sulfite
SO ₄ ²⁻	Sulfate
HSO ₄ ⁻	Hydrogen sulfate (bisulfate)
OH ⁻	Hydroxide
CN ⁻	Cyanide
PO ₄ ³⁻	Phosphate
HPO ₄ ²⁻	Hydrogen phosphate
H ₂ PO ₄ ⁻	Dihydrogen phosphate
NCS ⁻	Thiocyanate
CO ₃ ²⁻	Carbonate
HCO ₃ ⁻	Hydrogen carbonate (bicarbonate)
ClO ⁻	Hypochlorite
ClO ₂ ⁻	Chlorite
ClO ₃ ⁻	Chlorate
ClO ₄ ⁻	Perchlorate
BrO ⁻	Hypobromite
BrO ₂ ⁻	Bromite
BrO ₃ ⁻	Bromate
BrO ₄ ⁻	Perbromate
IO ⁻	Hypoiodite
IO ₂ ⁻	Iodite
IO ₃ ⁻	Iodate
IO ₄ ⁻	Periodate
C ₂ H ₃ O ₂ ⁻	Acetate
MnO ₄ ⁻	Permanganate
Cr ₂ O ₇ ²⁻	Dichromate
CrO ₄ ²⁻	Chromate
O ₂ ²⁻	Peroxide
C ₂ O ₄ ²⁻	Oxalate
NH ₂ ⁻	Amide
BO ₃ ³⁻	Borate
S ₂ O ₃ ²⁻	Thiosulfate

Tips for Learning the Ions

“From the Table”

These are ions can be organized into two groups.

1. Their place on the table suggests the charge on the ion, since the neutral atom gains or loses a predictable number of electrons in order to obtain a noble gas configuration. This was a focus in first year chemistry, so if you are unsure what this means, get help BEFORE the start of the year.
 - a. All Group 1 Elements (alkali metals) lose one electron to form an ion with a 1+ charge
 - b. All Group 2 Elements (alkaline earth metals) lose two electrons to form an ion with a 2+ charge
 - c. Group 13 metals like aluminum lose three electrons to form an ion with a 3+ charge
 - d. All Group 17 Elements (halogens) gain one electron to form an ion with a 1- charge
 - e. All Group 16 nonmetals gain two electrons to form an ion with a 2- charge
 - f. All Group 15 nonmetals gain three electrons to form an ion with a 3- charge

Notice that cations keep their name (sodium ion, calcium ion) while anions get an “-ide” ending (chloride ion, oxide ion).

2. Metals that can form more than one ion will have their positive charge denoted by a roman numeral in parenthesis immediately next to the name of the

Polyatomic Anions

Most of the work on memorization occurs with these ions, but there are a number of patterns that can greatly reduce the amount of memorizing that one must do.

1. “ate” anions have one more oxygen than the “ite” ion, but the same charge. If you memorize the “ate” ions, then you should be able to derive the formula for the “ite” ion and vice-versa.
 - a. sulfate is SO_4^{2-} , so sulfite has the same charge but one less oxygen (SO_3^{2-})
 - b. nitrate is NO_3^- , so nitrite has the same charge but one less oxygen (NO_2^-)
2. If you know that a sulfate ion is SO_4^{2-} then to get the formula for hydrogen sulfate ion, you add a hydrogen ion to the front of the formula. Since a hydrogen ion has a 1+ charge, the net charge on the new ion is less negative by one.
 - a. Example:
 PO_4^{3-} → HPO_4^{2-} → H_2PO_4^-
phosphate hydrogen phosphate dihydrogen phosphate
3. Learn the hypochlorite → chlorite → chlorate → perchlorate series, and you also know the series containing iodite/iodate as well as bromite/bromate.
 - a. The relationship between the “ite” and “ate” ion is predictable, as always. Learn one and you know the other.
 - b. The prefix “hypo” means “under” or “too little” (think “hypodermic”, “hypothermic” or “hypoglycemia”)
 - i. Hypochlorite is “under” chlorite, meaning it has one less oxygen
 - c. The prefix “hyper” means “above” or “too much” (think “hyperkinetic”)
 - i. the prefix “per” is derived from “hyper” so perchlorate (hyperchlorate) has one more oxygen than chlorate.
 - d. Notice how this sequence increases in oxygen while retaining the same charge:

