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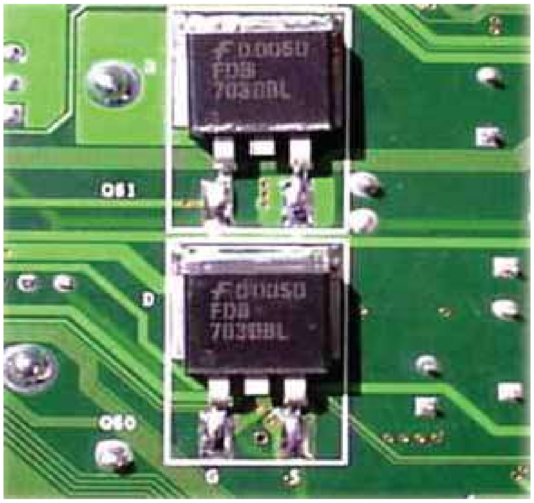
Transistors



INTRODUCTION

When a third doped element is added to a crystal diode in such a way that two *pn* junctions are formed, the resulting device is known as a *transistor*. The transistor—an entirely new type of electronic device—is capable of achieving amplification of weak signals in a fashion comparable and often superior to that realised by vacuum tubes. Transistors are far smaller than vacuum tubes, have no filament and hence need no heating power and may be operated in any position. They are mechanically strong, have practically unlimited life and can do some jobs better than vacuum tubes.

Invented in 1948 by J. Bardeen and W.H. Brattain of Bell Telephone Laboratories, U.S.A.; transistor has now become the heart of most electronic applications. Though transistor is only slightly more than 58 years old, yet it is fast replacing vacuum tubes in almost all applications. In this chapter, we shall focus our attention on the various aspects of transistors and their increasing applications in the fast developing electronics industry.

8.1 Transistor

A **transistor** *consists of two pn junctions formed by* ***sandwiching either p-type or n-type semiconductor between a pair of opposite types.* Accordingly ; there are two types of transistors, namely;

(*i*) *n-p-n* transistor (*ii*) *p-n-p* transistor

An *n-p-n* transistor is composed of two *n*-type semiconductors separated by a thin section of *p*-type as shown in Fig. 8.1 (*i*). However, a *p-n-p* transistor is formed by two *p*-sections separated by a thin section of *n*-type as shown in Fig. 8.1 (*ii*).

Fig. 8.1

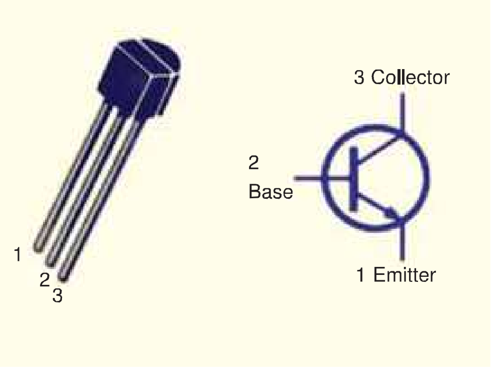
In each type of transistor, the following points may be noted :

(*i*) These are two *pn* junctions. Therefore, a transistor may be regarded as a combination of two diodes connected back to back.

(*ii*) There are three terminals, one taken from each type of semiconductor.

(*iii*) The middle section is a very thin layer. This is the most important factor in the function of a transistor.

Origin of the name "Transistor". When new devices are invented, scientists often try to devise a name that will appropriately describe the device. A transistor has two *pn* junctions. As discussed later, one junction is forward biased and the other is reverse biased. The forward biased junction has a low resistance path whereas a reverse biased junction has a high resistance path. The weak signal is introduced in the low resistance circuit and output is taken from the high resistance circuit. Therefore, a transistor *transfers* a signal from a low resistance to high resistance. The prefix 'trans' means the signal transfer property of the device while 'istor' classifies it as a solid element in the same general family with resistors.



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* In practice, these three blocks *p, n, p* are grown out of the same crystal by adding corresponding impurities in turn.

8.2 Naming the Transistor Terminals

A transistor (*pnp* or *npn*) has three sections of doped semiconductors. The section on one side is the *emitter* and the section on the opposite side is the *collector*. The middle section is called the *base* and forms two junctions between the emitter and collector.

***(i)* Emitter.** The section on one side that supplies charge carriers (electrons or holes) is called the *emitter*. *The emitter is always forward biased w.r.t. base* so that it can supply a large number of *majority carriers. In Fig. 8.2 (*i*), the emitter (*p*-type) of *pnp* transistor is forward biased and supplies hole charges to its junction with the base. Similarly, in Fig. 8.2 (*ii*), the emitter (*n*-type) of *npn* transistor has a forward bias and supplies free electrons to its junction with the base.

***(ii)* Collector.** The section on the other side that collects the charges is called the *collector*. *The collector is always reverse biased.* Its function is to remove charges from its junction with the base. In Fig. 8.2 (*i*), the collector (*p*-type) of *pnp* transistor has a reverse bias and receives hole charges that flow in the output circuit. Similarly, in Fig. 8.2 (*ii*), the collector (*n*-type) of *npn* transistor has reverse bias and receives electrons.

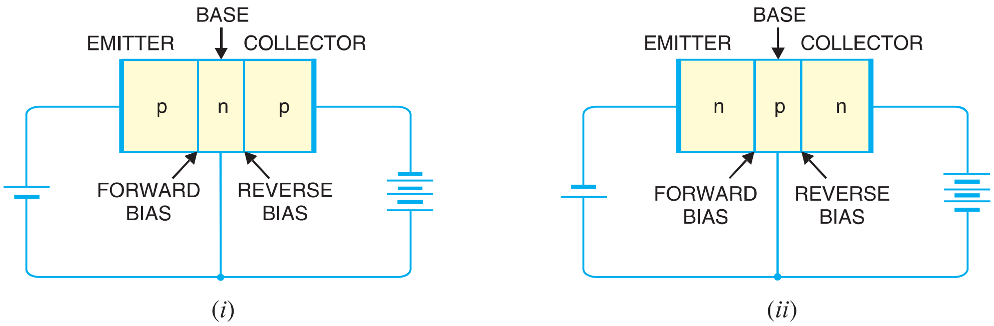

Fig. 8.2

***(iii)* Base.** The middle section which forms two *pn*-junctions between the emitter and collector is called the *base*. The base-emitter junction is forward biased, allowing low resistance for the emitter circuit. The base-collector junction is reverse biased and provides high resistance in the collector circuit.

8.3 Some Facts about the Transistor

Before discussing transistor action, it is important that the reader may keep in mind the following facts about the transistor :

(i) The transistor has three regions, namely ; *emitter, base* and *collector*. The base is much thinner than the emitter while **collector is wider than both as shown in Fig. 8.3. However, for the sake of convenience, it is customary to show emitter and collector to be of equal size.

(ii) The emitter is heavily doped so that it can inject a large number of charge carriers (electrons or holes) into the base. The base is lightly doped and very thin ; it passes most of the emitter injected charge carriers to the collector. The collector is moderately doped.

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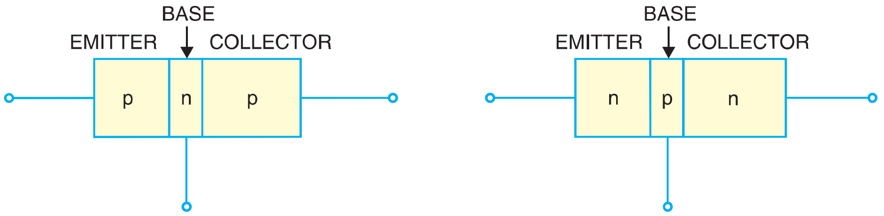
* Holes if emitter is *p*-type and electrons if the emitter is *n*-type.

** During transistor operation, much heat is produced at the collector junction. The collector is made larger to dissipate the heat.



(*i*) (*ii*)

Fig. 8.3

(*iii*) The transistor has two *pn* junctions *i.e.* it is like two diodes. The junction between emitter and base may be called *emitter-base diode* or simply the *emitter diode*. The junction between the base and collector may be called *collector-base diode* or simply *collector diode*.

(*iv*) The emitter diode is always forward biased whereas collector diode is always reverse biased.

(*v*) The resistance of emitter diode (forward biased) is very small as compared to collector diode (reverse biased). Therefore, forward bias applied to the emitter diode is generally very small whereas reverse bias on the collector diode is much higher.

8.4 Transistor Action

The emitter-base junction of a transistor is forward biased whereas collector-base junction is reverse biased. If for a moment, we ignore the presence of emitter-base junction, then *practically** no current would flow in the collector circuit because of the reverse bias. However, if the emitter-base junction is also present, then forward bias on it causes the emitter current to flow. It is seen that this emitter current almost entirely flows in the collector circuit. Therefore, the current in the collector circuit depends upon the emitter current. If the emitter current is zero, then collector current is nearly zero. However, if the emitter current is 1mA, then collector current is also about 1mA. This is precisely what happens in a transistor. We shall now discuss this transistor action for *npn* and *pnp* transistors.

(*i*) Working of npn transistor. Fig. 8.4 shows the *npn* transistor with forward bias to emitter-base junction and reverse bias to collector-base junction. The forward bias causes the electrons in the *n*-type emitter to flow towards the base. This constitutes the emitter current I_E. As these electrons flow through the *p*-type base, they tend to combine with holes. As the base is lightly doped and very thin, therefore, only a few electrons (less than 5%) combine with holes to constitute base** current I_B. The remainder (***more than 95%) cross over into the collector region to constitute collector current I_C. In this way, almost the entire emitter current flows in the collector circuit. It is clear that emitter current is the sum of collector and base currents *i.e.*

$$I_E = I_B + I_C$$

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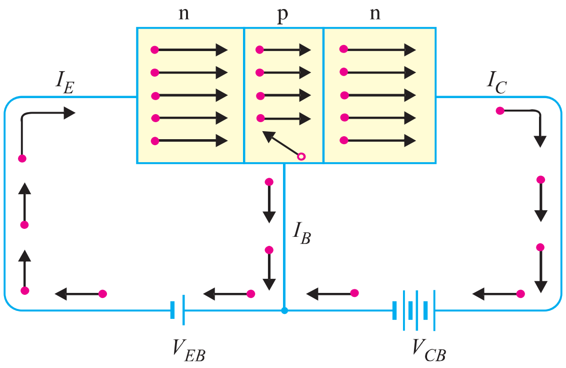
* In actual practice, a very little current (a few μA) would flow in the collector circuit. This is called collector cut off current and is due to minority carriers.

** The electrons which combine with holes become valence electrons. Then as valence electrons, they flow down through holes and into the external base lead. This constitutes base current I_B.

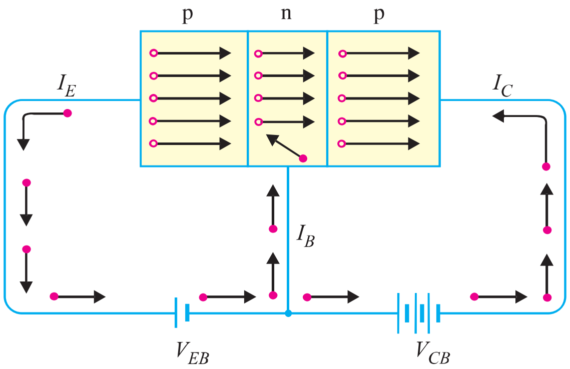
*** The reasons that most of the electrons from emitter continue their journey through the base to collector to form collector current are : (*i*) The base is lightly doped and very thin. Therefore, there are a few holes which find enough time to combine with electrons. (*ii*) The reverse bias on collector is quite high and exerts attractive forces on these electrons.



Basic connection of *npn* transistor

Fig. 8.4

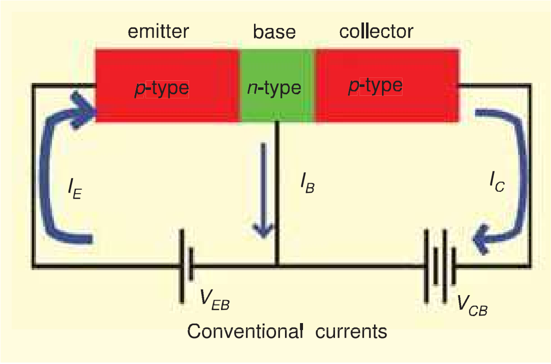
(*ii*) Working of pnp transistor. Fig. 8.5 shows the basic connection of a *pnp* transistor. The forward bias causes the holes in the *p*-type emitter to flow towards the base. This constitutes the emitter current I_E. As these holes cross into *n*-type base, they tend to combine with the electrons. As the base is lightly doped and very thin, therefore, only a few holes (less than 5%) combine with the electrons. The remainder (more than 95%) cross into the collector region to constitute collector current I_C. In this way, almost the entire emitter current flows in the collector circuit. It may be noted that current conduction within *pnp* transistor is by holes. However, in the external connecting wires, the current is still by electrons.



Basic connection of *pnp* transistor

Fig. 8.5

Importance of transistor action. The input circuit (*i.e.* emitter-base junction) has low resistance because of forward bias whereas output circuit (*i.e.* collector-base junction) has high resistance due to reverse bias. As we have seen, the input emitter current almost entirely flows in the collector circuit. Therefore, a transistor transfers the input signal current from a low-resistance circuit to a high-resistance circuit. This is the key factor responsible for

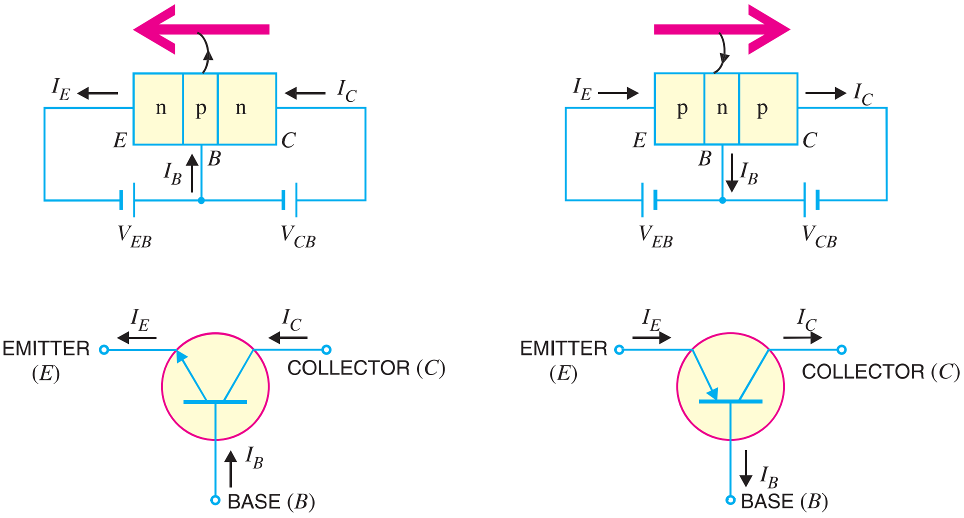


the amplifying capability of the transistor. We shall discuss the amplifying property of transistor later in this chapter.

Note. There are two basic transistor types : the **bipolar junction transistor** (*BJT*) and **field-effect transistor** (*FET*). As we shall see, these two transistor types differ in both their operating characteristics and their internal construction. **Note that when we use the term transistor, it means bipolar junction transistor (*BJT*).** The term comes from the fact that in a bipolar transistor, there are *two* types of charge carriers (*viz.* electrons and holes) that play part in conductions. Note that bi means two and polar refers to polarities. The field-effect transistor is simply referred to as *FET*.

8.5 Transistor Symbols

In the earlier diagrams, the transistors have been shown in diagrammatic form. However, for the sake of convenience, the transistors are represented by schematic diagrams. The symbols used for *npn* and *pnp* transistors are shown in Fig. 8.6.



(*i*) (*ii*)

Fig. 8.6

Note that emitter is shown by an arrow which indicates the direction of conventional current flow with forward bias. For *npn* connection, it is clear that conventional current flows out of the emitter as indicated by the outgoing arrow in Fig. 8.6 (*i*). Similarly, for *pnp* connection, the conventional current flows into the emitter as indicated by inward arrow in Fig. 8.6 (*ii*).

8.6 Transistor Circuit as an Amplifier

A transistor raises the strength of a weak signal and thus acts as an amplifier. Fig. 8.7 shows the basic circuit of a transistor amplifier. The weak signal is applied between emitter-base junction and output is taken across the load R_C connected in the collector circuit. In order to achieve faithful amplification, the input circuit should always remain forward biased. To do so, a d.c. voltage V_{EE} is applied in the input circuit in addition to the signal as

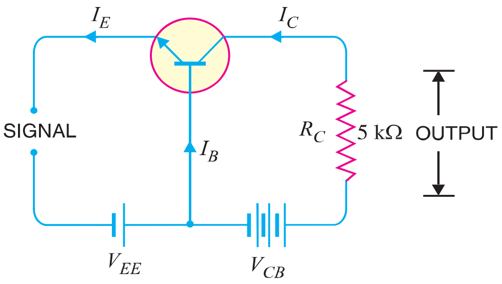


Fig. 8.7

shown. This d.c. voltage is known as bias voltage and its magnitude is such that it always keeps the input circuit forward biased regardless of the polarity of the signal.

As the input circuit has low resistance, therefore, a small change in signal voltage causes an appreciable change in emitter current. This causes almost the *same change in collector current due to transistor action. The collector current flowing through a high load resistance R_C produces a large voltage across it. Thus, a weak signal applied in the input circuit appears in the amplified form in the collector circuit. It is in this way that a transistor acts as an amplifier.

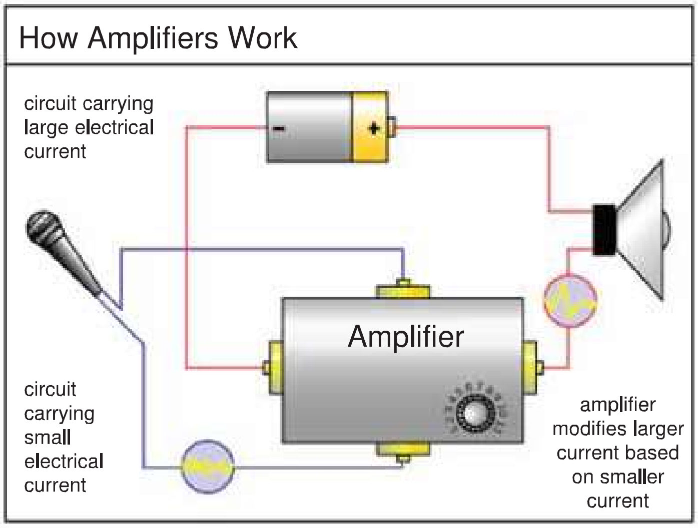


Illustration. The action of a transistor as an amplifier can be made more illustrative if we consider typical circuit values. Suppose collector load resistance R_C = 5 kΩ. Let us further assume that a change of 0.1V in signal voltage produces a change of 1 mA in emitter current. Obviously, the change in collector current would also be approximately 1 mA. This collector current flowing through collector load R_C would produce a voltage = 5 kΩ × 1 mA = 5 V. Thus, a change of 0.1 V in the signal has caused a change of 5 V in the output circuit. In other words, the transistor has been able to raise the voltage level of the signal from 0.1 V to 5 V *i.e.* voltage amplification is 50.

Example 8.1. *A common base transistor amplifier has an input resistance of 20 Ω and output resistance of 100 kΩ. The collector load is 1 kΩ. If a signal of 500 mV is applied between emitter and base, find the voltage amplification. Assume* α_{ac} *to be nearly one.*

Solution. **Fig. 8.8 shows the conditions of the problem. Note that output resistance is very high as compared to input resistance. This is not surprising because input junction (base to emitter) of the transistor is forward biased while the output junction (base to collector) is reverse biased.

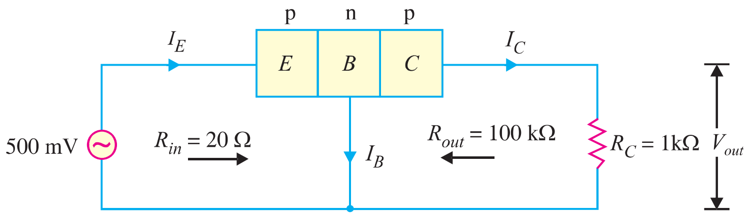


Fig. 8.8

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* The reason is as follows. The collector-base junction is reverse biased and has a very high resistance of the order of mega ohms. Thus collector-base voltage has little effect on the collector current. This means that a large resistance R_C can be inserted in series with collector without disturbing the collector current relation to the emitter current *viz.* $I_C = \alpha I_E + I_{CBO}$. Therefore, collector current variations caused by a small base-emitter voltage fluctuations result in voltage changes in R_C that are quite high—often hundreds of times larger than the emitter-base voltage.

** The d.c. biasing is omitted in the figure because our interest is limited to amplification.

Input current, $I_E = \frac{\text{Signal}}{R_{in}} = \frac{500 \text{ mV}}{20\ \Omega} = 25$ mA. Since α_{ac} is nearly 1, output current, $I_C = I_E =$ 25 mA.

$$\text{Output voltage, } V_{out} = I_C R_C = 25 \text{ mA} \times 1 \text{ k}\Omega = 25 \text{ V}$$

$$\therefore \quad \text{Voltage amplification, } A_v = \frac{V_{out}}{\text{signal}} = \frac{25\ V}{500\ mV} = \mathbf{50}$$

Comments. The reader may note that basic amplifying action is produced by transferring a current from a *low-resistance* to a *high-resistance* circuit. Consequently, the name transistor is given to the device by combining the two terms given in magenta letters below :

Transfer + Res**istor** ⟶ **Transistor**

8.7 Transistor Connections

There are three leads in a transistor *viz.*, emitter, base and collector terminals. However, when a transistor is to be connected in a circuit, we require four terminals; two for the input and two for the output. This difficulty is overcome by making one terminal of the transistor common to both input and output terminals. The input is fed between this common terminal and one of the other two terminals. The output is obtained between the common terminal and the remaining terminal. Accordingly; a transistor can be connected in a circuit in the following three ways :

(*i*) common base connection (*ii*) common emitter connection

(*iii*) common collector connection

Each circuit connection has specific advantages and disadvantages. It may be noted here that regardless of circuit connection, the emitter is always biased in the forward direction, while the collector always has a reverse bias.

8.8 Common Base Connection

In this circuit arrangement, input is applied between emitter and base and output is taken from collector and base. Here, base of the transistor is common to both input and output circuits and hence the name common base connection. In Fig. 8.9 (*i*), a common base *npn* transistor circuit is shown whereas Fig. 8.9 (*ii*) shows the common base *pnp* transistor circuit.

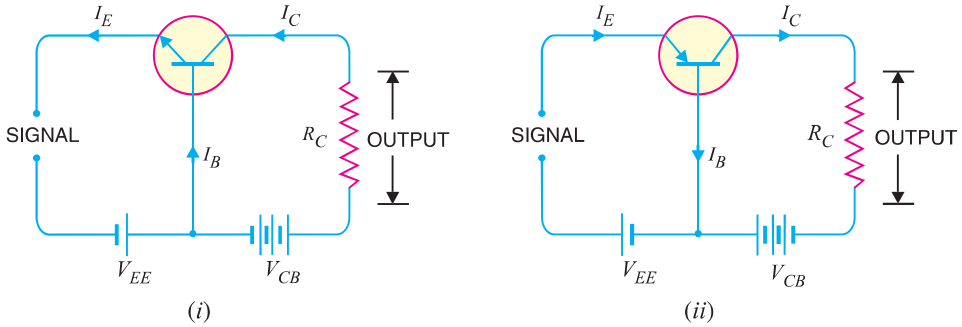

Fig. 8.9

1. Current amplification factor (α). It is the ratio of output current to input current. In a common base connection, the input current is the emitter current I_E and output current is the collector current I_C.

The ratio of change in collector current to the change in emitter current at constant collector-base voltage V_{CB} is known as **current amplification factor** *i.e.*

$$^{*}\alpha = \frac{\Delta I_C}{\Delta I_E} \text{ at constant } V_{CB}$$

It is clear that current amplification factor is less than **unity. This value can be increased (but not more than unity) by decreasing the base current. This is achieved by making the base thin and doping it lightly. Practical values of α in commercial transistors range from 0.9 to 0.99.

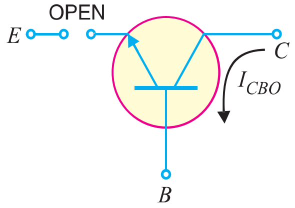

Fig. 8.10

2. Expression for collector current. The whole of emitter current does not reach the collector. It is because a small percentage of it, as a result of electron-hole combinations occurring in base area, gives rise to base current. Moreover, as the collector-base junction is reverse biased, therefore, some leakage current flows due to minority carriers. It follows, therefore, that total collector current consists of :

(*i*) That part of emitter current which reaches the collector terminal *i.e.* ***αI_E.

(*ii*) The leakage current $I_{leakage}$. This current is due to the movement of minority carriers across base-collector junction on account of it being reverse biased. This is generally much smaller than αI_E.

$$\therefore \qquad \text{Total collector current, } I_C = \alpha I_E + I_{leakage}$$

It is clear that if $I_E = 0$ (*i.e.*, emitter circuit is open), a small leakage current still flows in the collector circuit. This $I_{leakage}$ is abbreviated as I_{CBO}, meaning collector-base current with emitter open. The I_{CBO} is indicated in Fig. 8.10.

$$\therefore \qquad I_C = \alpha I_E + I_{CBO} \qquad \text{...}(i)$$

$$\text{Now} \qquad I_E = I_C + I_B$$

$$\therefore \qquad I_C = \alpha (I_C + I_B) + I_{CBO}$$

$$\text{or} \qquad I_C (1 - \alpha) = \alpha I_B + I_{CBO}$$

$$\text{or} \qquad I_C = \frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha} I_B + \frac{I_{CBO}}{1-\alpha} \qquad \text{...}(ii)$$

Relation (*i*) or (*ii*) can be used to find I_C. It is further clear from these relations that the collector current of a transistor can be controlled by either the emitter or base current.

Fig. 8.11 shows the concept of I_{CBO}. In *CB* configuration, a small collector current flows even when the emitter current is zero. This is the leakage collector current (*i.e.* the collector current when emitter is open) and is denoted by I_{CBO}. When the emitter voltage V_{EE} is also applied, the various currents are as shown in Fig. 8.11 (*ii*).

Note. Owing to improved construction techniques, the magnitude of I_{CBO} for general-purpose and low-powered transistors (especially silicon transistors) is usually very small and may be neglected in calculations. However, for high power applications, it will appear in microampere range. Further, I_{CBO} is very much temperature dependent; it increases rapidly with the increase in temperature. Therefore, at higher temperatures, I_{CBO} plays an important role and must be taken care of in calculations.

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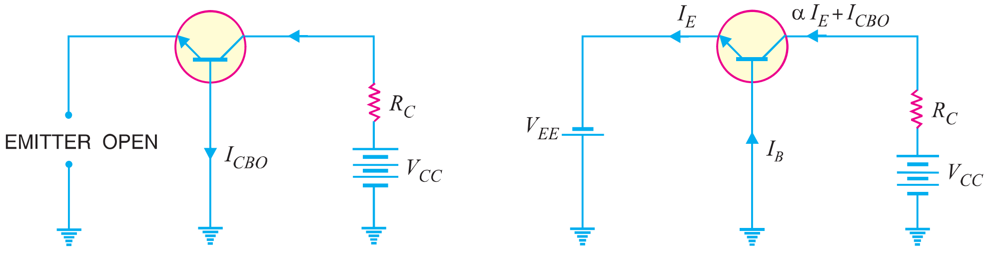
* If only d.c. values are considered, then $\alpha = I_C/I_E$.

** At first sight, it might seem that since there is no current gain, no voltage or power amplification could be possible with this arrangement. However, it may be recalled that output circuit resistance is much higher than the input circuit resistance. Therefore, it does give rise to voltage and power gain.

*** $$\alpha = \frac{I_C}{I_E} \qquad \therefore \quad I_C = \alpha I_E$$

In other words, αI_E part of emitter current reaches the collector terminal.



(i) (ii)

Fig. 8.11

Example 8.2. *In a common base connection,* $I_E = 1\text{mA}$, $I_C = 0.95\text{mA}$. *Calculate the value of* I_B.

Solution. Using the relation,

$$I_E = I_B + I_C$$

or

$$1 = I_B + 0.95$$

$$\therefore \quad I_B = 1 - 0.95 = \mathbf{0.05\ mA}$$

Example 8.3. *In a common base connection, current amplification factor is 0.9. If the emitter current is 1mA, determine the value of base current.*

Solution. Here, $\alpha = 0.9, \quad I_E = 1\text{ mA}$

Now

$$\alpha = \frac{I_C}{I_E}$$

or

$$I_C = \alpha I_E = 0.9 \times 1 = 0.9\text{ mA}$$

Also

$$I_E = I_B + I_C$$

$\therefore$ Base current, $I_B = I_E - I_C = 1 - 0.9 = \mathbf{0.1\ mA}$

Example 8.4. *In a common base connection,* $I_C = 0.95$ *mA and* $I_B = 0.05$ *mA. Find the value of* α.

Solution. We know $I_E = I_B + I_C = 0.05 + 0.95 = 1\text{ mA}$

$\therefore$ Current amplification factor,

$$\alpha = \frac{I_C}{I_E} = \frac{0.95}{1} = \mathbf{0.95}$$

Example 8.5. *In a common base connection, the emitter current is 1mA. If the emitter circuit is open, the collector current is 50 µA. Find the total collector current. Given that* $\alpha = 0.92$.

Solution. Here, $I_E = 1\text{ mA}, \alpha = 0.92, \quad I_{CBO} = 50\ \mu\text{A}$

$\therefore$ Total collector current,

$$I_C = \alpha I_E + I_{CBO} = 0.92 \times 1 + 50 \times 10^{-3}$$

$$= 0.92 + 0.05 = \mathbf{0.97\ mA}$$

Example 8.6. *In a common base connection,* $\alpha = 0.95$. *The voltage drop across 2 kΩ resistance which is connected in the collector is 2V. Find the base current.*

Solution. Fig. 8.12 shows the required common base connection. The voltage drop across R_C (= 2 kΩ) is 2V.

$$\therefore \quad I_C = 2\text{ V}/2\text{ k}\Omega = 1\text{ mA}$$

Now

$$\alpha = I_C/I_E$$

$$\therefore \qquad I_E = \frac{I_C}{\alpha} = \frac{1}{0.95} = 1.05 \text{ mA}$$

$$\text{Using the relation, } I_E = I_B + I_C$$

$$\therefore \qquad I_B = I_E - I_C = 1.05 - 1$$

$$= \mathbf{0.05\ mA}$$

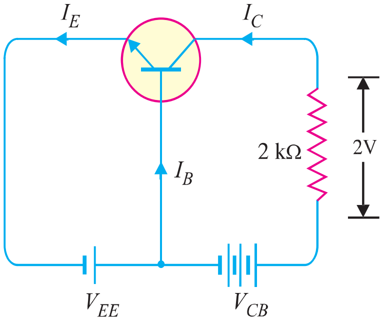


Fig. 8.12

Example 8.7. *For the common base circuit shown in Fig. 8.13, determine I_C and V_{CB}. Assume the transistor to be of silicon.*

Solution. Since the transistor is of silicon, $V_{BE} = 0.7\text{V}$. Applying Kirchhoff's voltage law to the emitter-side loop, we get,

$$V_{EE} = I_E R_E + V_{BE}$$

$$\text{or} \qquad I_E = \frac{V_{EE} - V_{BE}}{R_E}$$

$$= \frac{8V - 0.7V}{1.5 \text{ k}\Omega} = 4.87 \text{ mA}$$

$$\therefore \qquad I_C \simeq I_E = \mathbf{4.87\ mA}$$

Applying Kirchhoff's voltage law to the collector-side loop, we have,

$$V_{CC} = I_C R_C + V_{CB}$$

$$\therefore \qquad V_{CB} = V_{CC} - I_C R_C$$

$$= 18 \text{ V} - 4.87 \text{ mA} \times 1.2 \text{ k}\Omega = \mathbf{12.16\ V}$$

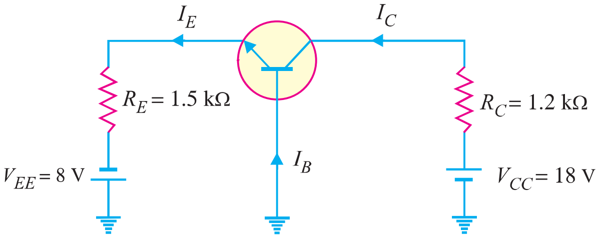


Fig. 8.13

8.9 Characteristics of Common Base Connection

The complete electrical behaviour of a transistor can be described by stating the interrelation of the various currents and voltages. These relationships can be conveniently displayed graphically and the curves thus obtained are known as the characteristics of transistor. The most important characteristics of common base connection are *input characteristics* and *output characteristics*.

1. Input characteristic. It is the curve between emitter current I_E and emitter-base voltage V_{EB} at constant collector-base voltage V_{CB}. The emitter current is generally taken along *y*-axis and emitter-base voltage along *x*-axis. Fig. 8.14 shows the input characteristics of a typical transistor in *CB* arrangement. The following points may be noted from these characteristics :

(*i*) The emitter current I_E increases rapidly with small increase in emitter-base voltage V_{EB}. It means that input resistance is very small.

(*ii*) The emitter current is almost independent of collector-base voltage V_{CB}. This leads to the conclusion that emitter current (and hence collector current) is almost independent of collector voltage.

Input resistance. It is the ratio of change in emitter-base voltage (ΔV_{EB}) to the resulting

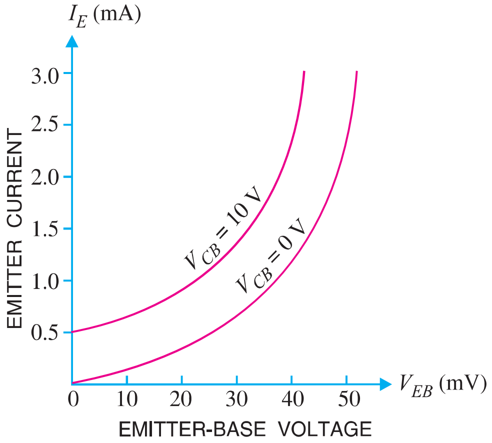


Fig. 8.14

change in emitter current (ΔI_E) at constant collector-base voltage (V_{CB}) *i.e.*

$$\text{Input resistance, } r_i = \frac{\Delta V_{BE}}{\Delta I_E} \quad \text{at constant } V_{CB}$$

In fact, input resistance is the opposition offered to the signal current. As a very small V_{EB} is sufficient to produce a large flow of emitter current I_E, therefore, input resistance is quite small, of the order of a few ohms.

2. Output characteristic. It is the curve between collector current I_C and collector-base voltage V_{CB} at *constant emitter current I_E. Generally, collector current is taken along *y*-axis and collector-base voltage along *x*-axis. Fig. 8.15 shows the output characteristics of a typical transistor in *CB* arrangement.

The following points may be noted from the characteristics :

(*i*) The collector current I_C varies with V_{CB} only at very low voltages (< 1V). The transistor is *never* operated in this region.

(*ii*) When the value of V_{CB} is raised above 1 – 2 V, the collector current becomes constant as indicated by straight horizontal curves. It means that now I_C is independent of V_{CB} and depends upon I_E only. This is consistent with the theory that the emitter current flows *almost* entirely to the collector terminal. The transistor is *always* operated in this region.

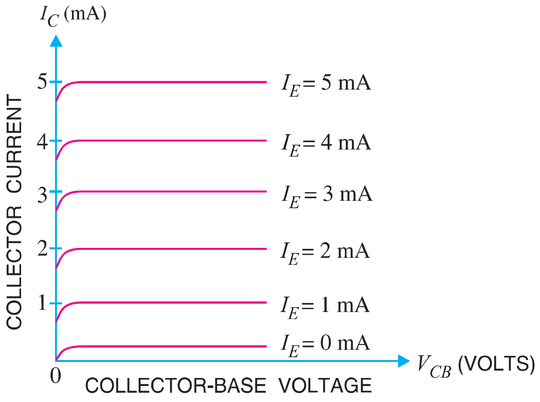


Fig. 8.15

(*iii*) A very large change in collector-base voltage produces only a tiny change in collector current. This means that output resistance is very high.

Output resistance. It is the ratio of change in collector-base voltage (ΔV_{CB}) to the resulting change in collector current (ΔI_C) at constant emitter current *i.e.*

$$\text{Output resistance, } r_o = \frac{\Delta V_{CB}}{\Delta I_C} \quad \text{at constant } I_E$$

The output resistance of *CB* circuit is very high, of the order of several tens of kilo-ohms. This is not surprising because the collector current changes very slightly with the change in V_{CB}.

8.10 Common Emitter Connection

In this circuit arrangement, input is applied between base and emitter and output is taken from the collector and emitter. Here, emitter of the transistor is common to both input and output circuits and hence the name common emitter connection. Fig. 8.16 (*i*) shows common emitter *npn* transistor circuit whereas Fig. 8.16 (*ii*) shows common emitter *pnp* transistor circuit.

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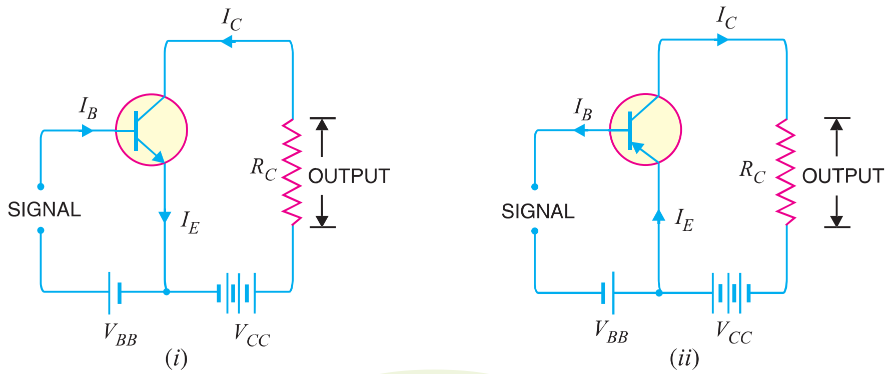
* I_E has to be kept constant because any change in I_E will produce corresponding change in I_C. Here, we are interested to see how V_{CB} influences I_C.



(*i*) (*ii*)

Fig. 8.16

1. Base current amplification factor (β). In common emitter connection, input current is I_B and output current is I_C.

The ratio of change in collector current (ΔI_C) *to the change in base current* (ΔI_B) *is known as* **base current amplification factor** *i.e.*

$$\beta^* = \frac{\Delta I_C}{\Delta I_B}$$

In almost any transistor, less than 5% of emitter current flows as the base current. Therefore, the value of β is generally greater than 20. Usually, its value ranges from 20 to 500. This type of connection is frequently used as it gives appreciable current gain as well as voltage gain.

Relation between β and α. A simple relation exists between β and α. This can be derived as follows :

$$\beta = \frac{\Delta I_C}{\Delta I_B} \qquad ...(i)$$

$$\alpha = \frac{\Delta I_C}{\Delta I_E} \qquad ...(ii)$$

Now $\quad I_E = I_B + I_C$

or $\quad \Delta I_E = \Delta I_B + \Delta I_C$

or $\quad \Delta I_B = \Delta I_E - \Delta I_C$

Substituting the value of ΔI_B in exp. (*i*), we get,

$$\beta = \frac{\Delta I_C}{\Delta I_E - \Delta I_C} \qquad ...(iii)$$

Dividing the numerator and denominator of R.H.S. of exp. (*iii*) by ΔI_E, we get,

$$\beta = \frac{\Delta I_C / \Delta I_E}{\frac{\Delta I_E}{\Delta I_E} - \frac{\Delta I_C}{\Delta I_E}} = \frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha} \qquad \left[\because \quad \alpha = \frac{\Delta I_C}{\Delta I_E}\right]$$

$$\therefore \quad \beta = \frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha}$$

It is clear that as α approaches unity, β approaches infinity. In other words, the current gain in common emitter connection is very high. It is due to this reason that this circuit arrangement is used in about 90 to 95 percent of all transistor applications.

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* If d.c. values are considered, $\beta = I_C / I_B$.

2. Expression for collector current. In common emitter circuit, I_B is the input current and I_C is the output current.

We know
$$I_E = I_B + I_C \qquad \text{...}(i)$$

and
$$I_C = \alpha I_E + I_{CBO} \qquad \text{...}(ii)$$

From exp. (*ii*), we get,
$$I_C = \alpha I_E + I_{CBO} = \alpha (I_B + I_C) + I_{CBO}$$

or
$$I_C (1 - \alpha) = \alpha I_B + I_{CBO}$$

or
$$I_C = \frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha} I_B + \frac{1}{1-\alpha} I_{CBO} \qquad \text{...}(iii)$$

From exp. (*iii*), it is apparent that if $I_B = 0$ (*i.e.* base circuit is open), the collector current will be the current to the emitter. This is abbreviated as I_{CEO}, meaning collector-emitter current with base open.

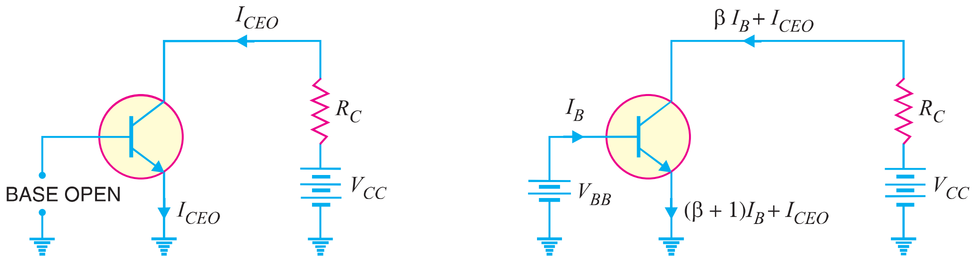
$$\therefore \quad I_{CEO} = \frac{1}{1-\alpha} I_{CBO}$$

Substituting the value of $\frac{1}{1-\alpha} I_{CBO} = I_{CEO}$ in exp. (*iii*), we get,

$$I_C = \frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha} I_B + I_{CEO}$$

or
$$I_C = \beta I_B + I_{CEO} \qquad \left(\because \beta = \frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha}\right)$$

Concept of I_{CEO}. In *CE* configuration, a small collector current flows even when the base current is zero [See Fig. 8.17 (*i*)]. This is the collector cut off current (*i.e.* the collector current that flows when base is open) and is denoted by I_{CEO}. The value of I_{CEO} is much larger than I_{CBO}.



(*i*) (*ii*)

Fig. 8.17

When the base voltage is applied as shown in Fig. 8.17 (*ii*), then the various currents are :

Base current $= I_B$

Collector current $= \beta I_B + I_{CEO}$

Emitter current $=$ Collector current $+$ Base current

$$= (\beta I_B + I_{CEO}) + I_B = (\beta + 1) I_B + I_{CEO}$$

It may be noted here that :

$$I_{CEO} = \frac{1}{1-\alpha} I_{CBO} = (\beta + 1) I_{CBO} \qquad \left[\because \frac{1}{1-\alpha} = \beta + 1\right]$$

8.11. Measurement of Leakage Current

A very small leakage current flows in all transistor circuits. However, in most cases, it is quite small and can be neglected.

(*i*) Circuit for I_{CEO} test. Fig. 8.18 shows the circuit for measuring I_{CEO}. Since base is open

($I_B = 0$), the transistor is in cut off. Ideally, $I_C = 0$ but actually there is a small current from collector to emitter due to minority carriers. It is called I_{CEO} (collector-to-emitter current with base open). This current is usually in the nA range for silicon. A faulty transistor will often have excessive leakage current.

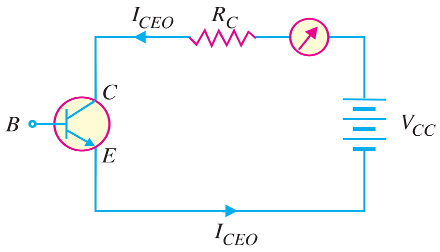


Fig. 8.18

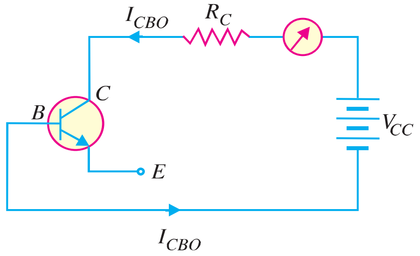


Fig. 8.19

(ii) **Circuit for I_{CBO} test.** Fig. 8.19 shows the circuit for measuring I_{CBO}. Since the emitter is open ($I_E = 0$), there is a small current from collector to base. This is called I_{CBO} (collector-to-base current with emitter open). This current is due to the movement of minority carriers across base-collector junction. The value of I_{CBO} is also small. If in measurement, I_{CBO} is excessive, then there is a possibility that collector-base is shorted.

Example 8.8. *Find the value of β if (i) α = 0.9 (ii) α = 0.98 (iii) α = 0.99.*

Solution. ***(i)***

$$\beta = \frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha} = \frac{0.9}{1-0.9} = \mathbf{9}$$

(ii)

$$\beta = \frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha} = \frac{0.98}{1-0.98} = \mathbf{49}$$

(iii)

$$\beta = \frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha} = \frac{0.99}{1-0.99} = \mathbf{99}$$

Example 8.9. *Calculate I_E in a transistor for which $\beta = 50$ and $I_B = 20\ \mu A$.*

Solution. Here $\beta = 50, \quad I_B = 20\mu\text{A} = 0.02\text{ mA}$

Now $$\beta = \frac{I_C}{I_B}$$

$$\therefore \quad I_C = \beta I_B = 50 \times 0.02 = 1\text{ mA}$$

Using the relation, $I_E = I_B + I_C = 0.02 + 1 = \mathbf{1.02\ mA}$

Example 8.10. *Find the α rating of the transistor shown in Fig. 8.20. Hence determine the value of I_C using both α and β rating of the transistor.*

Solution. Fig. 8.20 shows the conditions of the problem.

$$\alpha = \frac{\beta}{1+\beta} = \frac{49}{1+49} = \mathbf{0.98}$$

The value of I_C can be found by using either α or β rating as under :

$$I_C = \alpha I_E = 0.98\ (12\text{ mA}) = \mathbf{11.76\ mA}$$

Also $$I_C = \beta I_B = 49\ (240\ \mu\text{A}) = \mathbf{11.76\ mA}$$

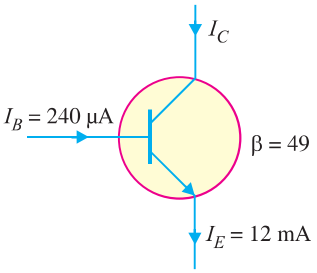


Fig. 8.20

Example 8.11. *For a transistor, β = 45 and voltage drop across 1kΩ which is connected in the collector circuit is 1 volt. Find the base current for common emitter connection.*

Solution. Fig. 8.21 shows the required common emitter connection. The voltage drop across R_C (= 1 kΩ) is 1volt.

$$\therefore \qquad I_C = \frac{1\ V}{1\ k\Omega} = 1\ \text{mA}$$

$$\text{Now} \qquad \beta = \frac{I_C}{I_B}$$

$$\therefore \qquad I_B = \frac{I_C}{\beta} = \frac{1}{45} = \mathbf{0.022\ mA}$$

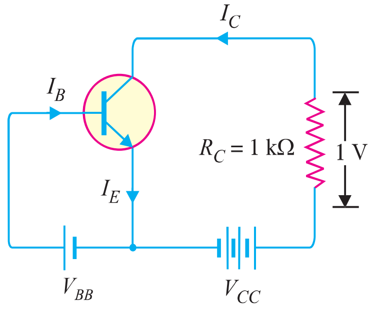


Fig. 8.21

Example 8.12. *A transistor is connected in common emitter (CE) configuration in which collector supply is 8V and the voltage drop across resistance R_C connected in the collector circuit is 0.5V. The value of R_C = 800 Ω. If α = 0.96, determine :*

(i) collector-emitter voltage

(ii) base current

Solution. Fig. 8.22 shows the required common emitter connection with various values.

(i) Collector-emitter voltage,

$$V_{CE} = V_{CC} - 0.5 = 8 - 0.5 = \mathbf{7.5\ V}$$

(ii) The voltage drop across R_C (= 800 Ω) is 0.5 V.

$$\therefore \qquad I_C = \frac{0.5\ \text{V}}{800\ \Omega} = \frac{5}{8}\ \text{mA} = 0.625\ \text{mA}$$

$$\text{Now} \qquad \beta = \frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha} = \frac{0.96}{1-0.96} = 24$$

$$\therefore \text{ Base current, } I_B = \frac{I_C}{\beta} = \frac{0.625}{24} = \mathbf{0.026\ mA}$$

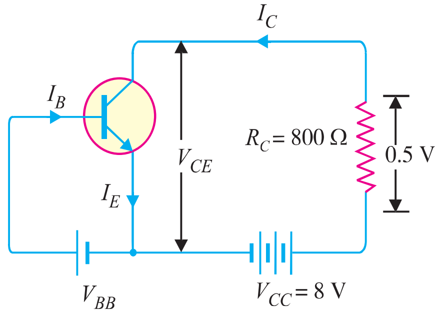
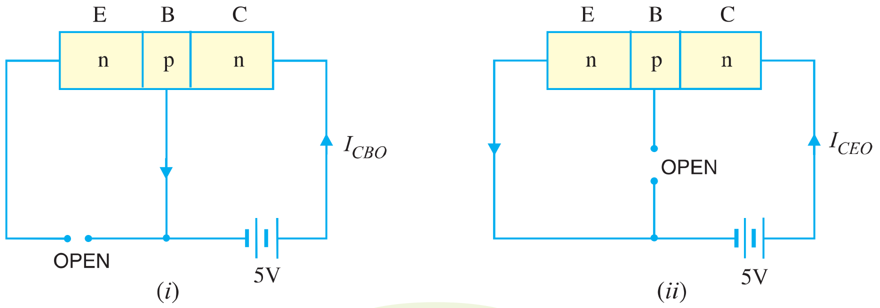


Fig. 8.22

Example 8.13. *An n-p-n transistor at room temperature has its emitter disconnected. A voltage of 5V is applied between collector and base. With collector positive, a current of 0.2 μA flows. When the base is disconnected and the same voltage is applied between collector and emitter, the current is found to be 20 μA. Find α, I_E and I_B when collector current is 1mA.*



(i) (ii)

Fig. 8.23