

Physics of Materials

EPFL

Chapter 2: Crystallography

Dr. Thomas LaGrange

LUMES

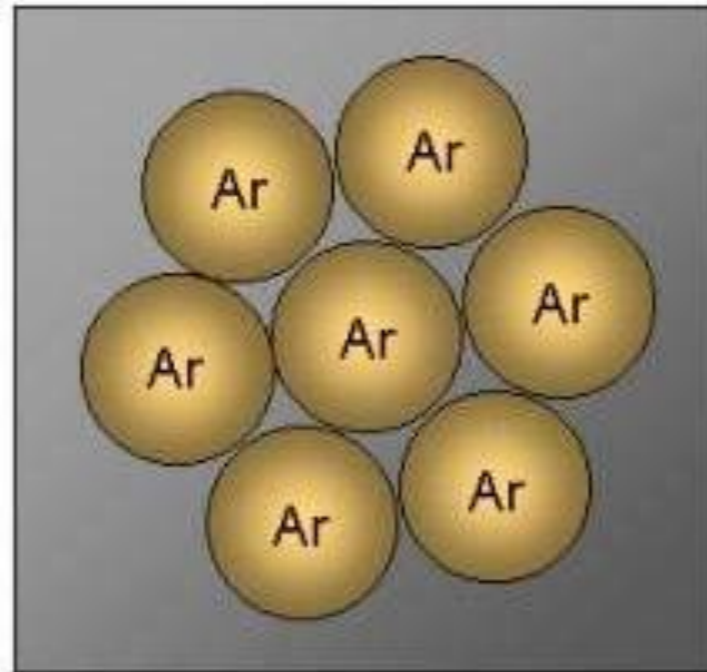


Masters Course PHYS-307

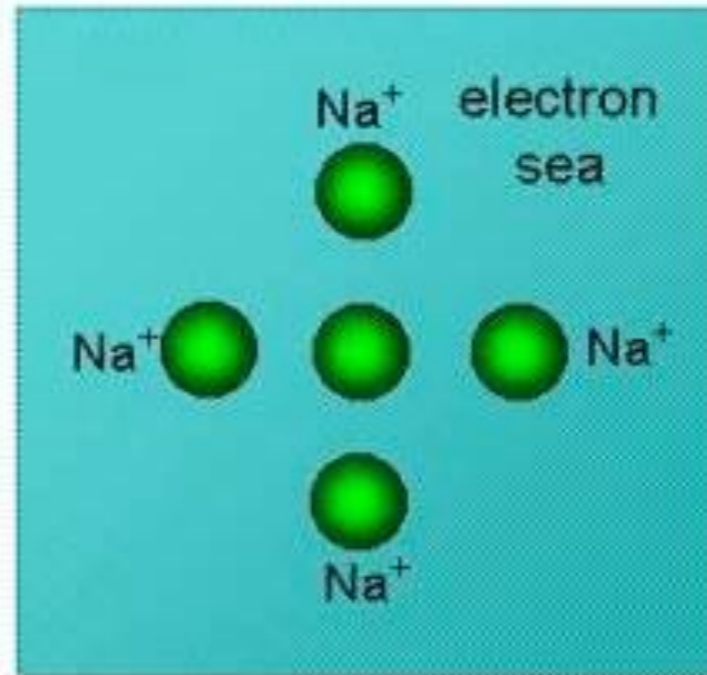
Fall 2025

Atomic bonding: structures

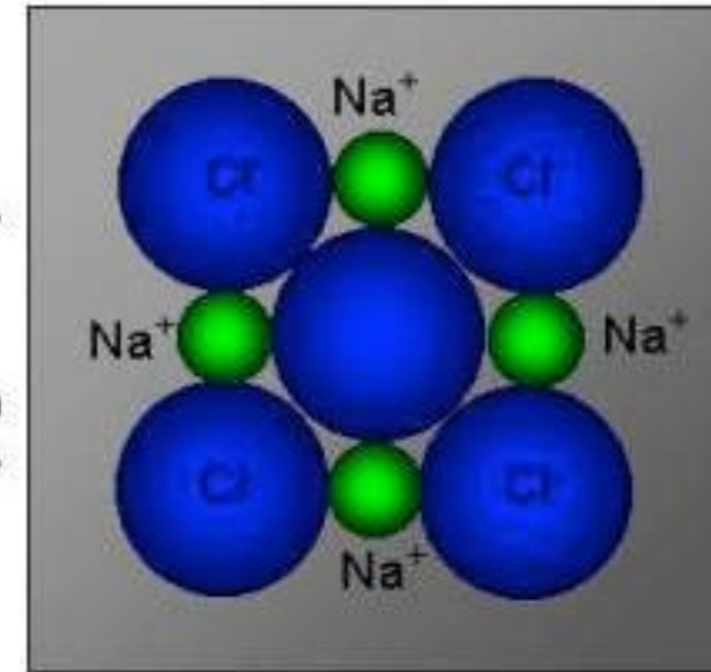
Van der Waals bonding (eg Argon)



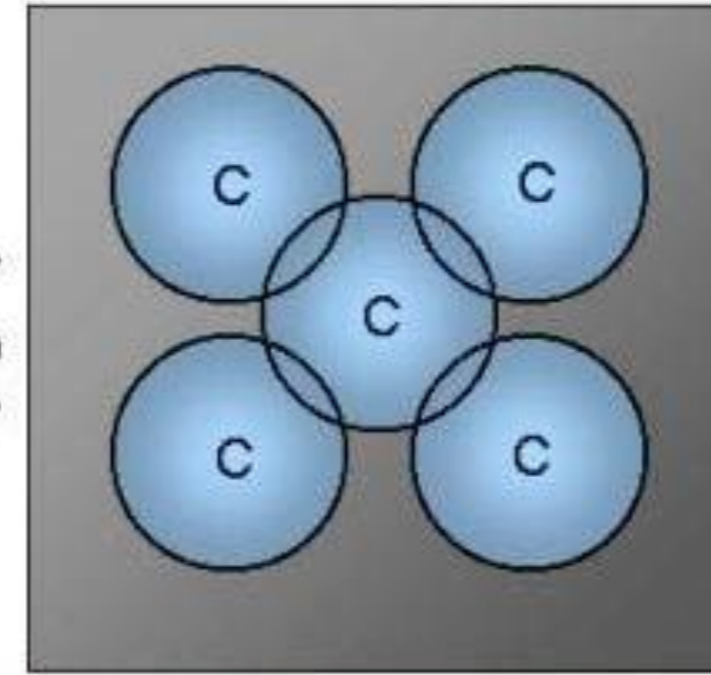
metallic bonding (eg Na)



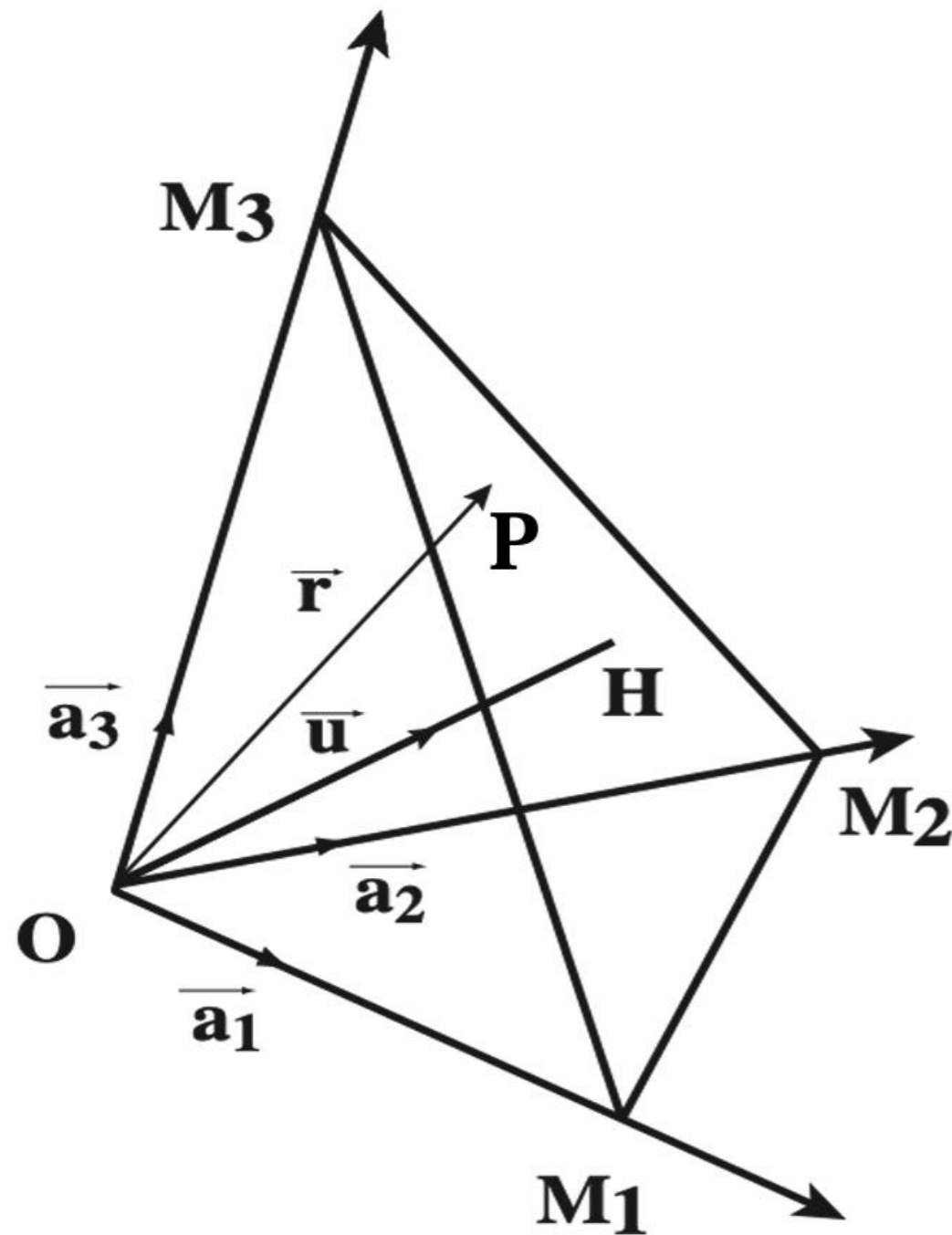
Ionic bonding (eg NaCl)



Covalent bonding (eg C)



Nodes of the periodic lattice



$$\vec{OM} = m_1 \vec{a}_1 + m_2 \vec{a}_2 + m_3 \vec{a}_3$$

$$\vec{OM} = m(m'_1 \vec{a}_1 + m'_2 \vec{a}_2 + m'_3 \vec{a}_3) = m \vec{OM}' \quad \text{with } m \text{ the GCD}$$

$$\vec{OM}_1 = n_1 \vec{a}_1$$

$$\vec{OM}_2 = n_2 \vec{a}_2$$

$$\vec{OM}_3 = n_3 \vec{a}_3$$

equation of the plane M_1, M_2, M_3

$$\vec{r} = x \vec{a}_1 + y \vec{a}_2 + z \vec{a}_3 = \vec{OP}$$

$$\vec{r} \cdot \vec{u} = OH$$

$$OH = x(\vec{a}_1 \cdot \vec{u}) + y(\vec{a}_2 \cdot \vec{u}) + z(\vec{a}_3 \cdot \vec{u})$$

$$\text{but } \vec{OM}_1 \cdot \vec{u} = n_1 \vec{a}_1 \cdot \vec{u} = OH \dots$$

$$\vec{M_1 M_2} = n_2 \vec{a}_2 - n_1 \vec{a}_1$$

$$\vec{M_2 M_3} = n_3 \vec{a}_3 - n_2 \vec{a}_2$$

$$\vec{M_1 M_3} = n_3 \vec{a}_3 - n_1 \vec{a}_1$$

$$(\vec{a}_1 \cdot \vec{u}) = \frac{OH}{n_1} \quad (\vec{a}_2 \cdot \vec{u}) = \frac{OH}{n_2} \quad (\vec{a}_3 \cdot \vec{u}) = \frac{OH}{n_3}$$

The equation of the plane becomes:

$$\frac{x}{n_1} + \frac{y}{n_2} + \frac{z}{n_3} = 1$$

let n be their GCD so that:

$$n_1 = nn_1' \quad n_2 = nn_2' \quad n_3 = nn_3'$$

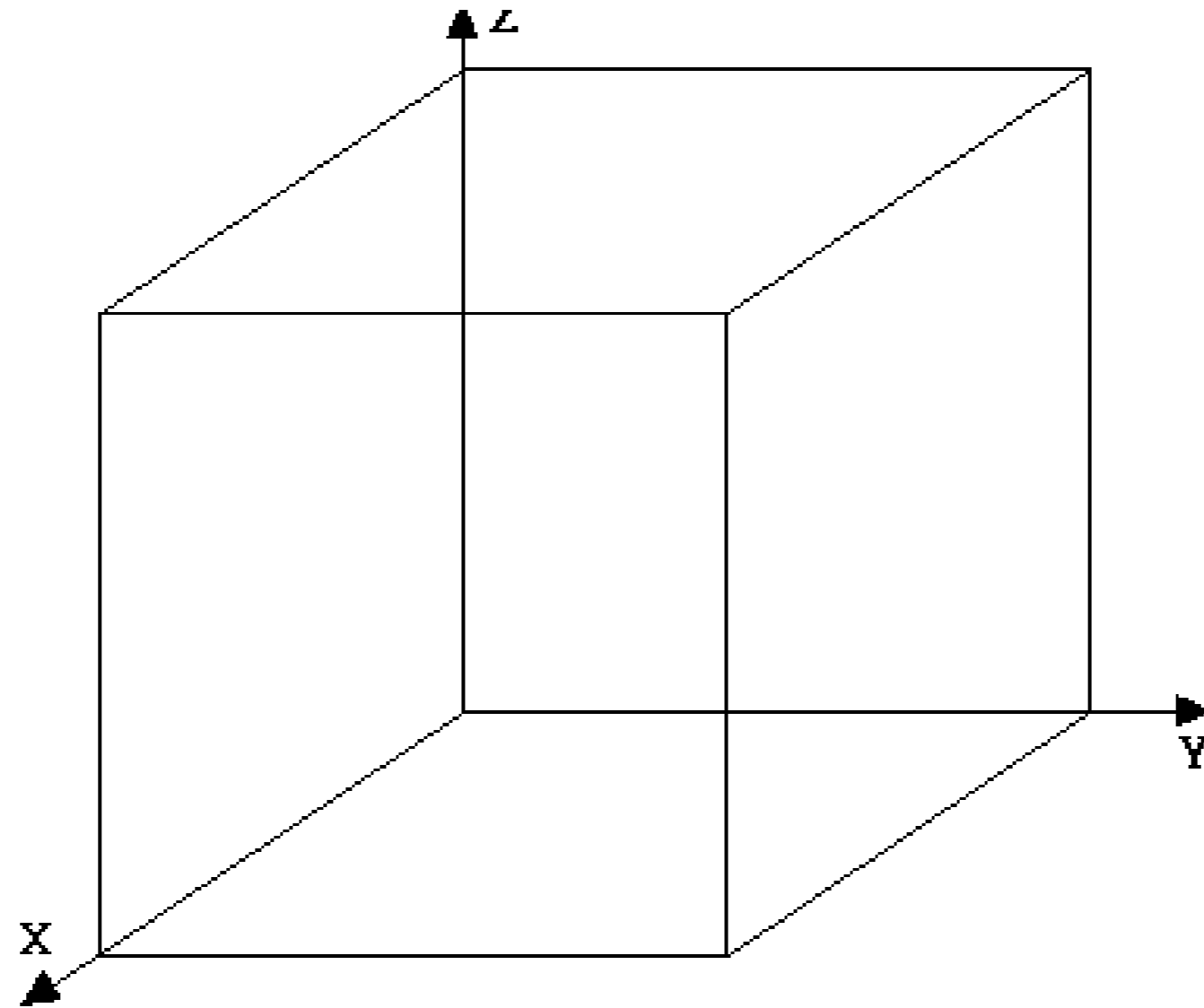
or $\frac{x}{n_1'} + \frac{y}{n_2'} + \frac{z}{n_3'} = 1$ n_1', n_2', n_3' are prime numbers

$$n_2' n_3' x + n_1' n_3' y + n_1' n_2' z = n_1' n_2' n_3'$$

Miller indices

$$h = n_2' n_3' \quad k = n_1' n_3' \quad l = n_1' n_2'$$

Examples equation of the plane



Normal vectors to crystallographic planes

$$\vec{u} = (n'_2 \vec{a}_2 - n'_1 \vec{a}_1) \times (n'_3 \vec{a}_3 - n'_1 \vec{a}_1)$$

$$\vec{u} = n'_2 n'_3 (\vec{a}_2 \times \vec{a}_3) + n'_3 n'_1 (\vec{a}_3 \times \vec{a}_1) + n'_1 n'_2 (\vec{a}_1 \times \vec{a}_2)$$

$$\vec{u} = h (\vec{a}_2 \times \vec{a}_3) + k (\vec{a}_3 \times \vec{a}_1) + l (\vec{a}_1 \times \vec{a}_2)$$

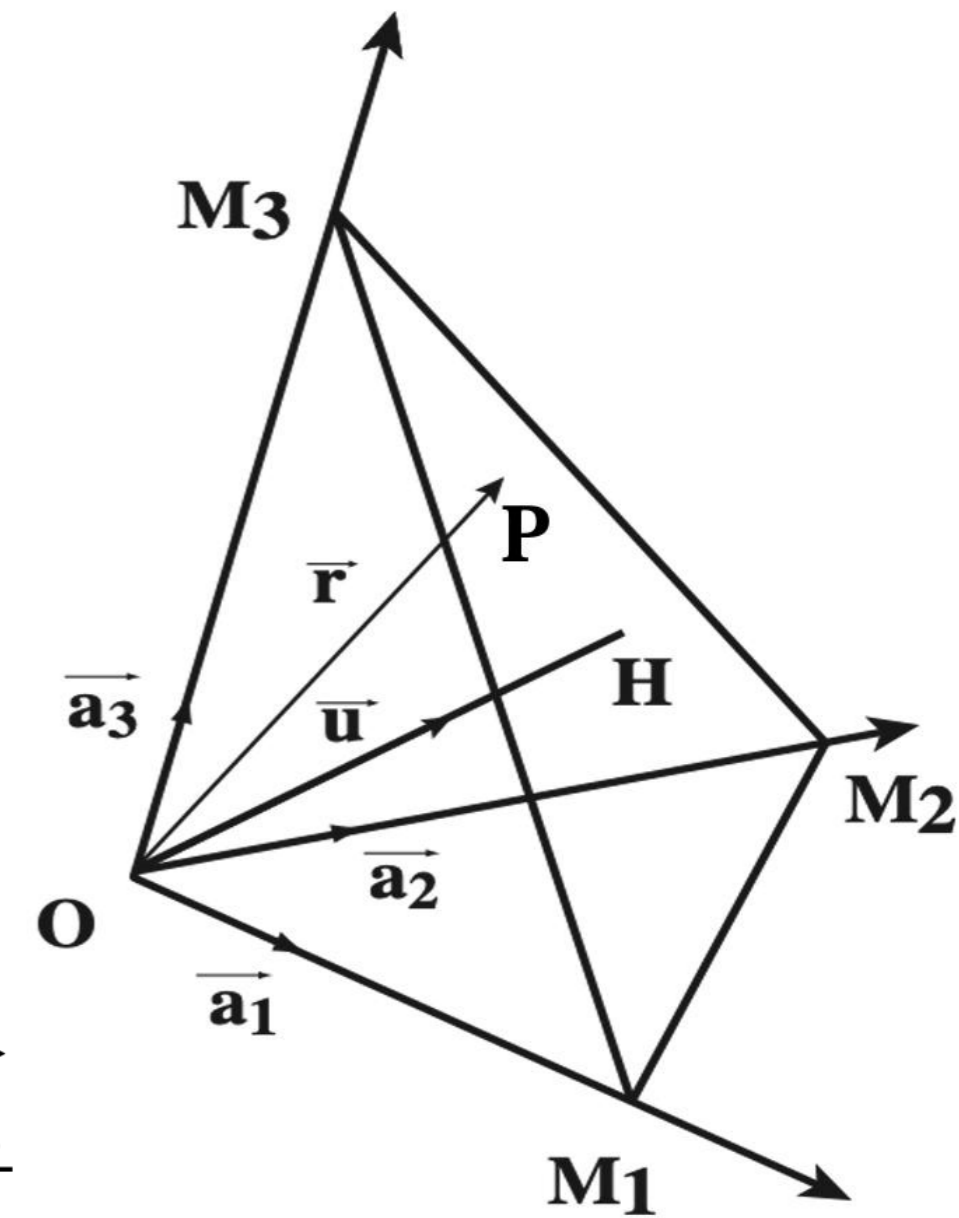
$$\vec{u} = h \vec{a}_1^* + k \vec{a}_2^* + l \vec{a}_3^* = \vec{r}^*$$

It would be better to normalize $\vec{a}_i \cdot \vec{a}_i^* = 1$

$$\vec{a}_1^* = \frac{(\vec{a}_2 \times \vec{a}_3)}{\vec{a}_1 \cdot (\vec{a}_2 \times \vec{a}_3)} = \frac{(\vec{a}_2 \times \vec{a}_3)}{V} \quad \text{but also} \quad \vec{a}_1^* \times \vec{a}_2^* = \frac{\vec{a}_3}{V}$$

Distance between crystalline planes

$$\left| \vec{r}_{hkl}^* \right| = \frac{1}{d_{hkl}}$$



The intersection of two crystalline planes

$$\begin{aligned} h_1x + k_1y + l_1z &= 0 \\ h_2x + k_2y + l_2z &= 0 \end{aligned} \quad \text{plane through origin}$$

The common line between the two planes is given on the basis $(\vec{a}_1, \vec{a}_2, \vec{a}_3)$ by the vector

$$(k_1l_2 - l_1k_2)\vec{a}_1 + (l_1h_2 - h_1l_2)\vec{a}_2 + (h_1k_2 - h_2k_1)\vec{a}_3$$

Reciprocally by taking two vectors of the direct lattice

$$x\vec{a}_1 + y\vec{a}_2 + z\vec{a}_3 \quad \text{and} \quad x'\vec{a}_1 + y'\vec{a}_2 + z'\vec{a}_3$$

The normal to the plane formed by these vectors is given by

$$(yz' - y'z)\vec{a}_1^* + (x'z - xz')\vec{a}_2^* + (xy' - x'y)\vec{a}_3^*$$

Matrix math for non-orthonormal basis

$$\left(x\vec{a}_1 + y\vec{a}_2 + z\vec{a}_3\right) \cdot \left(x'\vec{a}_1 + y'\vec{a}_2 + z'\vec{a}_3\right) = \begin{pmatrix} x & y & z \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} a_1^2 & \vec{a}_1 \cdot \vec{a}_2 & \vec{a}_1 \cdot \vec{a}_3 \\ \vec{a}_1 \cdot \vec{a}_2 & a_2^2 & \vec{a}_2 \cdot \vec{a}_3 \\ \vec{a}_1 \cdot \vec{a}_3 & \vec{a}_2 \cdot \vec{a}_3 & a_3^2 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} x' \\ y' \\ z' \end{pmatrix} = \vec{r}_T \mathbf{M} \vec{r}$$

M is called metric tensor; its determinant is the Volume²

$$\left(h\vec{a}_1^* + k\vec{a}_2^* + l\vec{a}_3^*\right) \cdot \left(h'\vec{a}_1^* + k'\vec{a}_2^* + l'\vec{a}_3^*\right) = (hkl) \begin{pmatrix} a_1^{*2} & \vec{a}_1^* \cdot \vec{a}_2^* & \vec{a}_1^* \cdot \vec{a}_3^* \\ \vec{a}_1^* \cdot \vec{a}_2^* & a_2^{*2} & \vec{a}_2^* \cdot \vec{a}_3^* \\ \vec{a}_1^* \cdot \vec{a}_3^* & \vec{a}_2^* \cdot \vec{a}_3^* & a_3^{*2} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} h' \\ k' \\ l' \end{pmatrix}$$

$= \vec{h}_T \mathbf{M}^* \vec{h}$ and $\mathbf{M}^* = \mathbf{M}^{-1}$

Bragg diffraction

If we consider X-rays (and electrons) as

plane waves $E = E_0 \exp(kx - \omega t)$

Wave vector \vec{S} with amplitude $k = \frac{2\pi}{\lambda}$

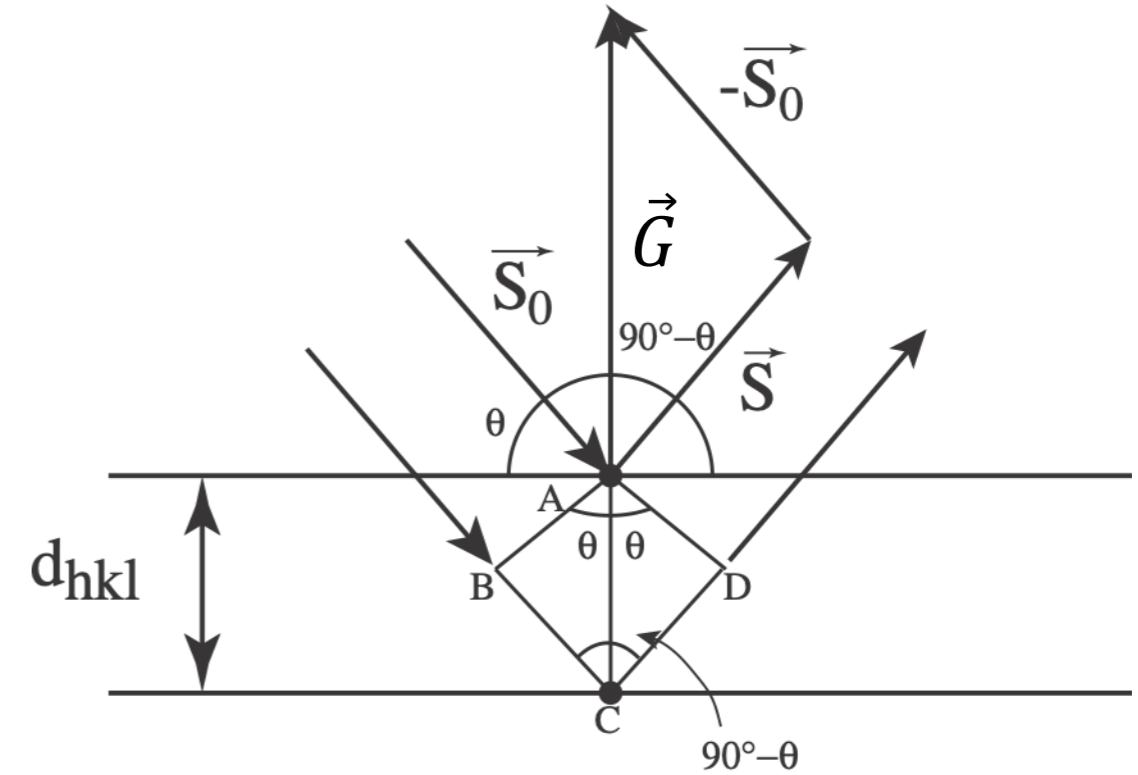
Constructive interference if $BC + CD = n\lambda$

$$2d_{hkl} \cos(90 - \theta) = 2d_{hkl} \sin \theta = n\lambda$$

In effect this can be written as:

$$\vec{S} - \vec{S}_0 = \vec{G} \quad \text{G is a reciprocal lattice vector}$$

$$\|\vec{S} - \vec{S}_0\| = \|\vec{G}\| \Rightarrow 2\|\vec{S}\|\sin \theta = 2\left(\frac{2\pi}{\lambda}\right)\sin \theta = \frac{2\pi}{d_{hkl}}$$

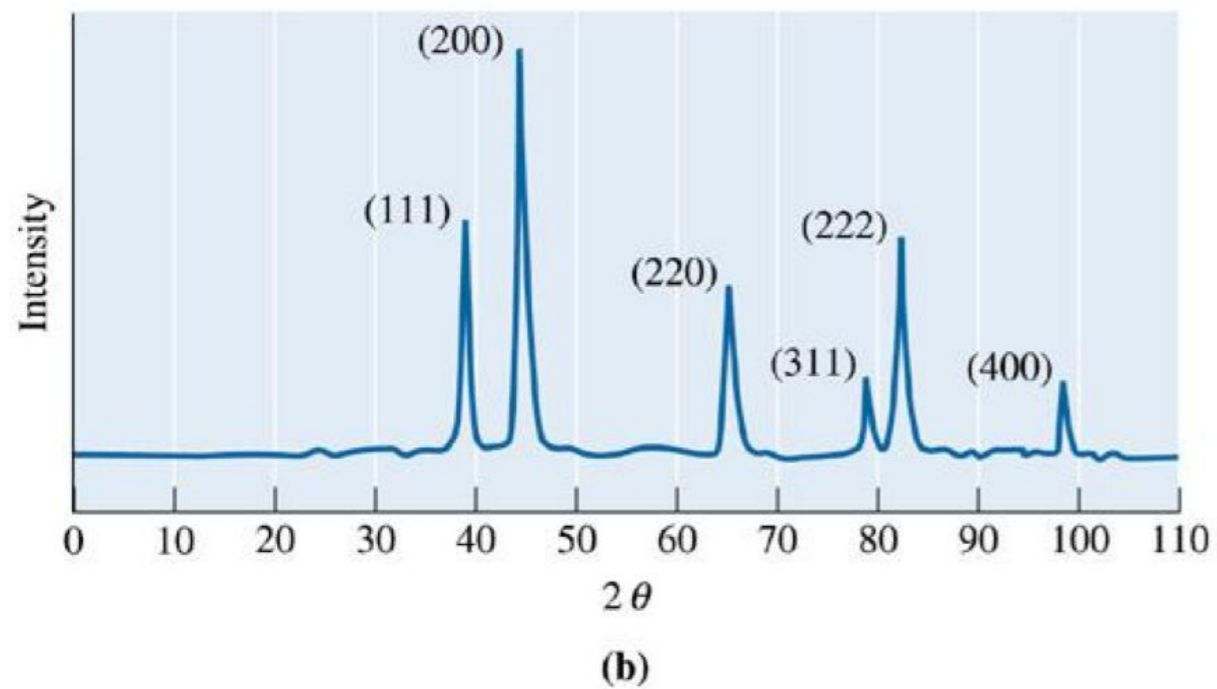
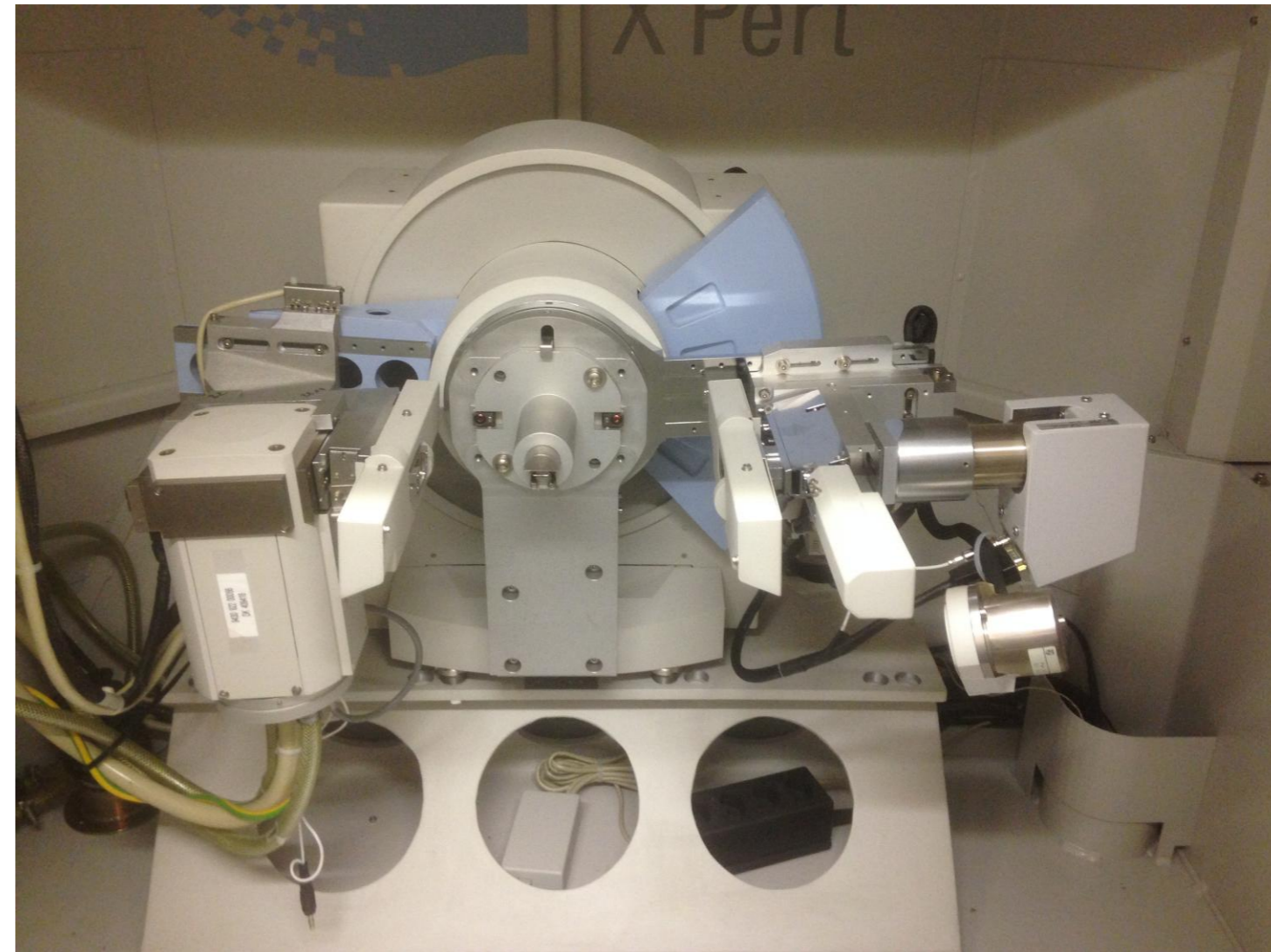
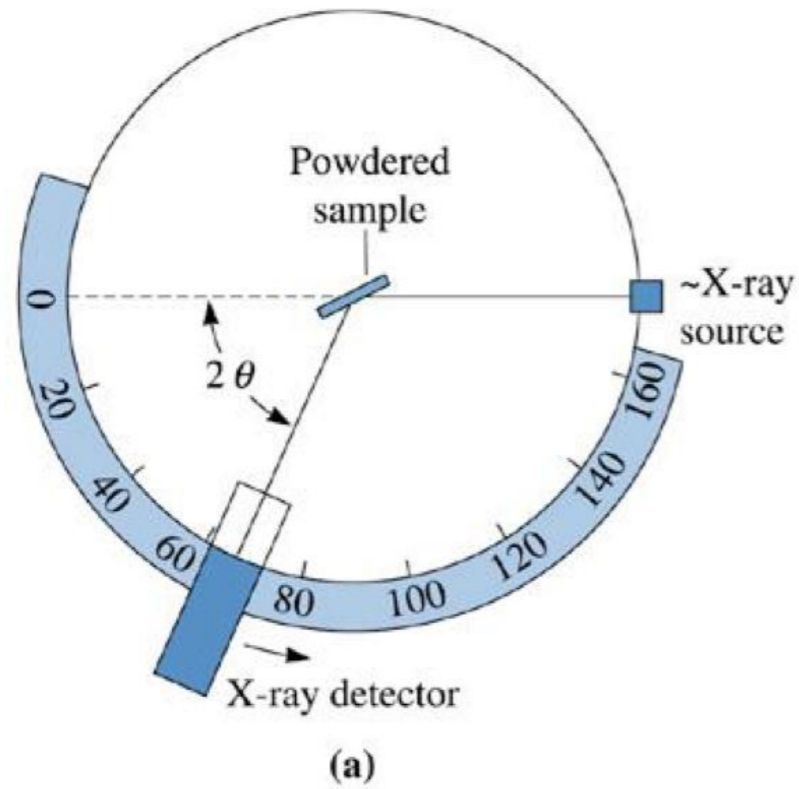


$$\|\vec{S}\| = \|\vec{S}_0\|$$

conservation of momentum

$$G = \frac{2\pi}{d_{hkl}} = \left\| \vec{r}_{hkl}^* \right\| = \frac{1}{d_{hkl}}$$

X-ray diffraction



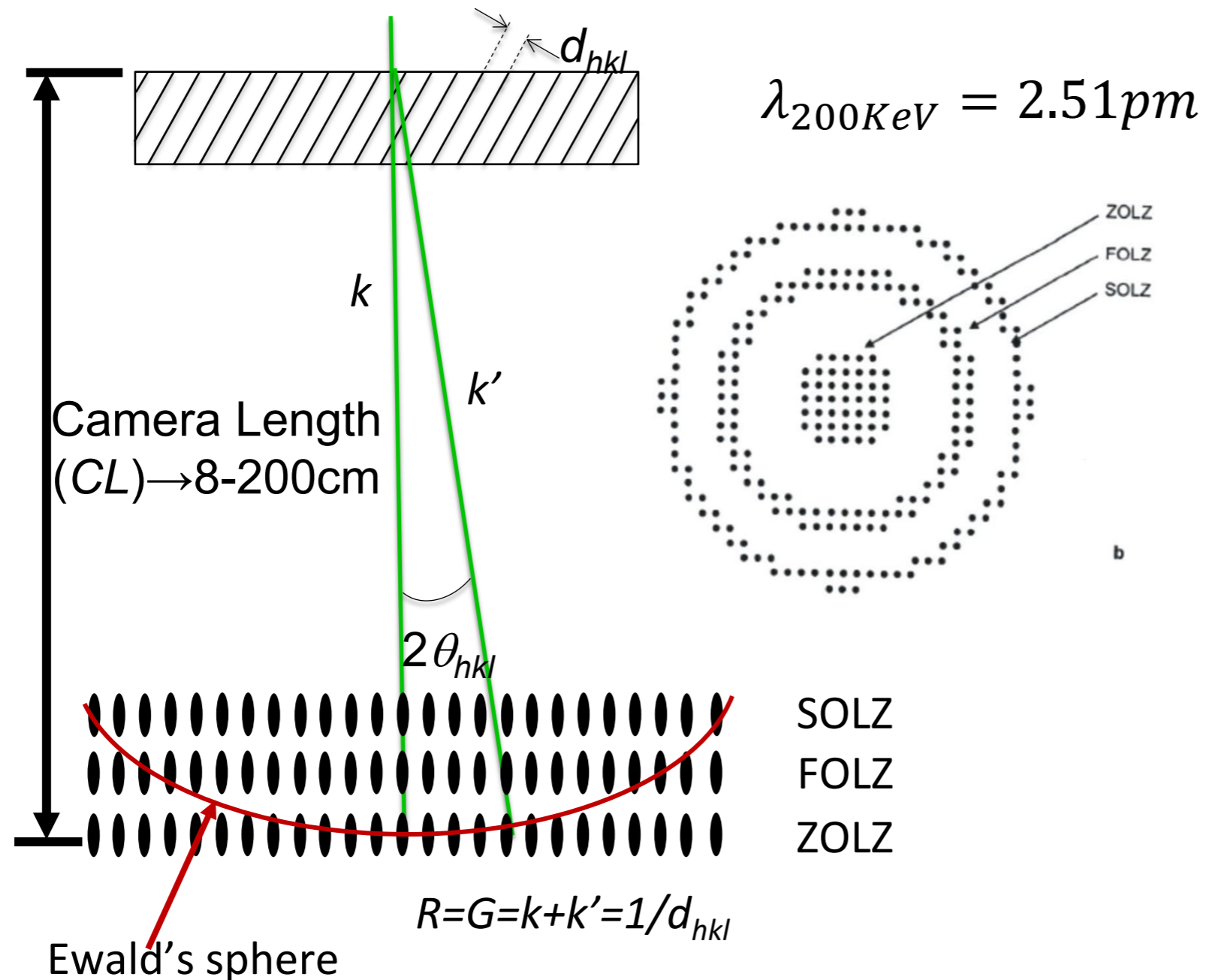
fcc Au

$$a = \frac{\lambda}{2 \sin \theta} \sqrt{h^2 + k^2 + l^2}$$

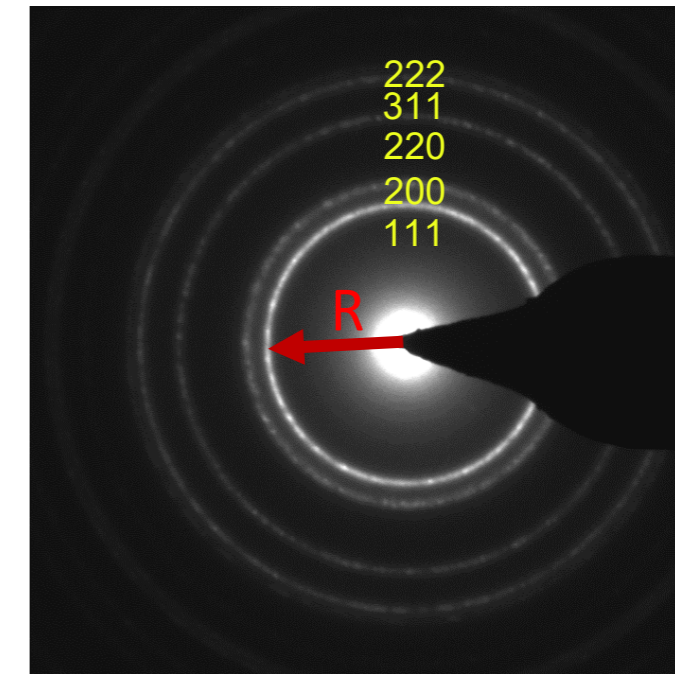
Transmission Electron Diffraction

$$2d\sin\theta = 2\theta d = n\lambda$$

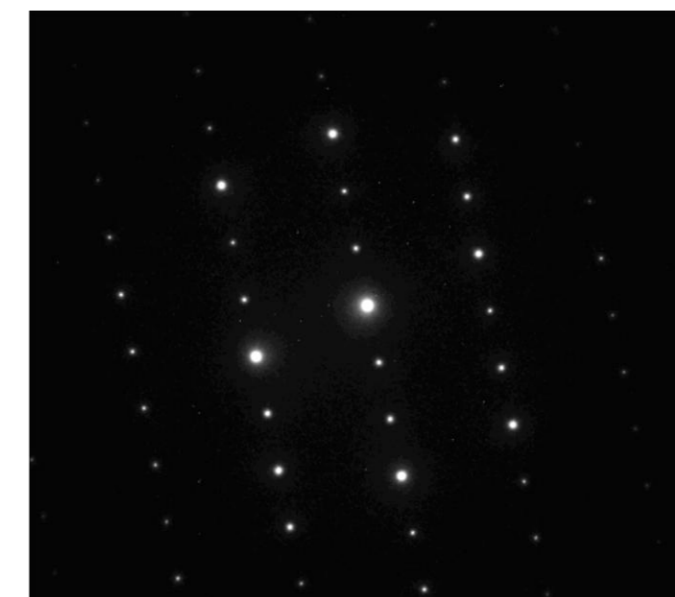
$$R\lambda = 2\theta = R/CL, d_{hkl} = \lambda CL/R$$



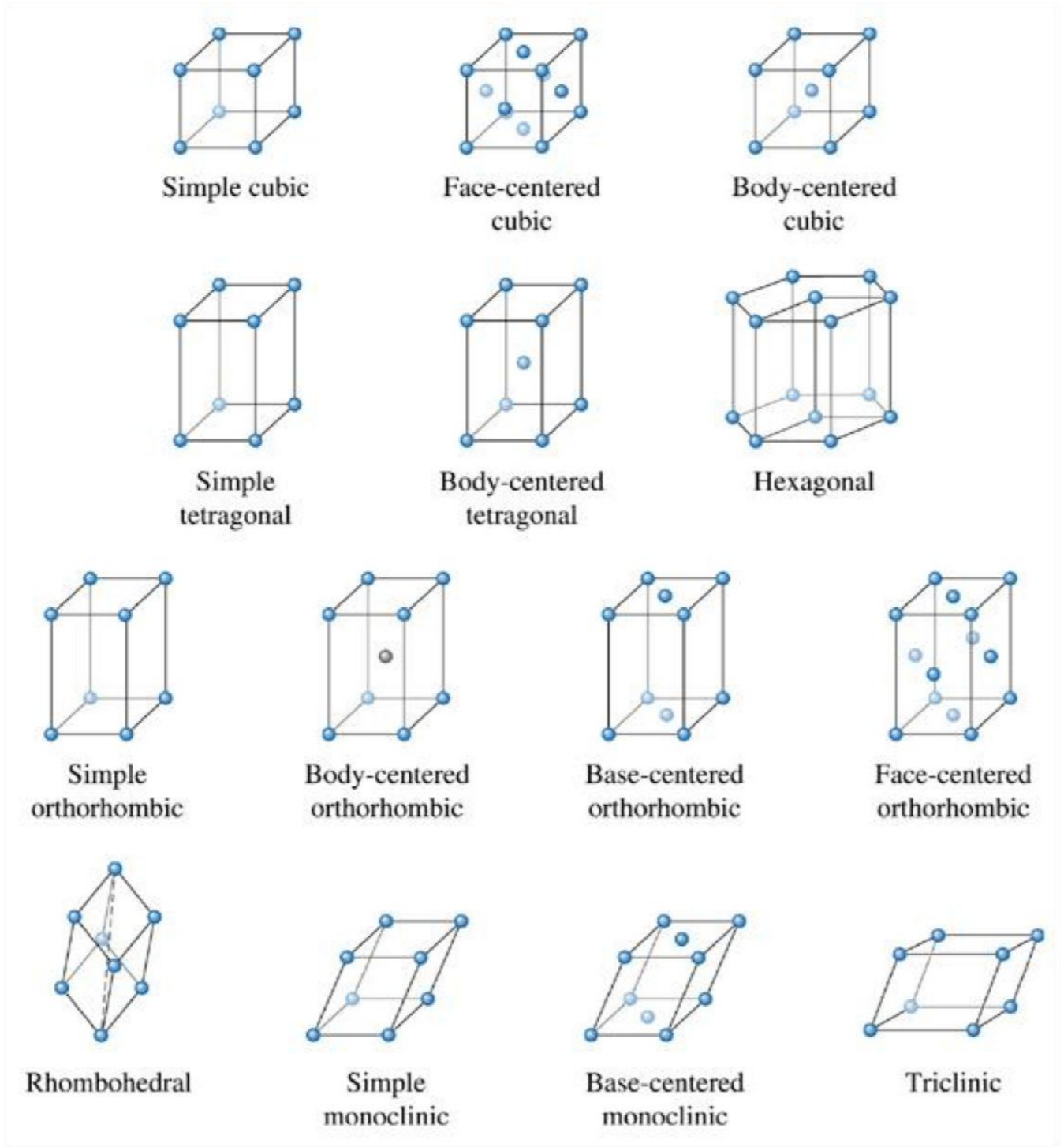
Bragg Diffraction Powder Pattern



Single Crystal Spot Pattern



Crystallography



Metals

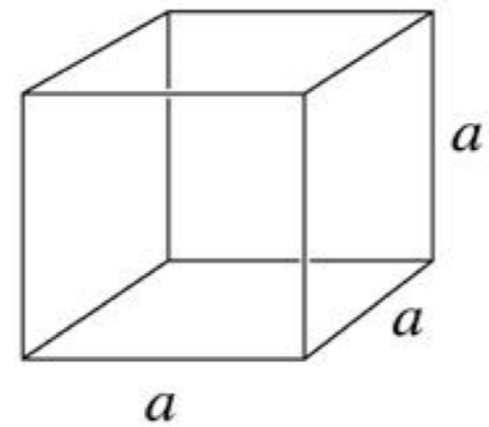
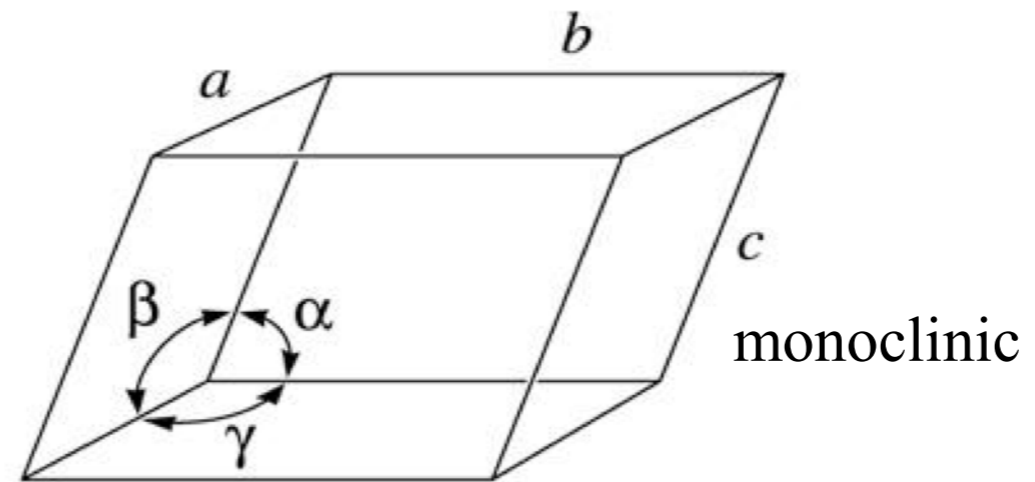
Ceramics
(ionic bonds)

Polymers
(covalent bonding)

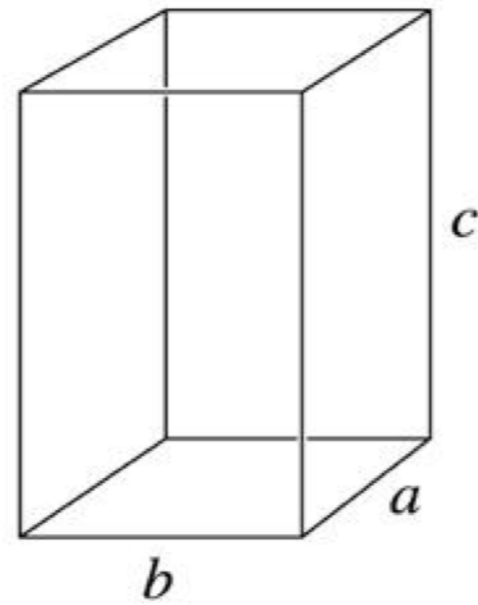
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14 Bravais lattices

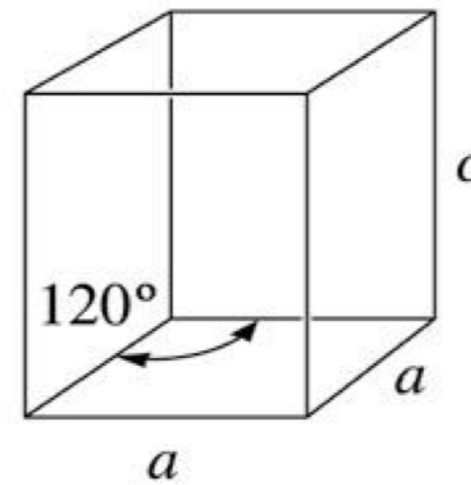
Definition of crystalline cell angles and edges



Cubic



Orthorhombic



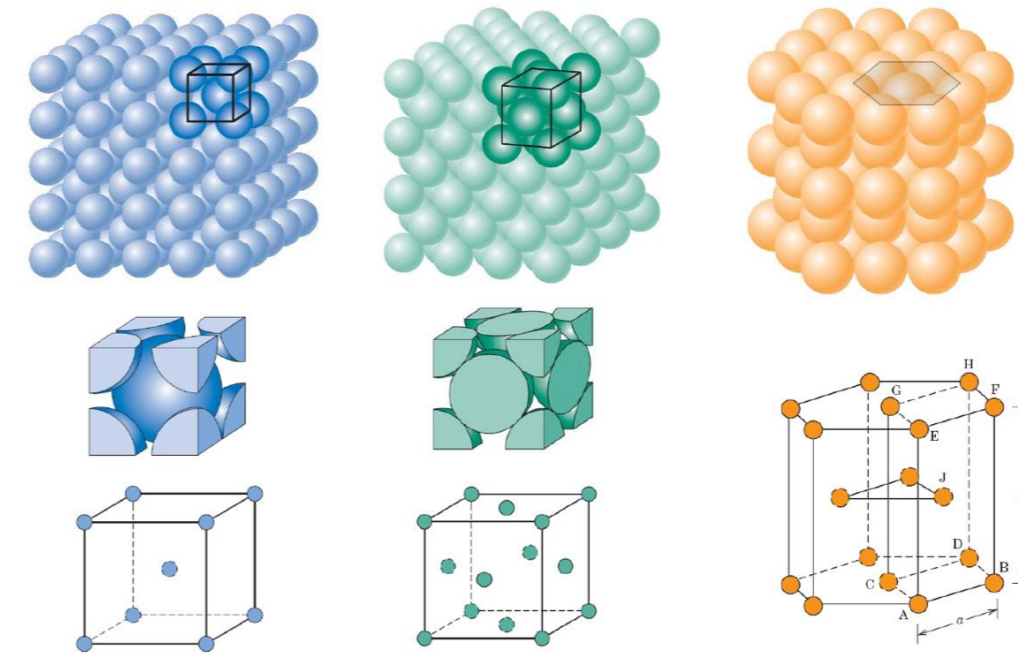
Hexagonal

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Characteristics of 7 crystalline systems

| Structure | Axis | Angles between axis | Volume of the cell |
|--------------|-------------------|---|---|
| Cubic | $a=b=c$ | all = 90° | a^3 |
| Tetrahedral | $a=b \neq c$ | all = 90° | $a^2 \cdot c$ |
| Orthorhombic | $a \neq b \neq c$ | all = 90° | $a \cdot b \cdot c$ |
| Hexagonal | $a=b \neq c$ | $\alpha=\beta=90^\circ, \gamma=120^\circ$ | $\sqrt{3}/2 \cdot a^2 c$ |
| Rhombohedral | $a=b=c$ | $\alpha=\beta=\gamma \neq 90^\circ$ | $a^3 \sqrt{1 - 3(\cos\alpha)^2 + 2(\cos\alpha)^3}$ |
| Monoclinic | $a \neq b \neq c$ | $\alpha=\gamma=90^\circ, \beta \neq 90^\circ$ | $a \cdot b \cdot c \sin \beta$ |
| Triclinic | $a \neq b \neq c$ | $\alpha \neq \beta \neq \gamma \neq 90^\circ$ | $abc \sqrt{1 - (\cos\alpha)^2 - (\cos\beta)^2 - (\cos\gamma)^2 + 2\cos\alpha \cos\beta \cos\gamma}$ |

Structure of metals



Metal Elements from the Periodic Table

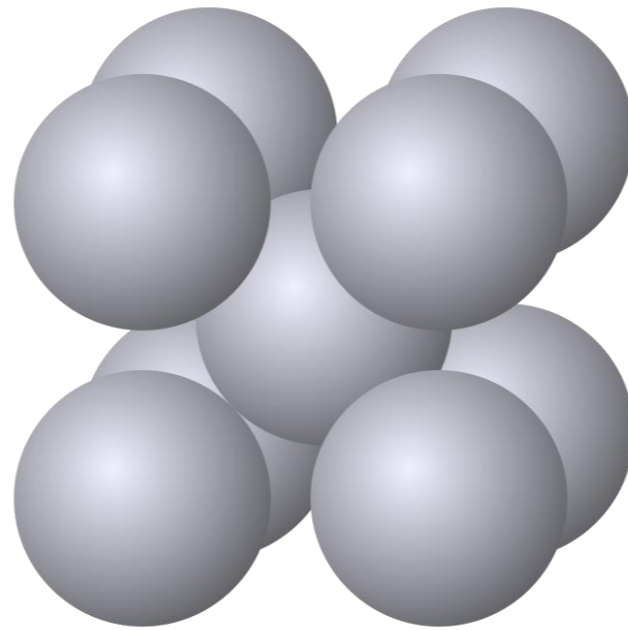
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Li | Be | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Na | Mg | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K | Ca | Sc | Ti | V | Cr | Mn | Fe | Co | Ni | Cu | Zn | Ga | | | |
| Rb | Sr | Y | Zr | Nb | Mo | Tc | Ru | Rh | Pd | Ag | Cd | In | Sn | | |
| Cs | Ba | Lu | Hf | Ta | W | Re | Os | Ir | Pt | Au | Hg | Tl | Pb | | |
| | | La | Ce | Pr | Nd | Pm | Sm | Eu | Gd | Tb | Dy | Ho | Er | Tm | Yb |

CCP (Cubic Close Packing)
HCP (Hexagonal Close Packing)
BCC (Body Centered Cubic)
HC (4H)
?

19/08/2008 chemtips.com

Compact Structures

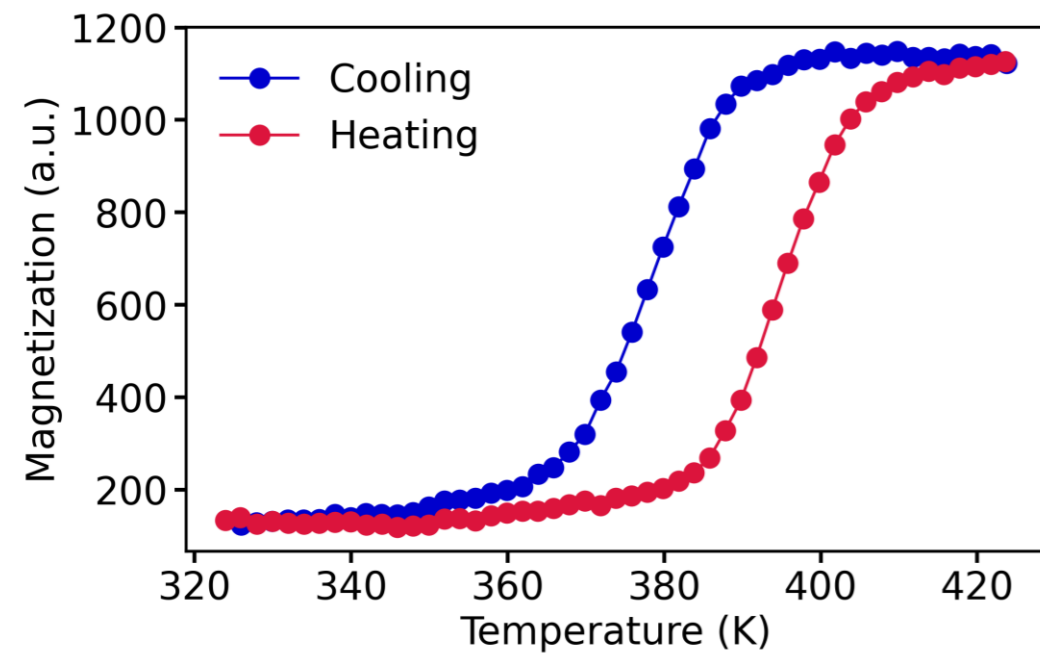
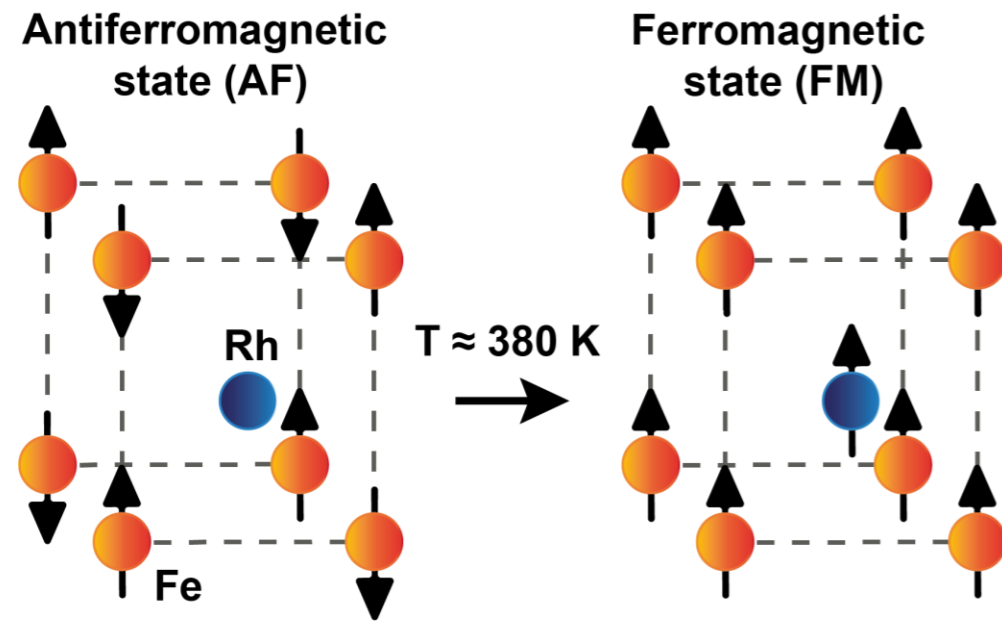
Body centered cubic structure



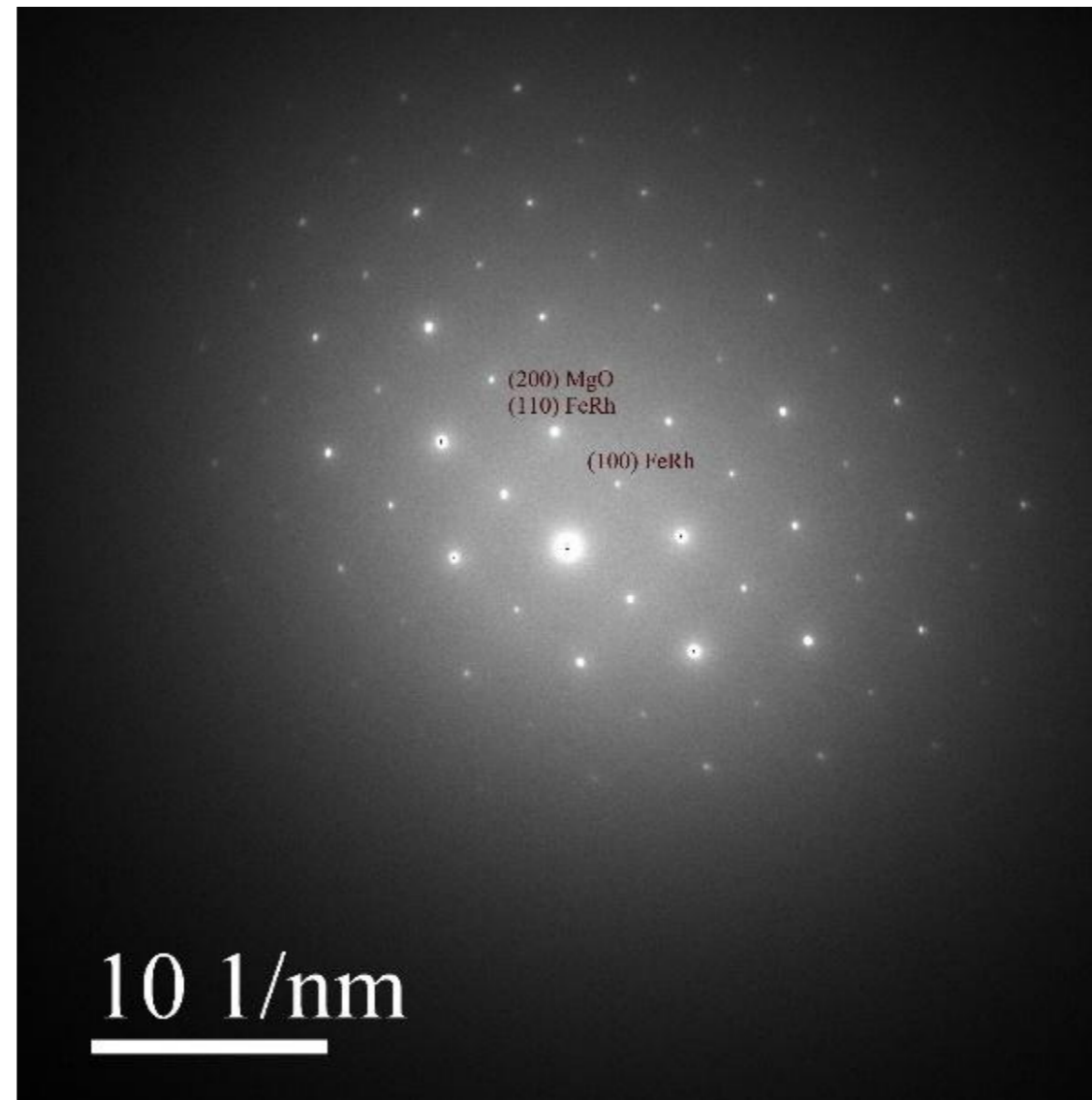
iron, chromium, tungsten.....

Electron Diffraction Example ordered BCC

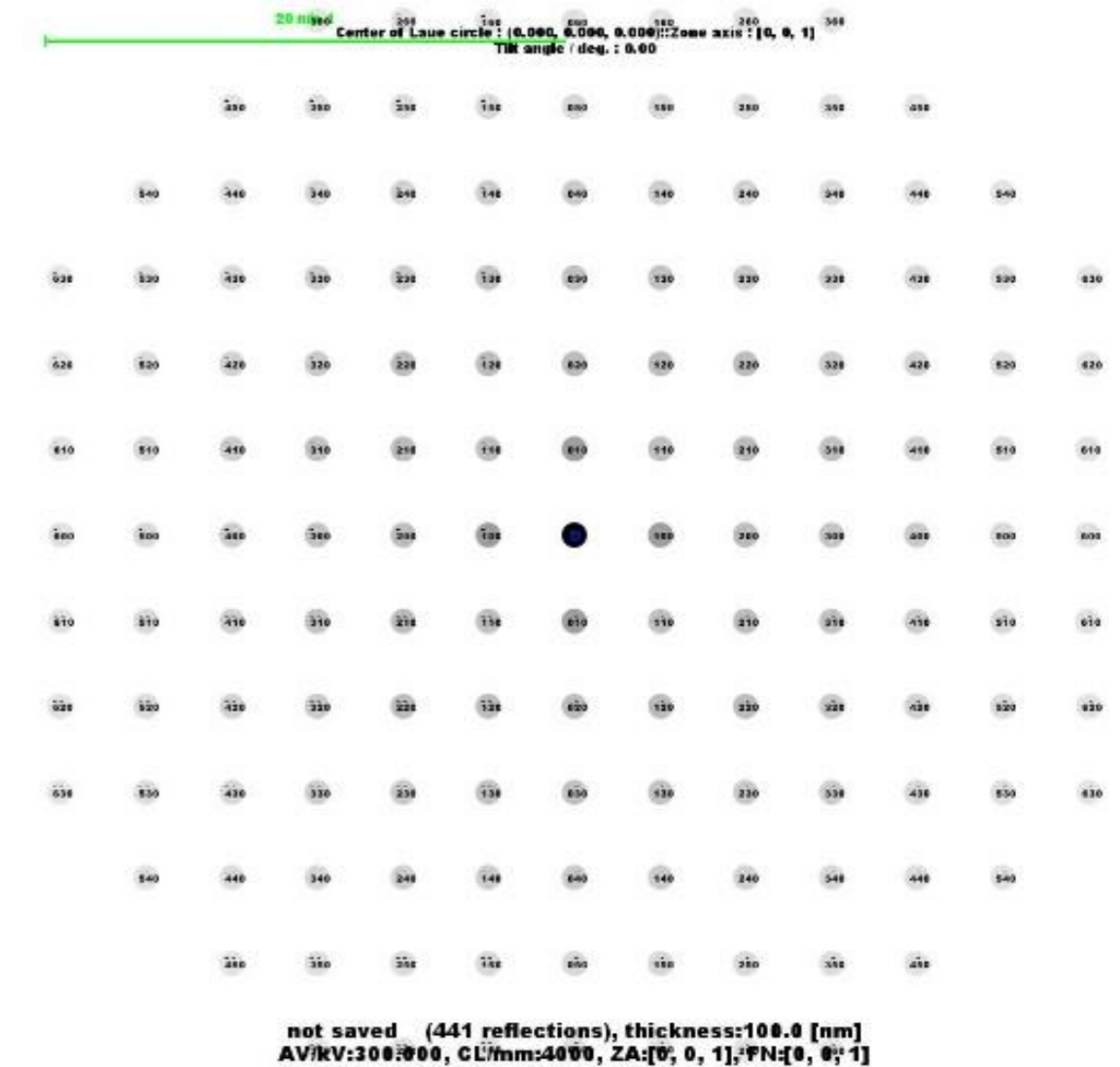
$\text{Fe}_x\text{Rh}_{1-x}; x \in (0.48; 0.52)$



TEM diffraction

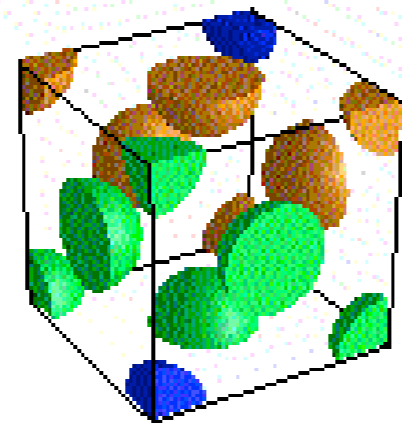
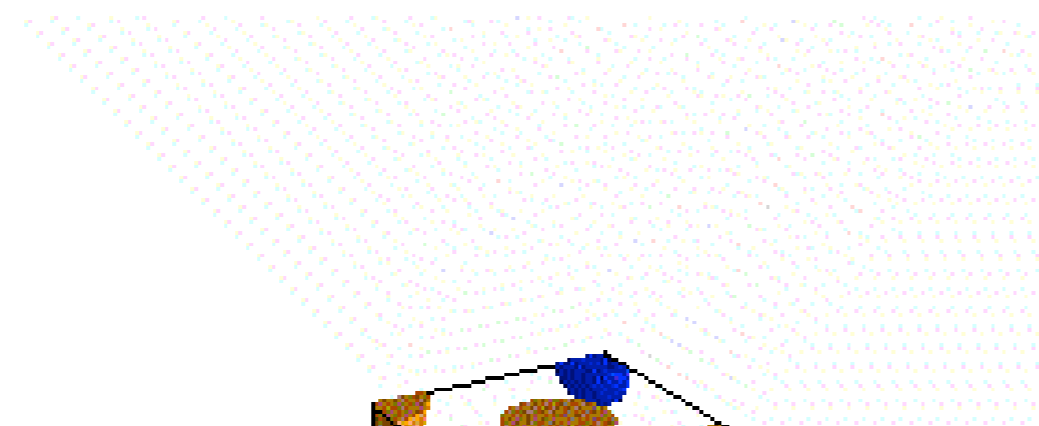
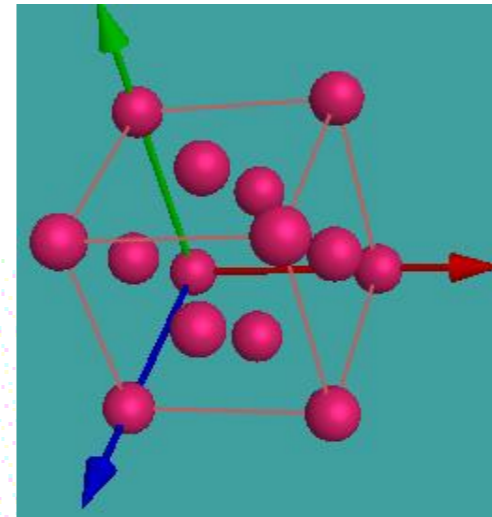


FeRh [100]ZA
simulation



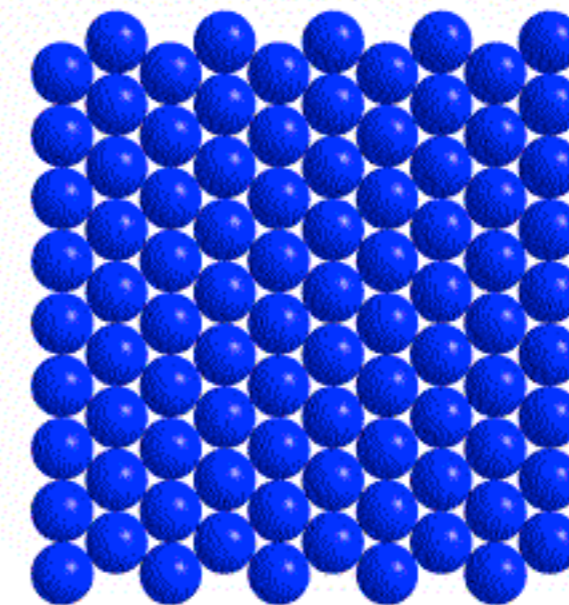
Compact Structures

Face centered cubic structure



Stacking

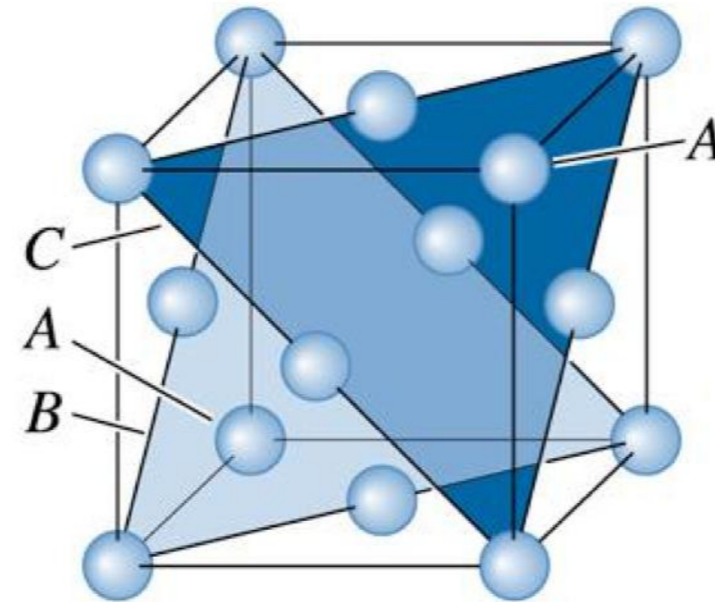
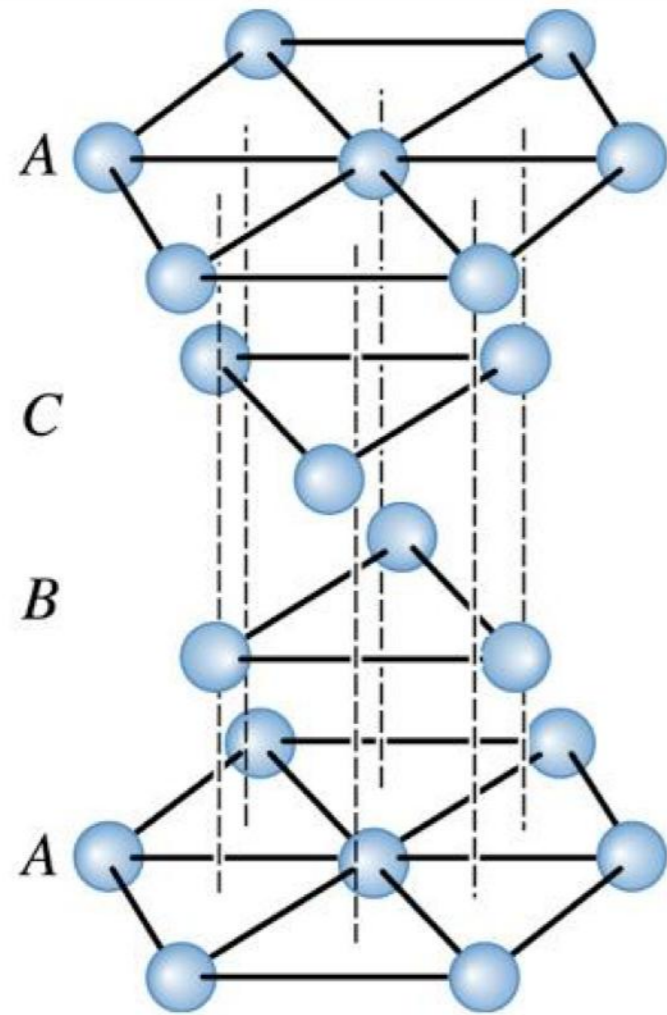
A-B-C-A-B sequence



aluminum, nickel, gold.....

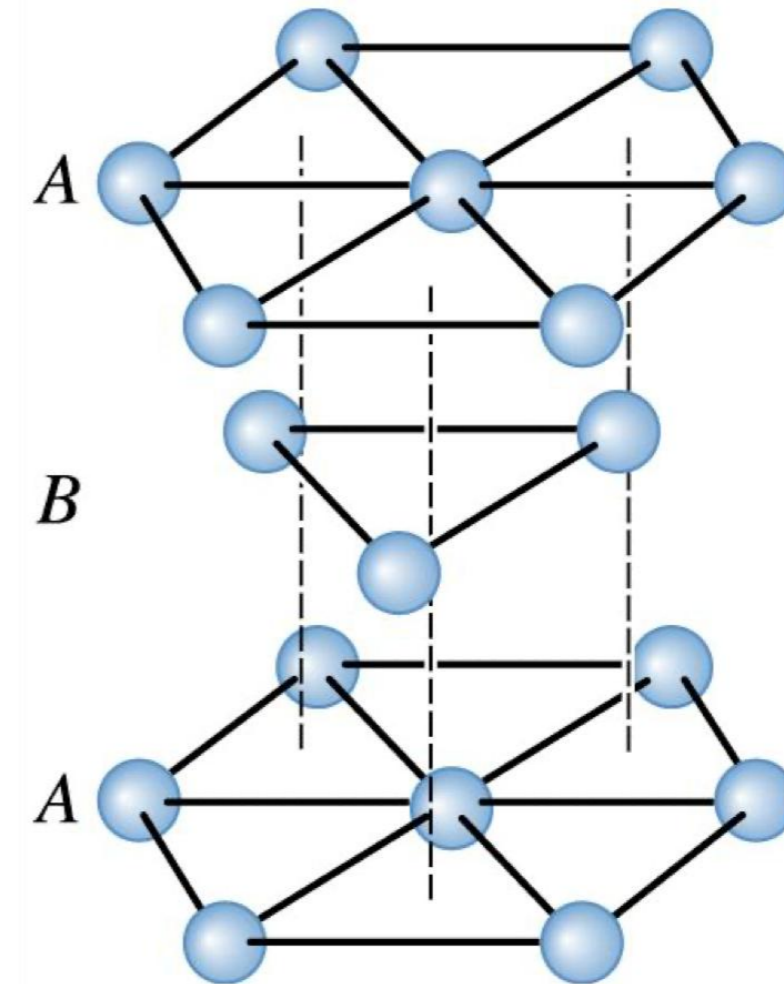
Compact Structures

Stacking in the FCC



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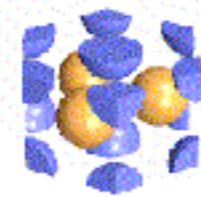
HCP



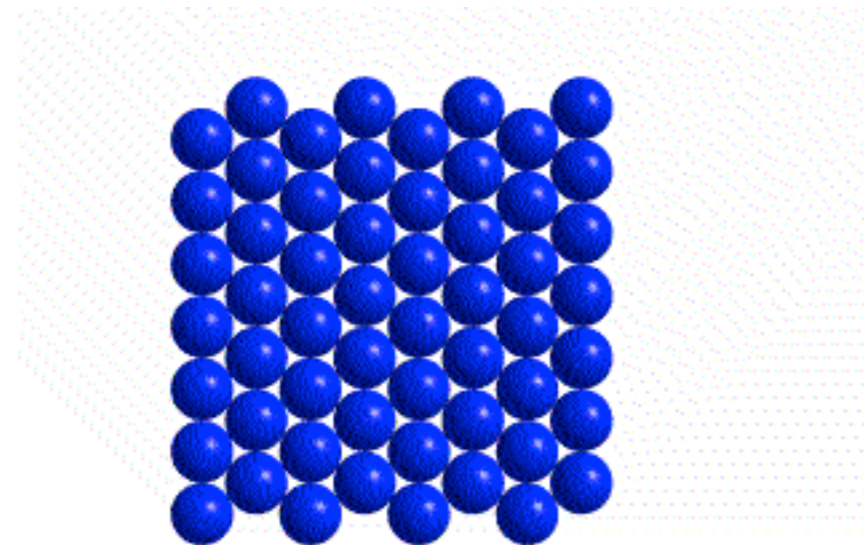
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Compact Structures

Hexagonal compact structure



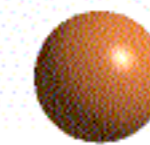
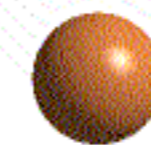
A-B-A-B structure



Comparison between structures

HCP

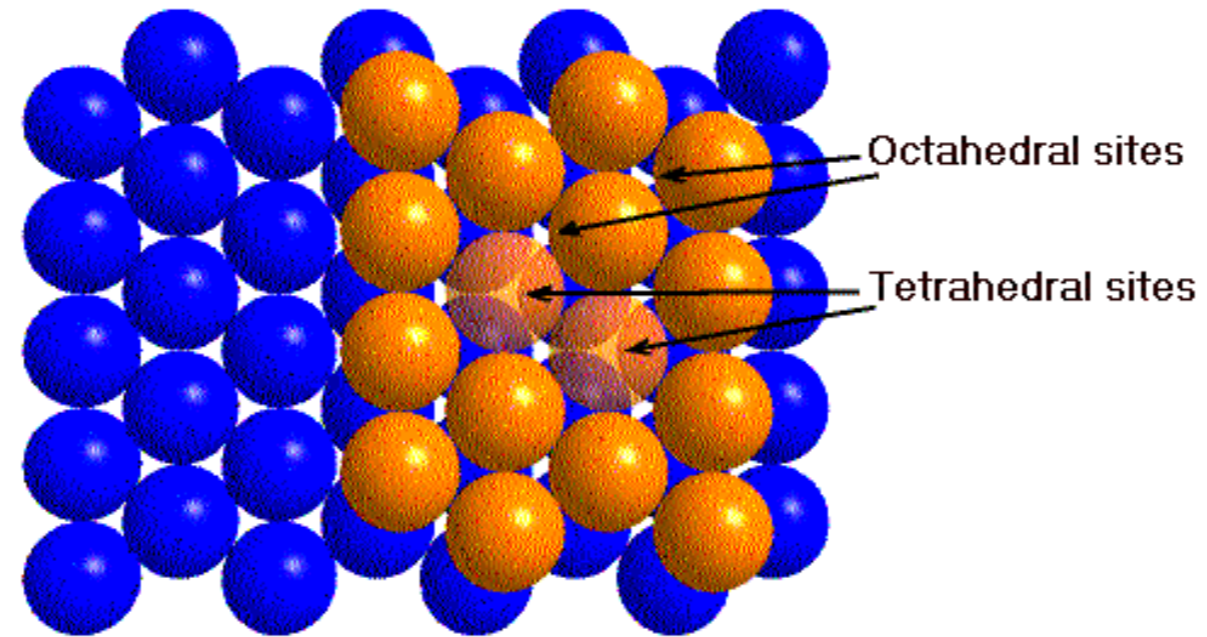
FCC



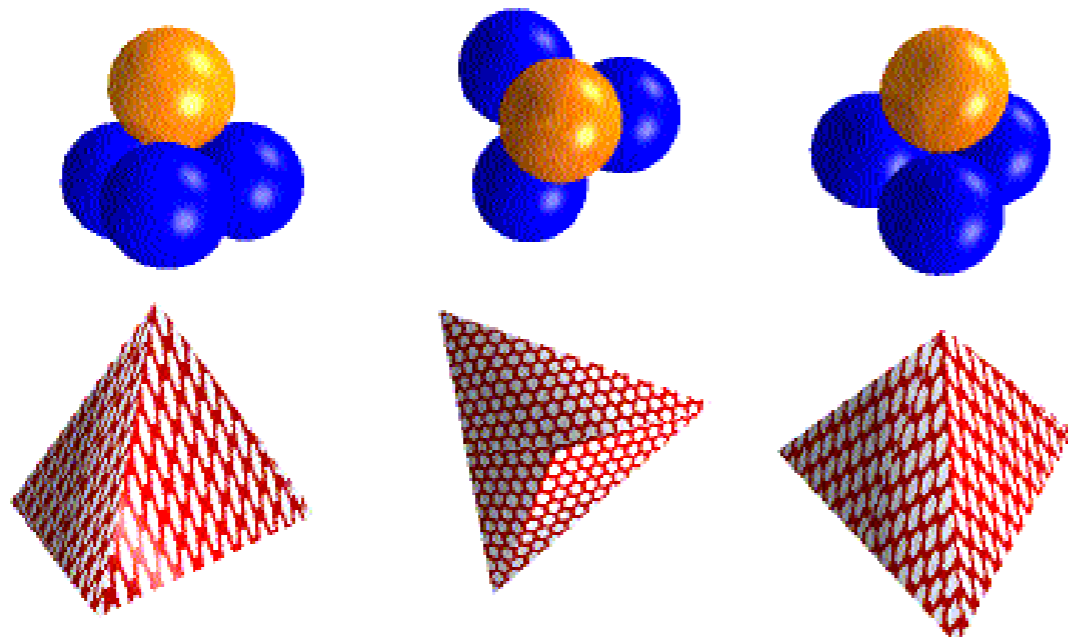
(001)

(111)

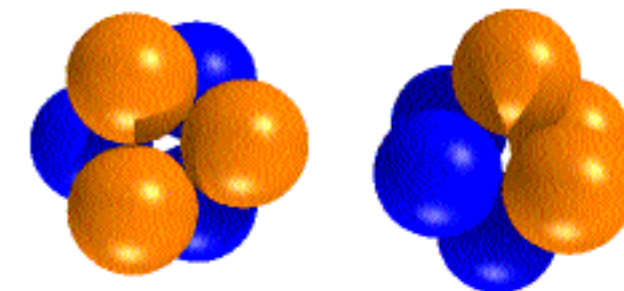
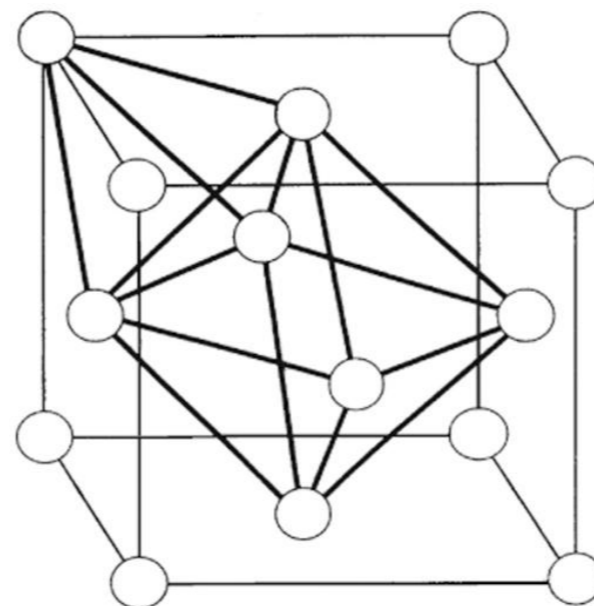
Interstitial sites in FCC metals



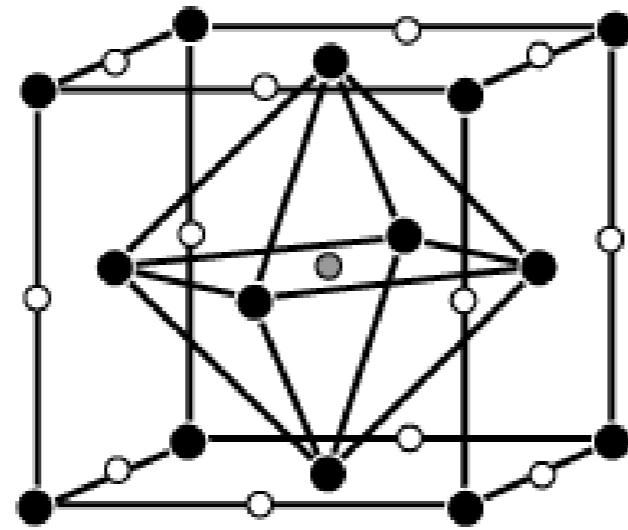
Tetrahedral sites



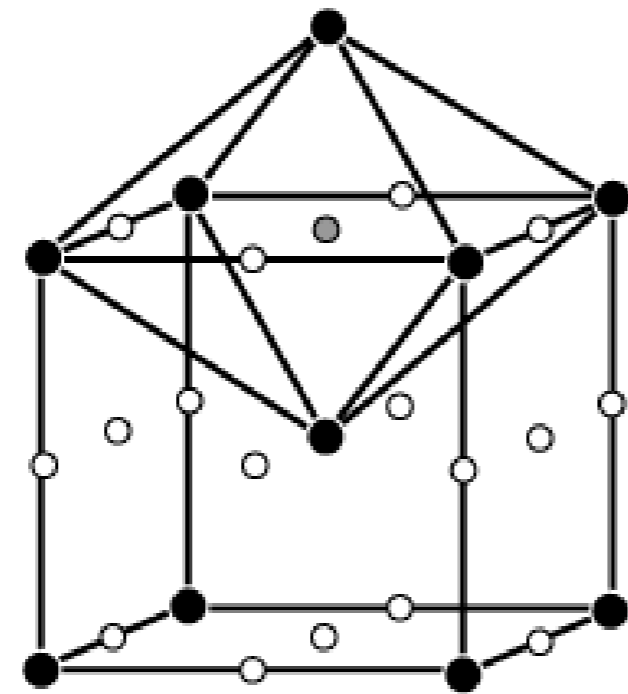
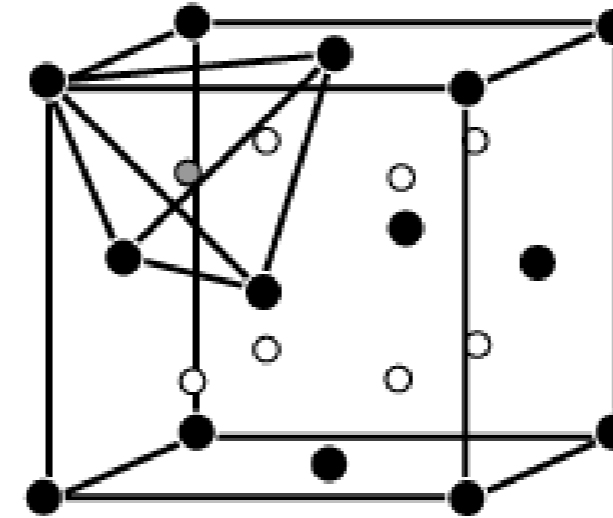
Octahedral sites



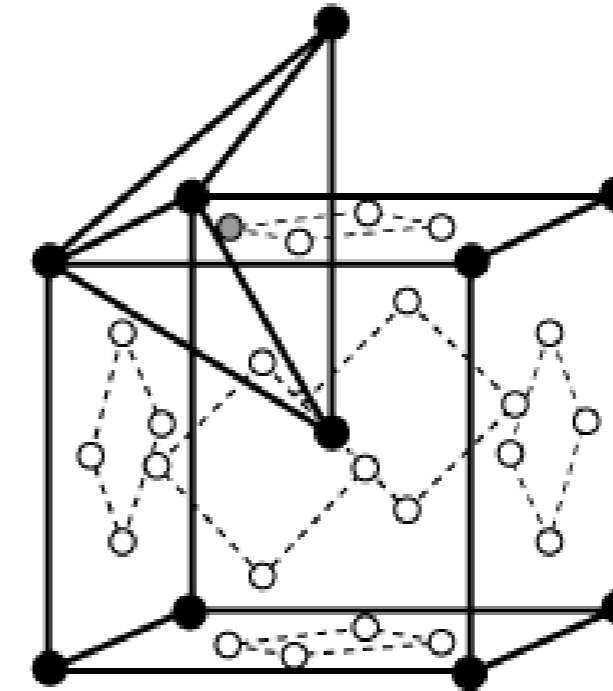
Interstitial sites



fcc



bcc



octahedral

tetrahedral

Coordination number atomic radius

Table 9 Atomic and ionic radius
 Approximative values. For origin references, consult W.B. Pearson, *Crystal chemistry and physics of metals and alloys*, Wiley, 1972.
 Units: 1 Å = 10⁻¹⁰ m

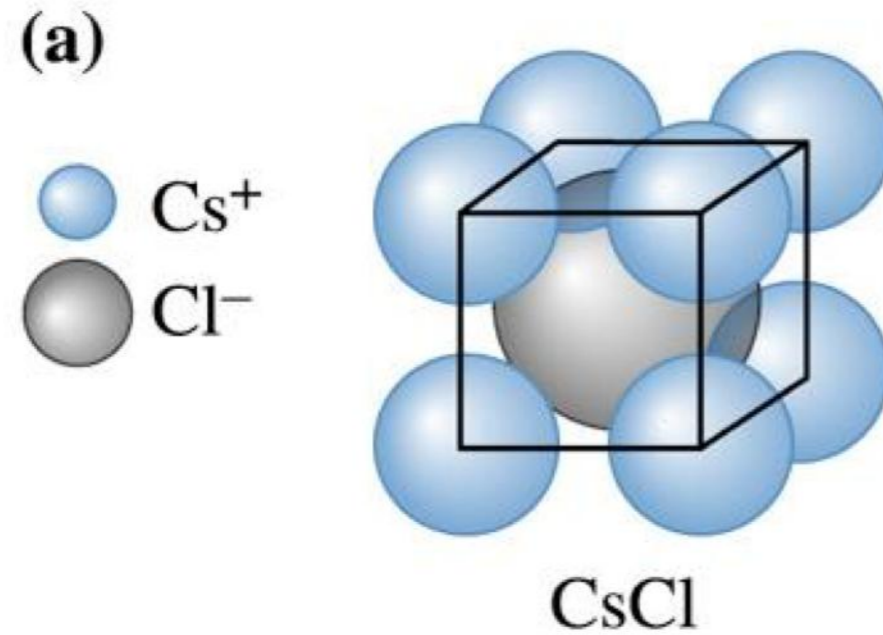
Standard radii for ions in the configuration of neutral gases (filled layer)
 Radius of atoms in the case of tetrahedral covalent bonds
 Radius of ions for coordination number of 12 (metals)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| H | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | He | | | | |
| 2,08 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Li | Be | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | B | C | N | O | F | Ne |
| 0,68 | 0,35 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0,23 | 0,15 | 1,71 | 1,40 | 1,36 | 1,58 |
| | 1,06 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0,88 | 0,77 | 0,70 | 0,66 | 0,64 | |
| 1,56 | 1,13 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0,98 | 0,92 | | | | |
| Na | Mg | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Al | Si | P | S | Cl | Ar |
| 0,97 | 0,65 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0,50 | 0,41 | 2,12 | 1,84 | 1,81 | 1,88 |
| | 1,40 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1,26 | 1,17 | 1,10 | 1,04 | 0,99 | |
| 1,91 | 1,60 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1,43 | 1,32 | | | | |
| K | Ca | Sc | Ti | V | Cr | Mn | Fe | Co | Ni | Cu | Zn | Ga | Ge | As | Se | Br | Kr | | | | |
| 1,33 | 0,99 | 0,81 | 0,68 | | | | | | | | 0,74 | 0,62 | 0,53 | 2,22 | 1,98 | 1,95 | 2,00 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | 1,35 | 1,31 | 1,26 | 1,22 | 1,18 | 1,14 | 1,11 | | | | | |
| 2,38 | 1,98 | 1,64 | 1,46 | 1,35 | 1,28 | 1,26 | 1,27 | 1,25 | 1,25 | 1,28 | 1,39 | 1,41 | 1,37 | 1,39 | | | | | | | |
| Rb | Sr | Y | Zr | Nb | Mo | Tc | Ru | Rh | Pd | Ag | Cd | In | Sn | Sb | Te | I | Xe | | | | |
| 1,48 | 1,13 | 0,93 | 0,80 | 0,67 | | | | | | 1,26 | 0,97 | 0,81 | 0,71 | 2,45 | 2,21 | 2,16 | 2,17 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | 1,52 | 1,48 | 1,44 | 1,40 | 1,36 | 1,32 | 1,28 | | | | | |
| 2,55 | 2,15 | 1,80 | 1,60 | 1,47 | 1,40 | 1,36 | 1,34 | 1,35 | 1,38 | 1,45 | 1,57 | 1,66 | 1,55 | 1,59 | | | | | | | |
| Cs | Ba | La | Hf | Ta | W | Re | Os | Ir | Pt | Au | Hg | Tl | Pb | Bi | Po | At | Rn | | | | |
| 1,67 | 1,35 | 1,15 | | | | | | | | 1,37 | 1,10 | 0,95 | 0,84 | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 1,48 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2,73 | 2,24 | 1,88 | 1,58 | 1,47 | 1,41 | 1,38 | 1,35 | 1,36 | 1,39 | 1,44 | 1,57 | 1,72 | 1,75 | 1,70 | 1,76 | | | | | | |
| Fr | Ra | Ac | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1,75 | 1,37 | 1,11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Ce | Pr | Nd | Pm | Sm | Eu | Gd | Tb | Dy | Ho | Er | Tm | Yb | Lu | | | | | |
| | | | 1,01 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 1,71- | | | | | 2,04 ²⁺ - | | | | | | | 1,94 ²⁺ - | | | | | | |
| | | | 1,82 | 1,83 | 1,82 | 1,81 | 1,80 | 1,80 ³⁺ | 1,80 | 1,78 | 1,77 | 1,77 | 1,76 | 1,75 | 1,74 ³⁺ | | | | | | |
| | | | Th | Pa | U | Np | Pu | Am | Cm | Bk | Cf | Es | Fm | Md | No | Lr | | | | | |
| | | | 0,99 | 0,90 | 0,83 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | 1,58- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 1,80 | 1,63 | 1,56 | 1,56 | 1,64 | 1,81 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Coordination number

| CN | r/R | geometry | Diagram 1 | Diagram 2 |
|----|----------------------------------|--|-----------|-----------|
| 2 | $0 < \frac{r}{R} < 0.155$ | | | |
| 3 | $0.155 \leq \frac{r}{R} < 0.225$ | Triangle | | |
| 4 | $0.225 \leq \frac{r}{R} < 0.414$ | Tetrahedron | | |
| 6 | $0.414 \leq \frac{r}{R} < 0.732$ | Octahedron | | |
| 8 | $0.732 \leq \frac{r}{R} < 1$ | Body Centered Cubic | | |
| 12 | 1 | Face Centered Cubic and Hexagonal Close Packed | | |

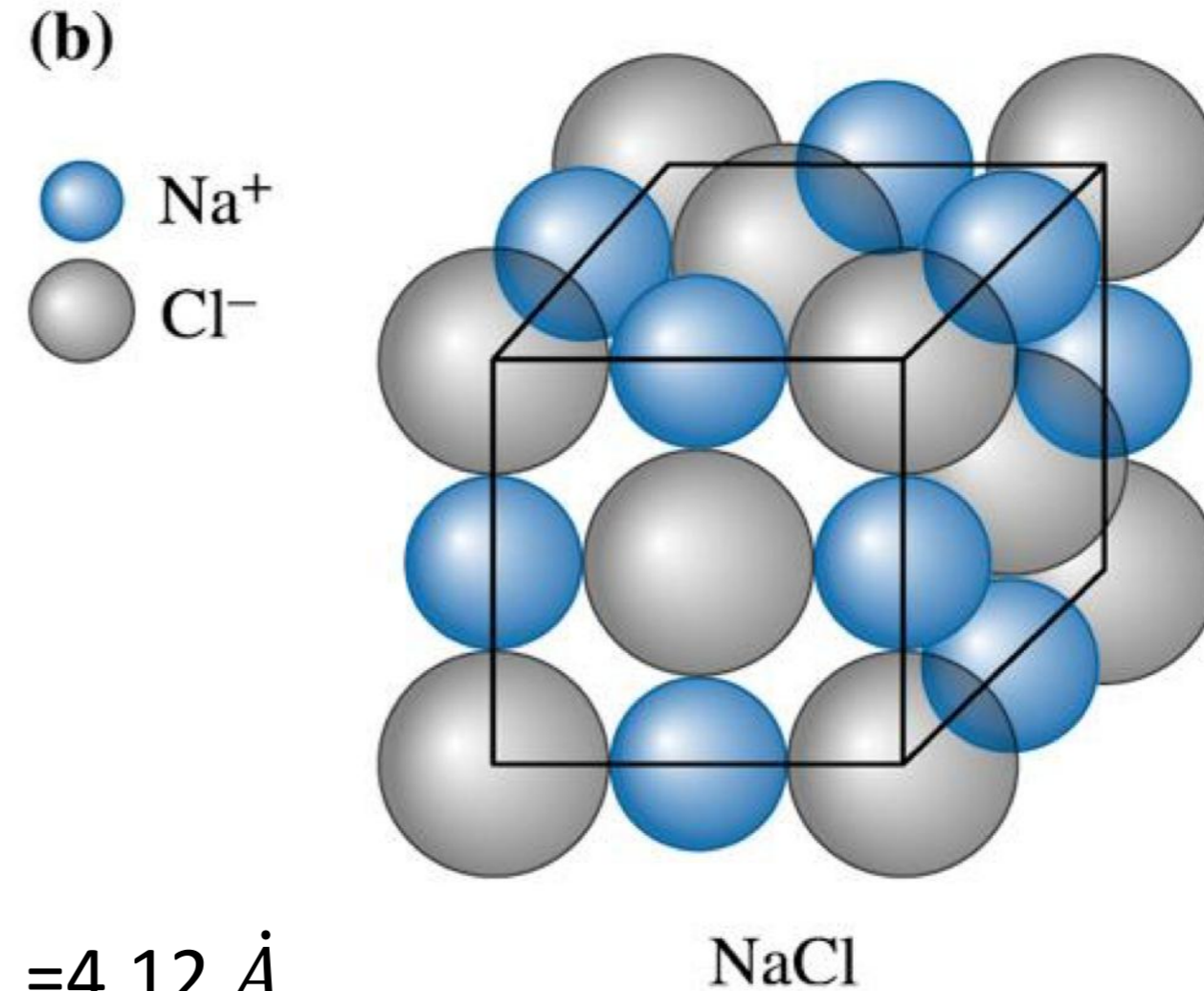
Composite structures



$$\frac{r}{R} = \frac{1.67}{1.81} = 0.9 \quad n=8$$

$$D = R_a + R_b + \Delta_N \quad D_{CsCl} = 3.56 \text{ \AA}, a_o = 4.12 \text{ \AA}$$

| N | $\Delta_N(\text{\AA})$ | N | $\Delta_N(\text{\AA})$ | N | $\Delta_N(\text{\AA})$ |
|---|------------------------|---|------------------------|----|------------------------|
| 1 | -0.50 | 5 | -0.05 | 9 | 0.11 |
| 2 | -0.31 | 6 | 0 | 10 | 0.14 |
| 3 | -0.19 | 7 | 0.04 | 11 | 0.17 |
| 4 | -0.11 | 8 | 0.08 | 12 | 0.19 |

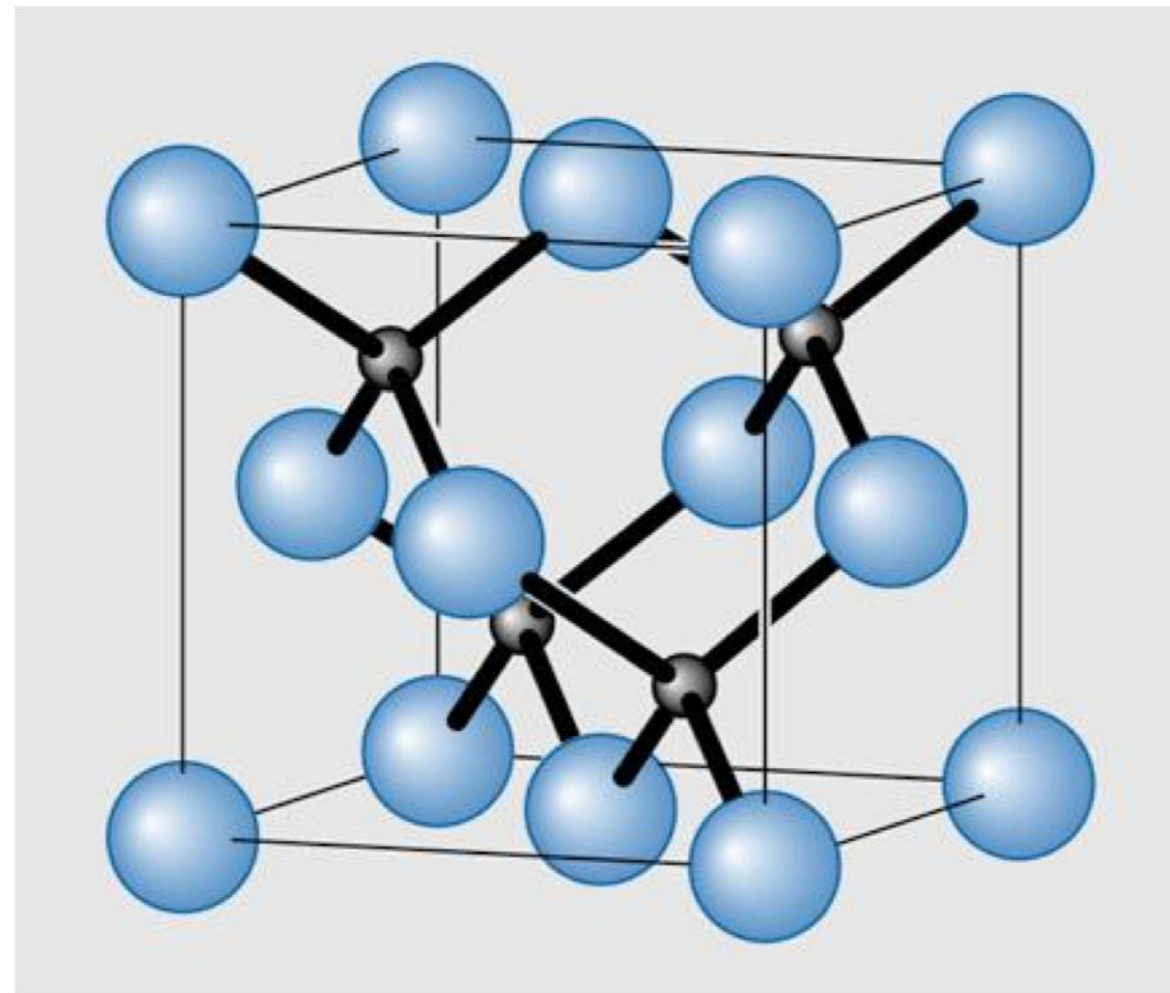


$$\frac{r}{R} = \frac{0.97}{1.81} = 0.5 \quad n=6$$

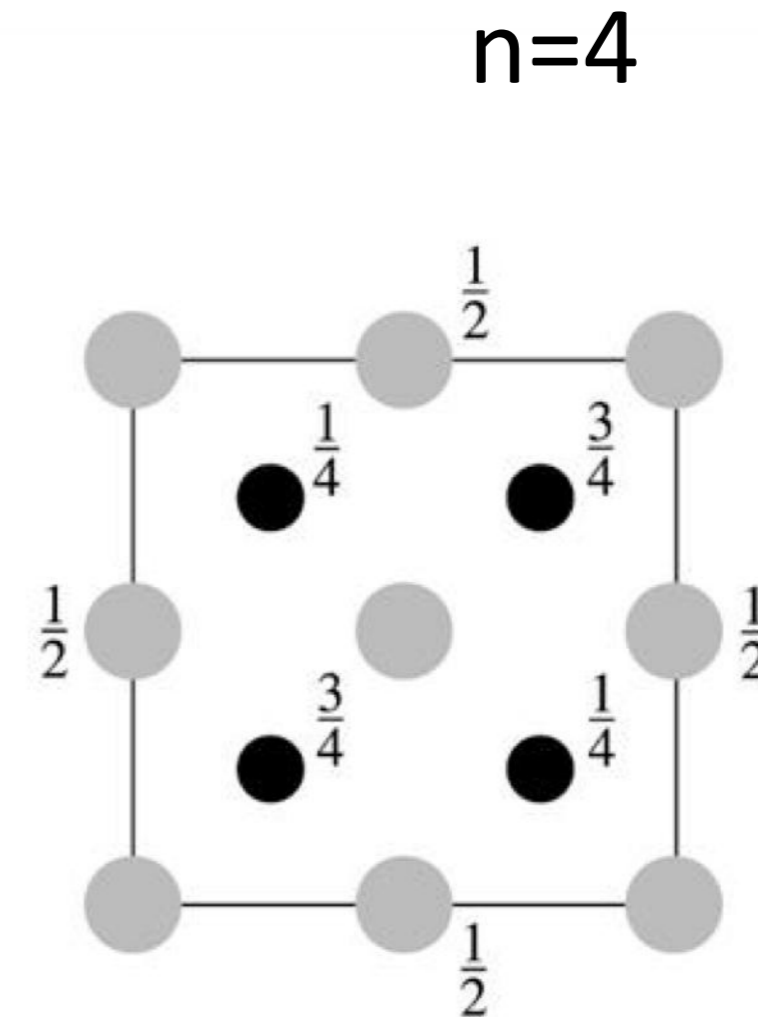
Composite structures

Sphalerite (zincblende)

$$\frac{r}{R} = \frac{0.74}{1.84} = 0.4$$



(a)

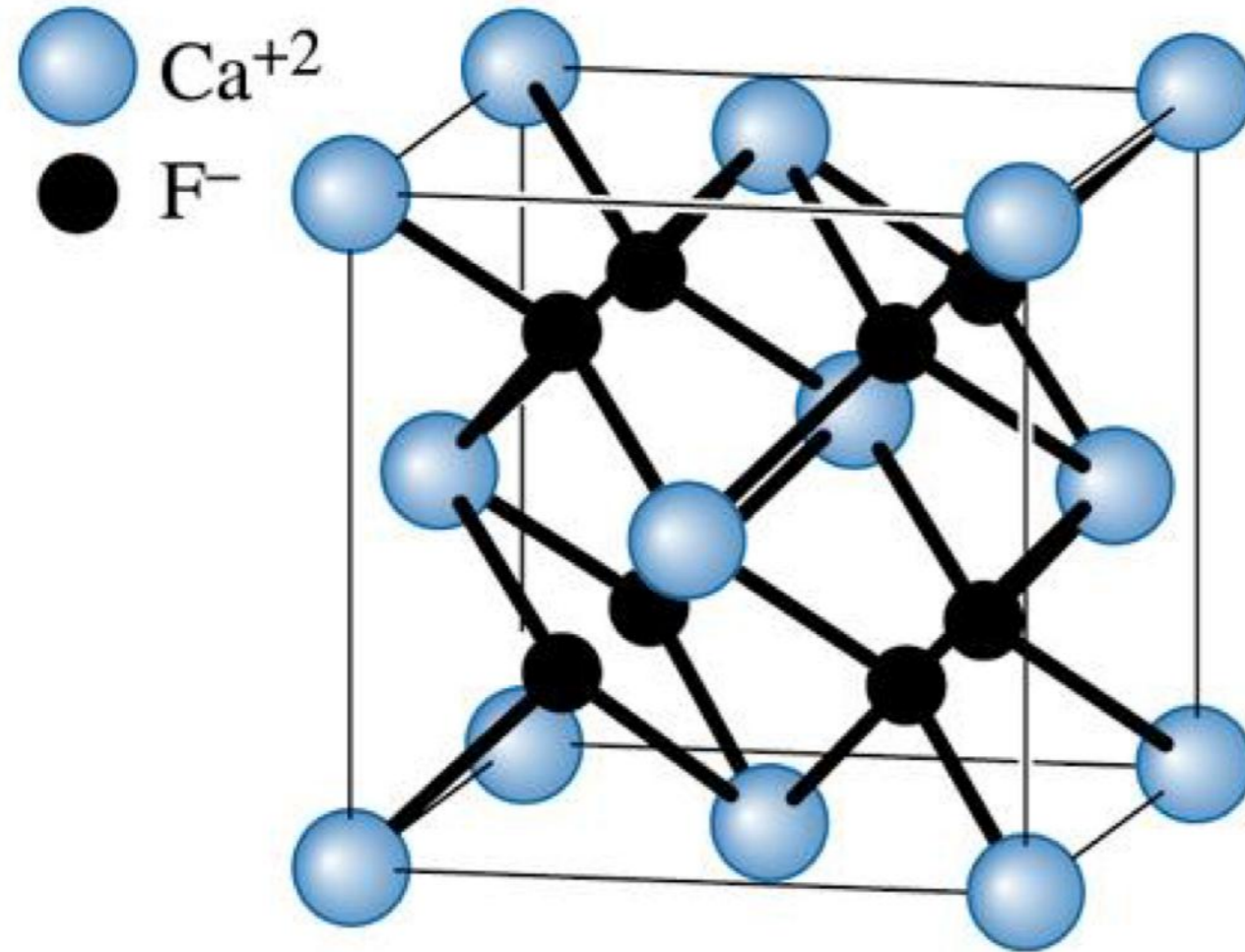


(b)

ZnS

Composite structures

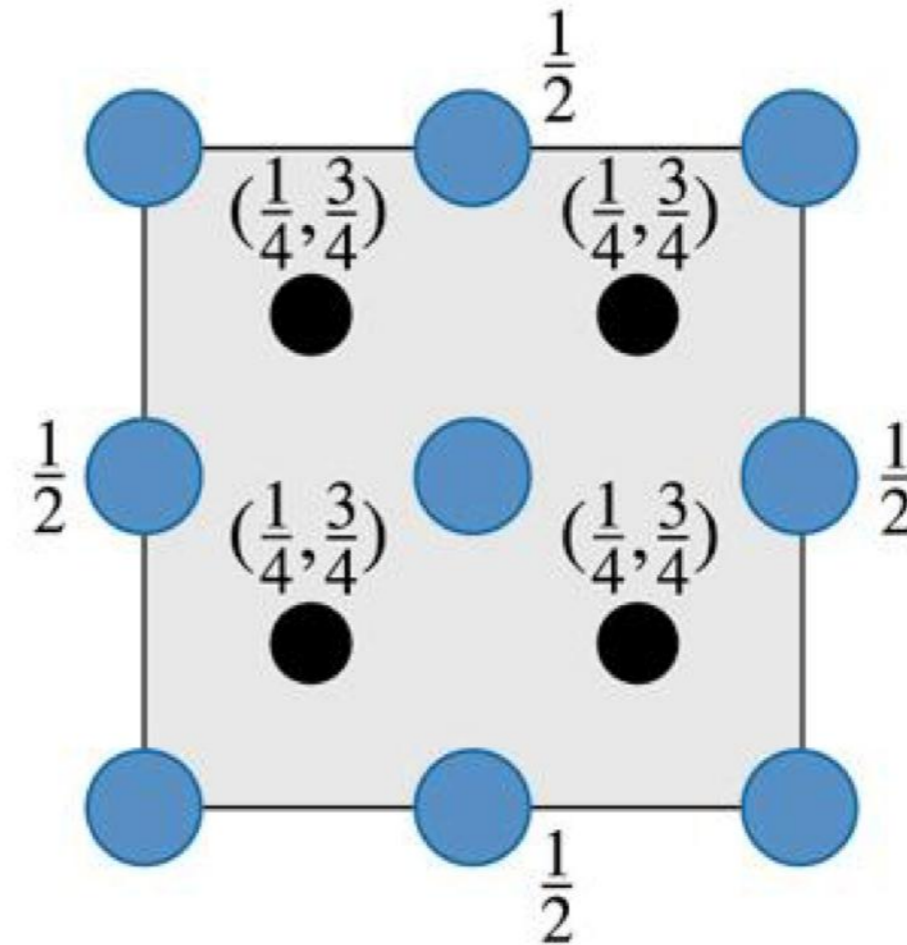
Fluorite CaF_2



Fluorite cell

(a)

$$n_{\text{Ca}}=8 \quad \frac{r}{R} = \frac{0.99}{1.36} = 0.73$$

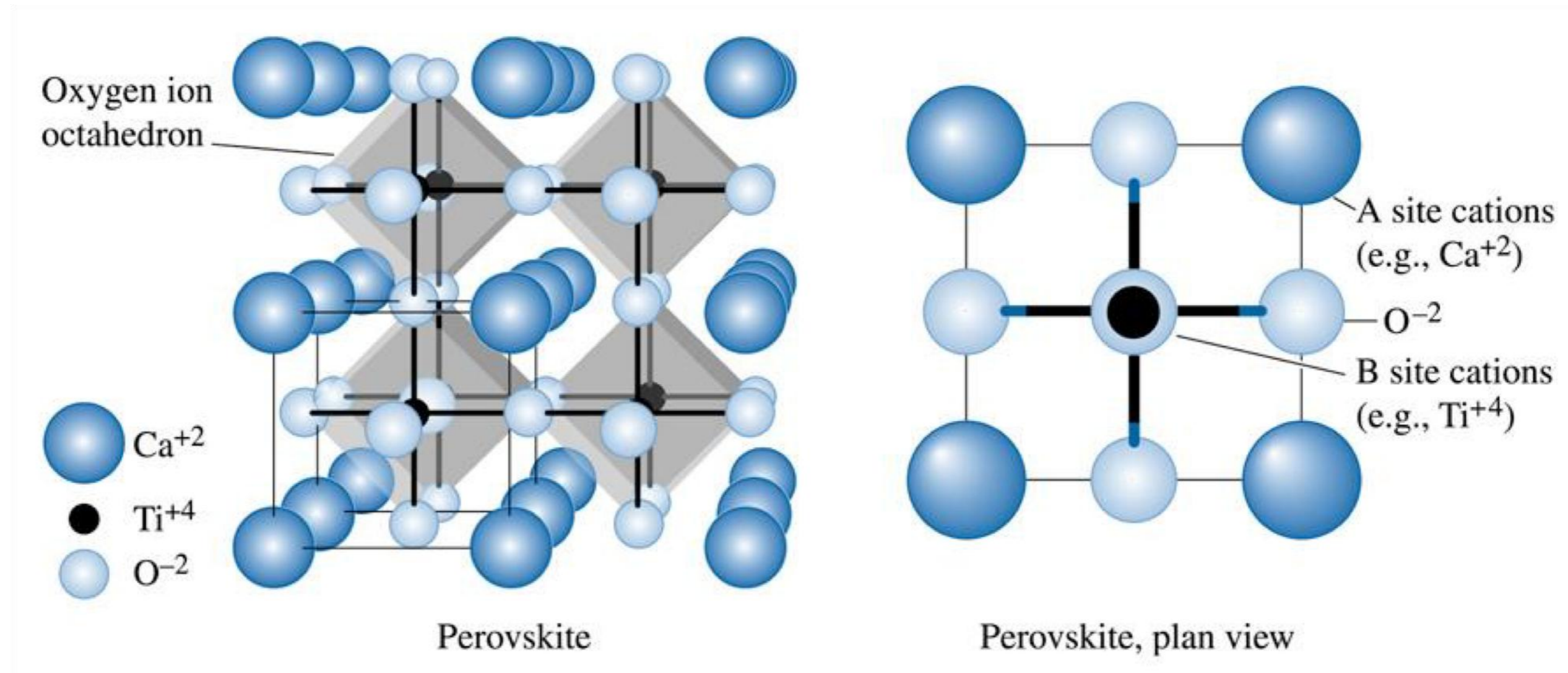


Plan view

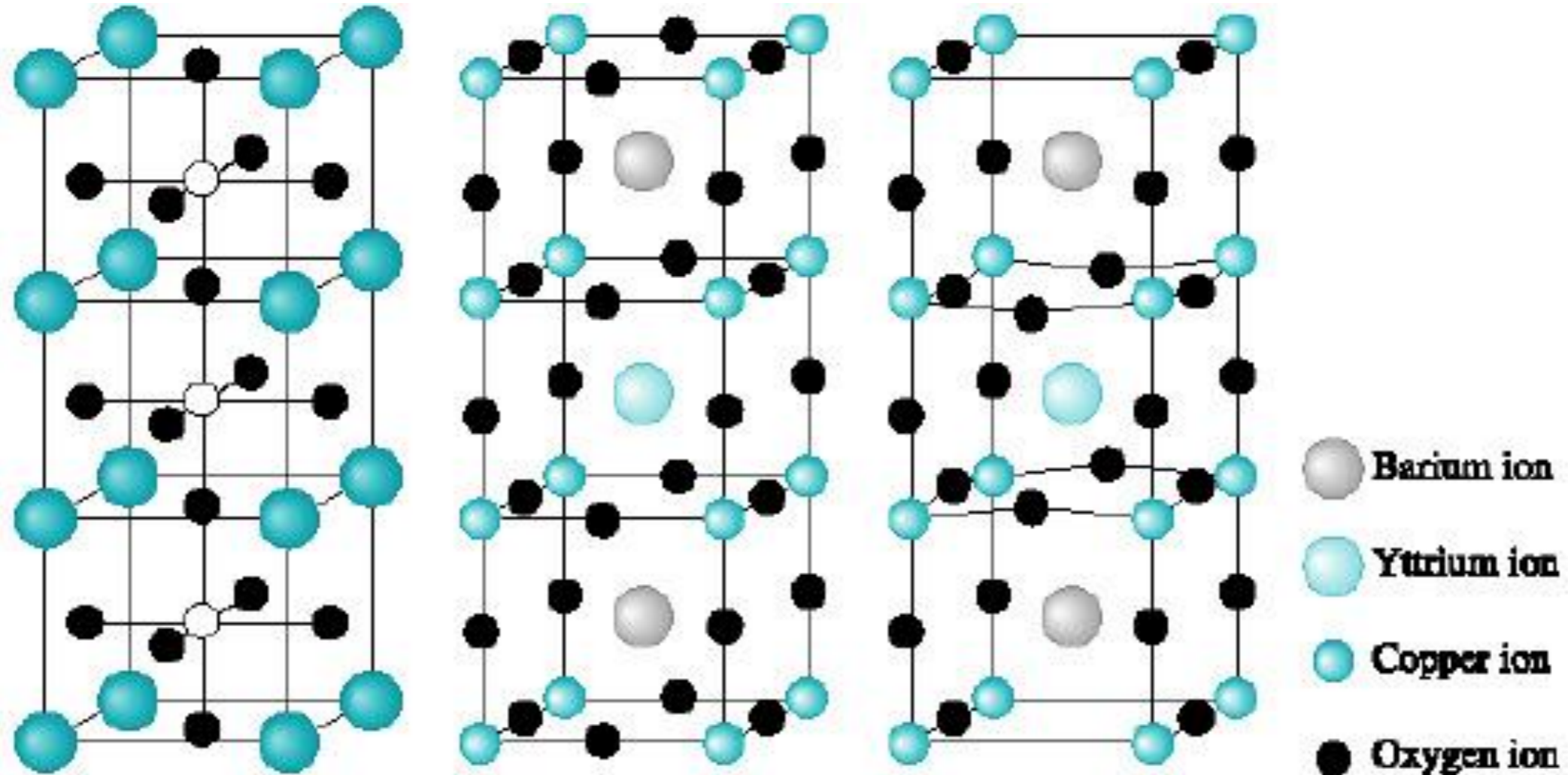
(b)

Composite structures

Perovskite CaTiO_3



Perovskite superconductor



Perovskite

YBa₂Cu₃O₇