and the potential difference V_0 is

$V_0 = E_0 d$

The capacitance C_0 in this case is

$$C_0 = \frac{Q}{V_0} = \varepsilon_0 \frac{A}{d} \tag{2.46}$$

Consider next a dielectric inserted between the plates fully occupying the intervening region. The dielectric is polarised by the field and, as explained in Section 2.10, the effect is equivalent to two charged sheets (at the surfaces of the dielectric normal to the field) with surface charge densities σ_p and $-\sigma_p$. The electric field in the dielectric then corresponds to the case when the net surface charge density on the plates is $\pm(\sigma - \sigma_p)$. That is,

$$E = \frac{\sigma - \sigma_P}{\varepsilon_0} \tag{2.47}$$

so that the potential difference across the plates is

$$V = E d = \frac{\sigma - \sigma_P}{\varepsilon_0} d \tag{2.48}$$

For linear dielectrics, we expect σ_p to be proportional to E_0, i.e., to σ. Thus, $(\sigma - \sigma_p)$ is proportional to σ and we can write

$$\sigma - \sigma_P = \frac{\sigma}{K} \tag{2.49}$$

where K is a constant characteristic of the dielectric. Clearly, $K > 1$. We then have

$$V = \frac{\sigma d}{\varepsilon_0 K} = \frac{Q d}{A \varepsilon_0 K} \tag{2.50}$$

The capacitance C, with dielectric between the plates, is then

$$C = \frac{Q}{V} = \frac{\varepsilon_0 K A}{d} \tag{2.51}$$

The product $\varepsilon_0 K$ is called the *permittivity* of the medium and is denoted by ε

$$\varepsilon = \varepsilon_0 K \tag{2.52}$$

For vacuum $K = 1$ and $\varepsilon = \varepsilon_0$; ε_0 is called the *permittivity of the vacuum*. The dimensionless ratio

$$K = \frac{\varepsilon}{\varepsilon_0} \tag{2.53}$$

is called the *dielectric constant* of the substance. As remarked before, from Eq. (2.49), it is clear that K is greater than 1. From Eqs. (2.46) and (2. 51)

$$K = \frac{C}{C_0} \tag{2.54}$$

Thus, the dielectric constant of a substance is the factor (>1) by which the capacitance increases from its vacuum value, when the dielectric is inserted fully between the plates of a capacitor. Though we arrived at

EXAMPLE 2.8

$$V = E_0\left(\frac{1}{4}d\right) + \frac{E_0}{K}\left(\frac{3}{4}d\right)$$

$$= E_0 d\left(\frac{1}{4} + \frac{3}{4K}\right) = V_0 \frac{K+3}{4K}$$

The potential difference decreases by the factor $(K + 3)/4K$ while the free charge Q_0 on the plates remains unchanged. The capacitance thus increases

$$C = \frac{Q_0}{V} = \frac{4K}{K+3}\frac{Q_0}{V_0} = \frac{4K}{K+3}C_0$$

2.14 Combination of Capacitors

We can combine several capacitors of capacitance $C_1, C_2,\ldots, C_n$ to obtain a system with some effective capacitance C. The effective capacitance depends on the way the individual capacitors are combined. Two simple possibilities are discussed below.

2.14.1 Capacitors in series

Figure 2.26 shows capacitors C_1 and C_2 combined in series.

The left plate of C_1 and the right plate of C_2 are connected to two terminals of a battery and have charges Q and $-Q$, respectively. It then follows that the right plate of C_1 has charge $-Q$ and the left plate of C_2 has charge Q. If this was not so, the net charge on each capacitor would not be zero. This would result in an electric field in the conductor connecting C_1 and C_2. Charge would flow until the net charge on both C_1 and C_2 is zero and there is no electric field in the conductor connecting C_1 and C_2. Thus, in the series combination, charges on the two plates ($\pm Q$) are the same on each capacitor. The total potential drop V across the combination is the sum of the potential drops V_1 and V_2 across C_1 and C_2, respectively.

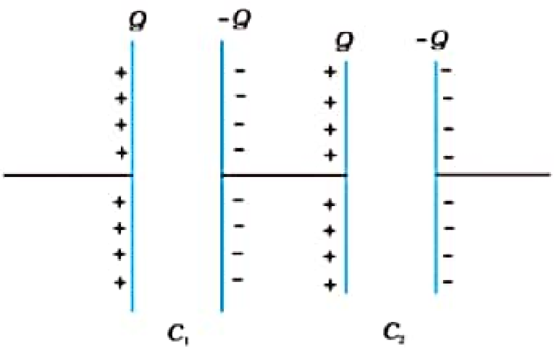

FIGURE 2.26 Combination of two capacitors in series.

$$V = V_1 + V_2 = \frac{Q}{C_1} + \frac{Q}{C_2} \tag{2.55}$$

i.e., $$\frac{V}{Q} = \frac{1}{C_1} + \frac{1}{C_2}, \tag{2.56}$$

Now we can regard the combination as an effective capacitor with charge Q and potential difference V. The *effective capacitance* of the combination is

$$C = \frac{Q}{V} \tag{2.57}$$

We compare Eq. (2.57) with Eq. (2.56), and obtain

$$\frac{1}{C} = \frac{1}{C_1} + \frac{1}{C_2} \tag{2.58}$$

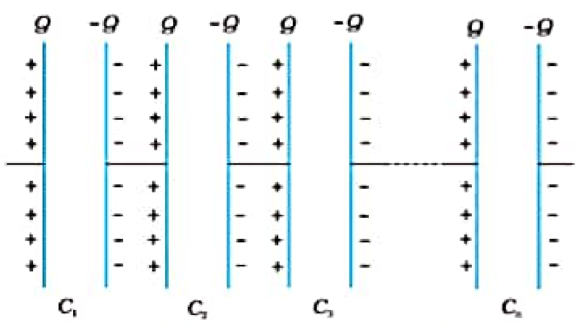

FIGURE 2.27 Combination of n capacitors in series.

Scanned by CamScanner

2.16 Van De Graaff Generator

This is a machine that can build up high voltages of the order of a few million volts. The resulting large electric fields are used to accelerate charged particles (electrons, protons, ions) to high energies needed for experiments to probe the small scale structure of matter. The principle underlying the machine is as follows.

Suppose we have a large spherical conducting shell of radius R, on which we place a charge Q. This charge spreads itself uniformly all over the sphere. As we have seen in Section 1.14, the field outside the sphere is just that of a point charge Q at the centre; while the field inside the sphere vanishes. So the potential outside is that of a point charge; and inside it is constant, namely the value at the radius R. We thus have:

Potential inside conducting spherical shell of radius R carrying charge Q = constant

$$= \frac{1}{4\pi\varepsilon_0}\frac{Q}{R} \tag{2.78}$$

Now, as shown in Fig. 2.32, let us suppose that in some way we introduce a small sphere of radius r, carrying some charge q, into the large one, and place it at the centre. The potential due to this new charge clearly has the following values at the radii indicated:

Potential due to small sphere of radius r carrying charge q

$$= \frac{1}{4\pi\varepsilon_0}\frac{q}{r} \text{ at surface of small sphere}$$

$$= \frac{1}{4\pi\varepsilon_0}\frac{q}{R} \text{ at large shell of radius } R. \tag{2.79}$$

Taking both charges q and Q into account we have for the total potential V and the potential difference the values

$$V(R) = \frac{1}{4\pi\varepsilon_0}\left(\frac{Q}{R}+\frac{q}{R}\right)$$

$$V(r) = \frac{1}{4\pi\varepsilon_0}\left(\frac{Q}{R}+\frac{q}{r}\right)$$

$$V(r) - V(R) = \frac{q}{4\pi\varepsilon_0}\left(\frac{1}{r}-\frac{1}{R}\right) \tag{2.80}$$

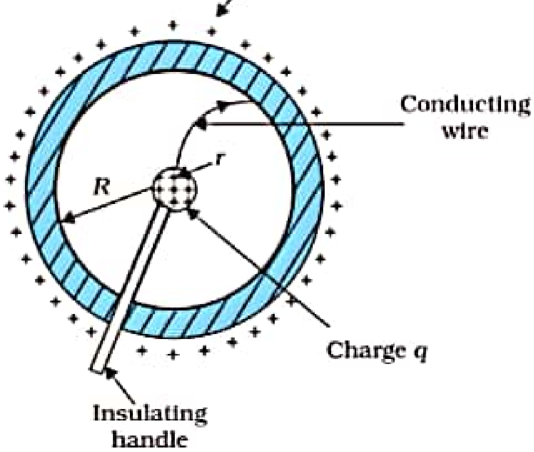

FIGURE 2.32 Illustrating the principle of the electrostatic generator.

Assume now that q is positive. We see that, independent of the amount of charge Q that may have accumulated on the larger sphere and even if it is positive, the inner sphere is always at a higher potential: the difference $V(r)–V(R)$ is positive. The potential due to Q is constant upto radius R and so cancels out in the difference!

PHYSICS

Van de Graaff generator, principle and demonstration:
http://amasce.com/emotor/vdg.html
http://www.coe.ufrj.br/~acmq/myvdg.html

Potential	ϕ or V	$[M^1 L^2 T^{-3} A^{-1}]$	V	Potential difference is physically significant
Capacitance	C	$[M^{-1} L^{-2} T^{4} A^2]$	F	
Polarisation	**P**	$[L^{-2} AT]$	C m^{-2}	Dipole moment per unit volume
Dielectric constant	K	[Dimensionless]		

POINTS TO PONDER

1. Electrostatics deals with forces between charges at rest. But if there is a force on a charge, how can it be at rest? Thus, when we are talking of electrostatic force between charges, it should be understood that each charge is being kept at rest by some unspecified force that opposes the net Coulomb force on the charge.
2. A capacitor is so configured that it confines the electric field lines within a small region of space. Thus, even though field may have considerable strength, the potential difference between the two conductors of a capacitor is small.
3. Electric field is discontinuous across the surface of a spherical charged shell. It is zero inside and $\frac{\sigma}{\varepsilon_0}\hat{\mathbf{n}}$ outside. Electric potential is, however continuous across the surface, equal to $q/4\pi\varepsilon_0 R$ at the surface.
4. The torque $\mathbf{p} \times \mathbf{E}$ on a dipole causes it to oscillate about **E**. Only if there is a dissipative mechanism, the oscillations are damped and the dipole eventually aligns with **E**.

2.25 Obtain the equivalent capacitance of the network in Fig. 2.35. For a 300 V supply, determine the charge and voltage across each capacitor.

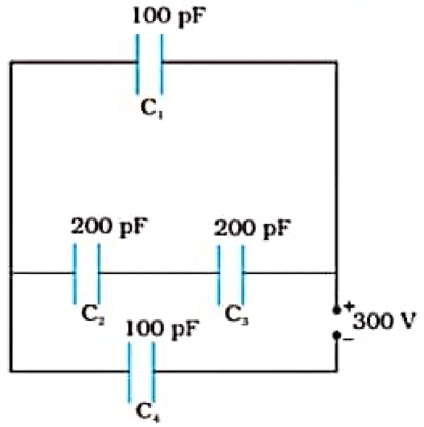

FIGURE 2.35

2.26 The plates of a parallel plate capacitor have an area of 90 cm^2 each and are separated by 2.5 mm. The capacitor is charged by connecting it to a 400 V supply.

(a) How much electrostatic energy is stored by the capacitor?

(b) View this energy as stored in the electrostatic field between the plates, and obtain the energy per unit volume u. Hence arrive at a relation between u and the magnitude of electric field E between the plates.

2.27 A 4 µF capacitor is charged by a 200 V supply. It is then disconnected from the supply, and is connected to another uncharged 2 µF capacitor. How much electrostatic energy of the first capacitor is lost in the form of heat and electromagnetic radiation?

2.28 Show that the force on each plate of a parallel plate capacitor has a magnitude equal to (½) QE, where Q is the charge on the capacitor, and E is the magnitude of electric field between the plates. Explain the origin of the factor ½.

2.29 A spherical capacitor consists of two concentric spherical conductors, held in position by suitable insulating supports (Fig. 2.36). Show

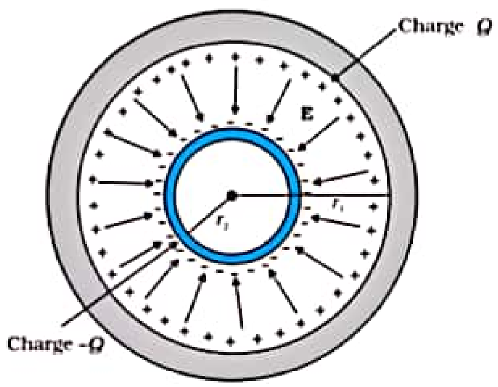

FIGURE 2.36