

# Le Chatelier's principle

**Introduction:** Le Chatelier's principle states that when a system at equilibrium undergoes stress processes will occur to reduce the stress and return the system to equilibrium.

## EQUILIBRIUM AND LE CHÂTELIER'S PRINCIPLE

Reversible chemical reactions reach equilibrium in closed systems (no substances added or lost). Here's how different conditions affect that equilibrium.

EQUILIBRIUM	CONCENTRATION	TEMPERATURE	PRESSURE
$A + B \rightleftharpoons C + D$ <p>In reversible reactions products of the reaction can react to prevent the original reactants. At dynamic equilibrium in the rates of the forwards and backwards reactions are equal; the concentrations of the reactants and products don't change.</p>	<p><b>REACTANT CONCENTRATION INCREASED</b></p> <p>The equilibrium position shifts to reduce the reactant concentration.</p> <p><b>REACTION FORMING PRODUCTS FAVOURIED</b></p> <p>In the example above the new equilibrium mixture will contain a higher concentration of C and D.</p>	<p><b>TEMPERATURE INCREASED</b></p> <p>The equilibrium position shifts to reduce the temperature.</p> <p><b>THE ENDOTHERMIC REACTION WILL BE FAVOURIED</b></p> <p>In the example above the new equilibrium mixture will contain more A and B, and less C and D.</p>	<p><b>PRESSURE INCREASED</b></p> <p>The equilibrium position shifts to reduce the pressure.</p> <p><b>SIDE OF REACTION WITH FEWER GAS MOLECULES FAVOURIED</b></p> <p>In the example above the new equilibrium mixture will contain more C and D, and less A and B.</p>
<p><b>LE CHÂTELIER'S PRINCIPLE</b></p> <p>An analogy for changing equilibrium conditions</p> <p>Le Chatelier's principle states that when a change is made to the conditions of a dynamic equilibrium, the system moves to counteract the change, causing changes in quantities of reactants and products.</p>	<p><b>PRODUCT CONCENTRATION INCREASED</b></p> <p>The equilibrium position shifts to reduce the product concentration.</p> <p><b>REACTION FORMING REACTANTS FAVOURIED</b></p> <p>In the example above the new equilibrium mixture will contain a higher concentration of A and B.</p>	<p><b>TEMPERATURE DECREASED</b></p> <p>The equilibrium position shifts to increase the temperature.</p> <p><b>THE EXOTHERMIC REACTION WILL BE FAVOURIED</b></p> <p>In the example above the new equilibrium mixture will contain more C and D, and less A and B.</p>	<p><b>PRESSURE DECREASED</b></p> <p>The equilibrium position shifts to increase the pressure.</p> <p><b>SIDE OF REACTION WITH MORE GAS MOLECULES FAVOURIED</b></p> <p>In the example above the new equilibrium mixture will contain more A and B, and less C and D.</p>

Note: using a catalyst increases the rate of both the forwards and backwards reactions but doesn't change the equilibrium position.

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