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.

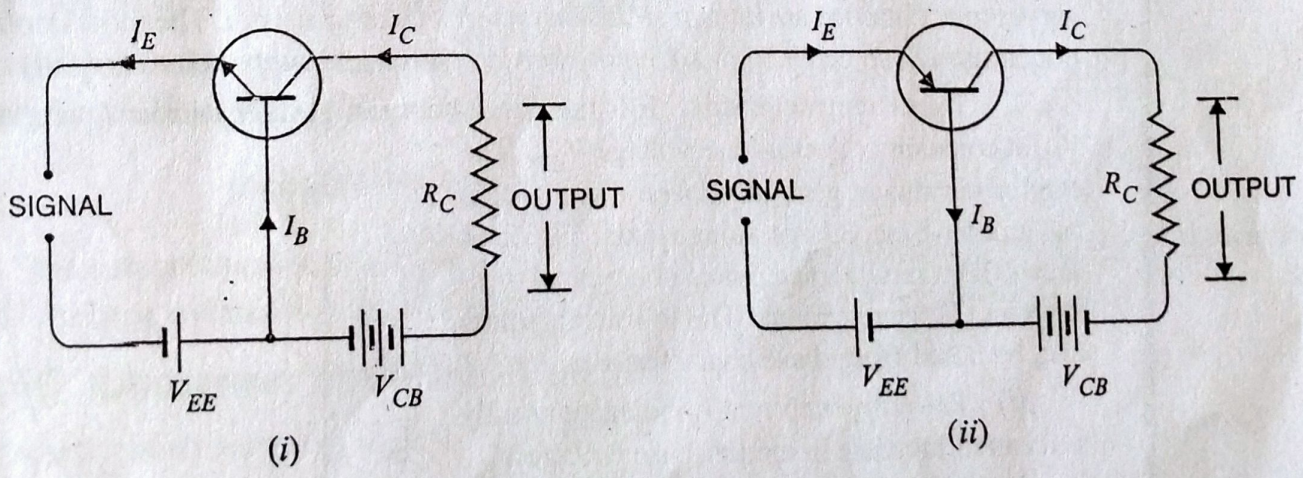

Fig. 8.9

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.

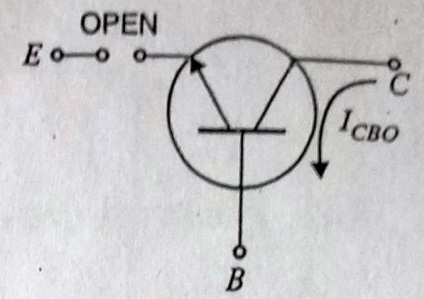

Fig. 8.10

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.

$\therefore$ 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.

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

Now $$I_E = I_C + I_B$$

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

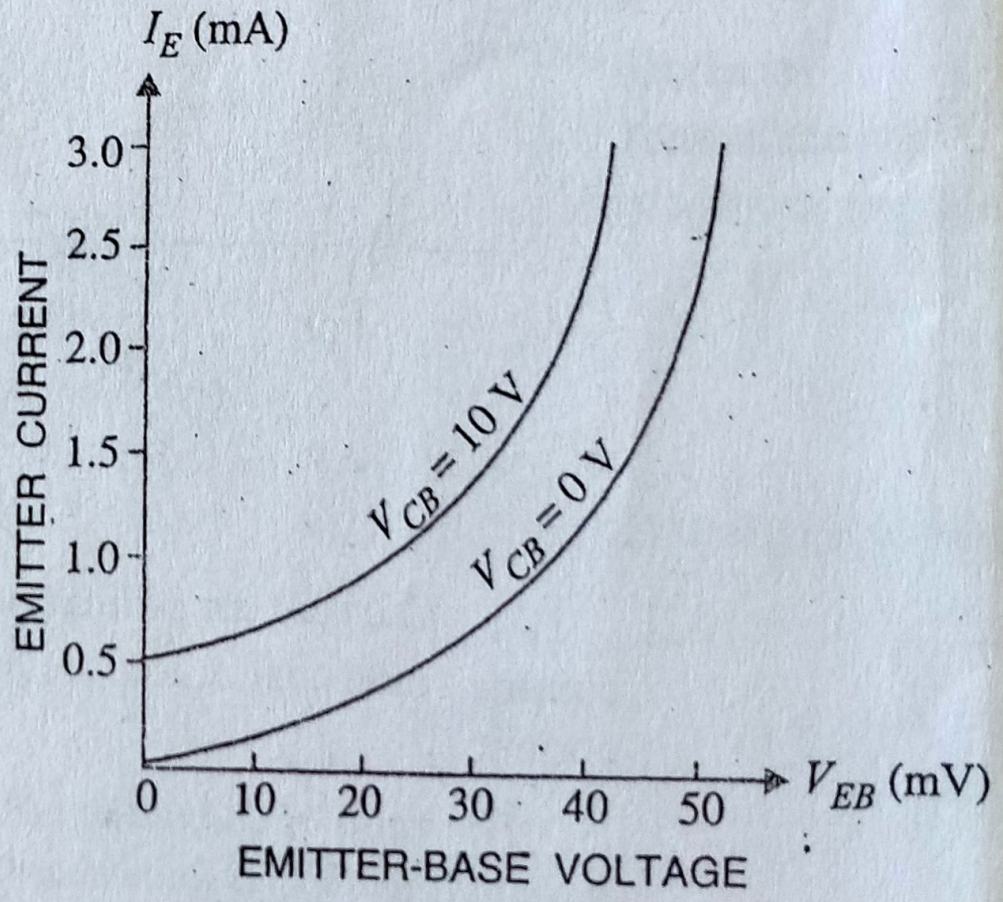


Fig. 8.14

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.

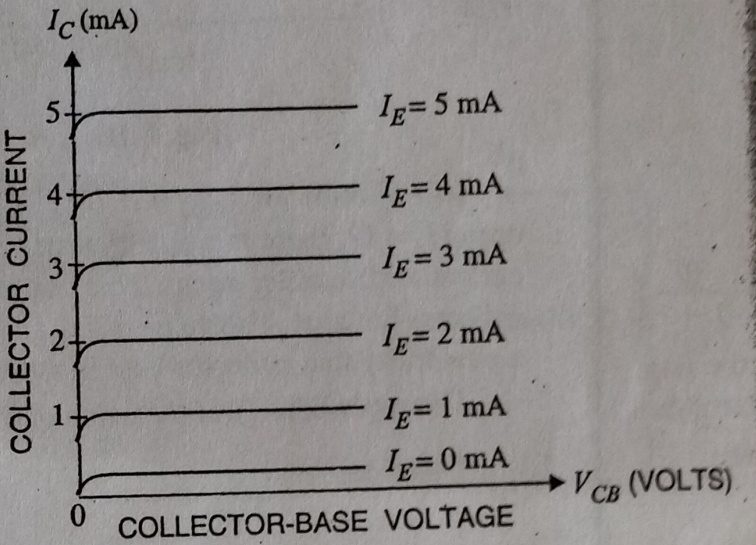


Fig. 8.15

(*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.

* 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.

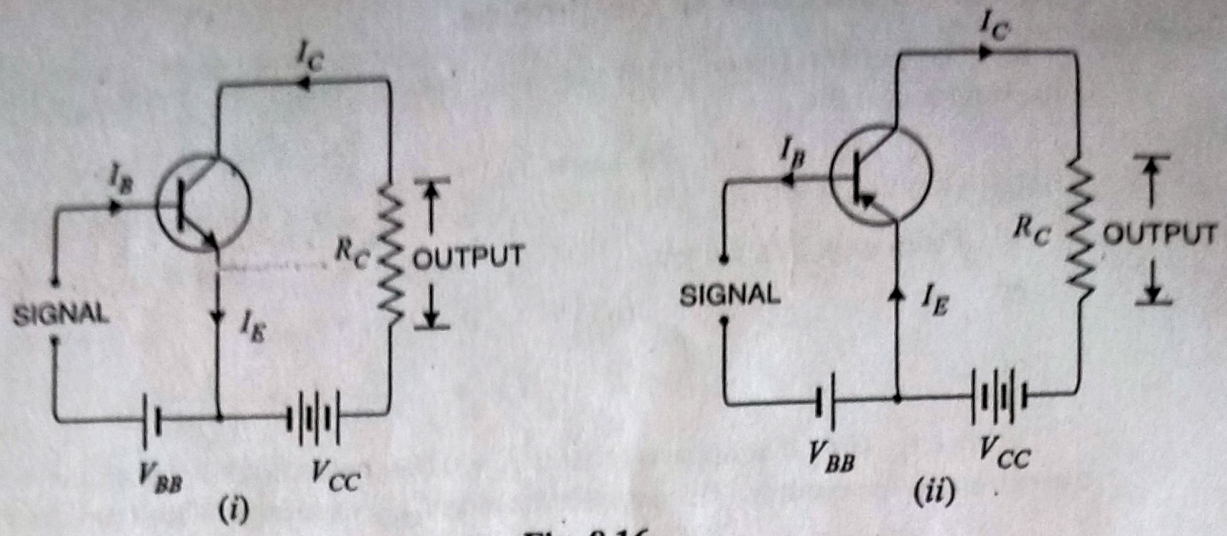


Fig. 8.16

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 $I_E = I_B + I_C$

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

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

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.

* 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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}.

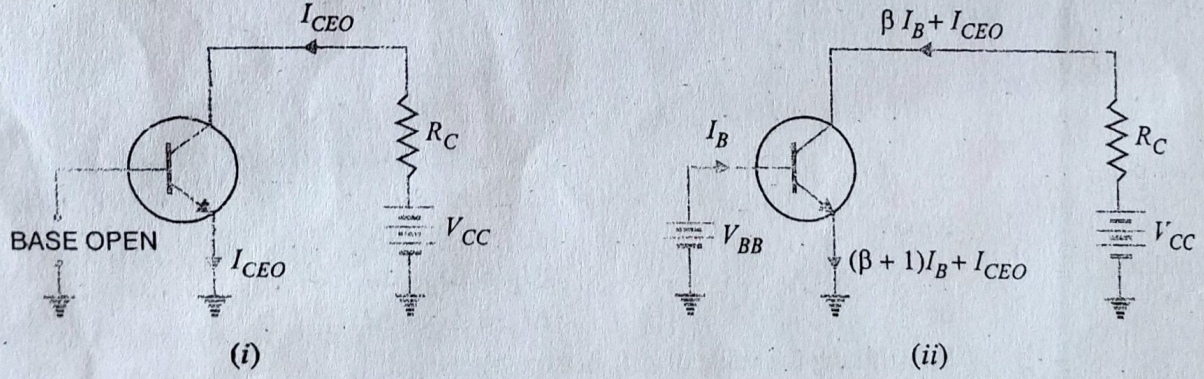


Fig. 8.17

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

$$\text{Base current} = I_B$$

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

$$\text{Emitter current} = \text{Collector current} + \text{Base current}$$

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

It may be noted here that :

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

8.12 Characteristics of Common Emitter Connection

The important characteristics of this circuit arrangement are the *input characteristics* and *output characteristics*.

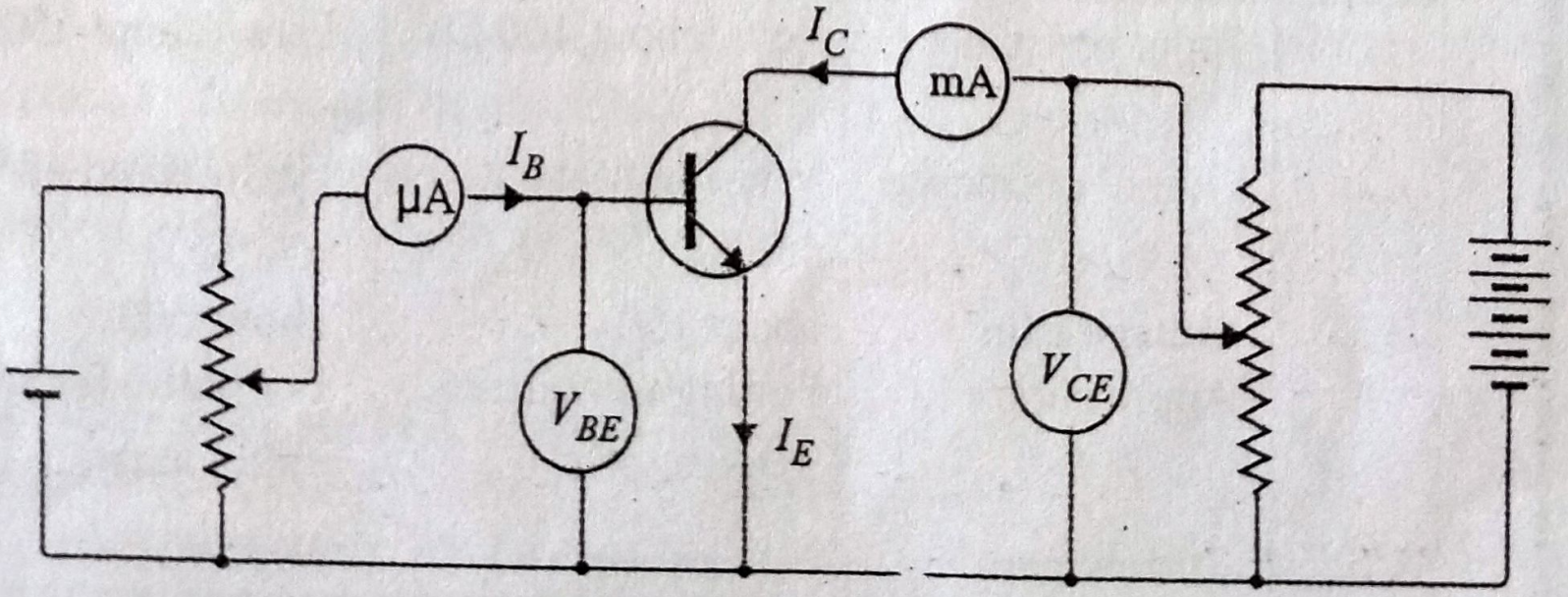


Fig. 8.29

1. Input characteristic. *It is the curve between base current I_B and base-emitter voltage V_{BE} at constant collector-emitter voltage V_{CE}*

The input characteristics of a *CE* connection can be determined by the circuit shown in Fig. 8.29. Keeping V_{CE} constant (say at 10 V), note the base current I_B for various values of V_{BE}. Then plot the readings obtained on the graph, taking I_B along *y*-axis and V_{BE} along *x*-axis. This gives the input characteristic at V_{CE} = 10V as shown in Fig. 8.30. Following a similar procedure, a family of input characteristics can be drawn. The following points may be noted from the characteristics :

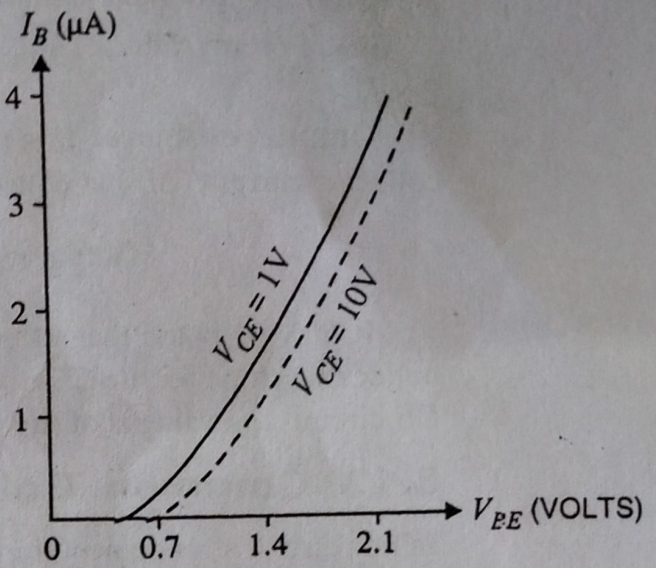


Fig. 8.30

(*i*) The characteristic resembles that of a forward biased diode curve. This is expected since the base-emitter section of transistor is a diode and it is forward biased.

(*ii*) As compared to *CB* arrangement, I_B increases less rapidly with V_{BE}. Therefore, input resistance of a *CE* circuit is higher than that of *CB* circuit.

Input resistance. It is the ratio of change in base-emitter voltage (ΔV_{BE}) to the change in base current (ΔI_B) at constant V_{CE} *i.e.*

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

The value of input resistance for a *CE* circuit is of the order of a few hundred ohms.

2. Output characteristic. *It is the curve between collector current I_C and collector-emitter voltage V_{CE} at constant base current I_B.*

The output characteristics of a *CE* circuit can be drawn with the help of the circuit shown in Fig. 8.29. Keeping the base current I_B fixed at some value say, 5 μA, note the collector current I_C for various values of V_{CE}. Then plot the readings on a graph, taking I_C along *y*-axis and V_{CE} along *x*-axis. This gives the output characteristic at I_B = 5 μA as shown in Fig. 8.31 (*i*). The test can be repeated for I_B = 10 μA to obtain the new output characteristic as shown in Fig. 8.31 (*ii*). Following similar procedure, a family of output characteristics can be drawn as shown in Fig. 8.31 (*iii*).

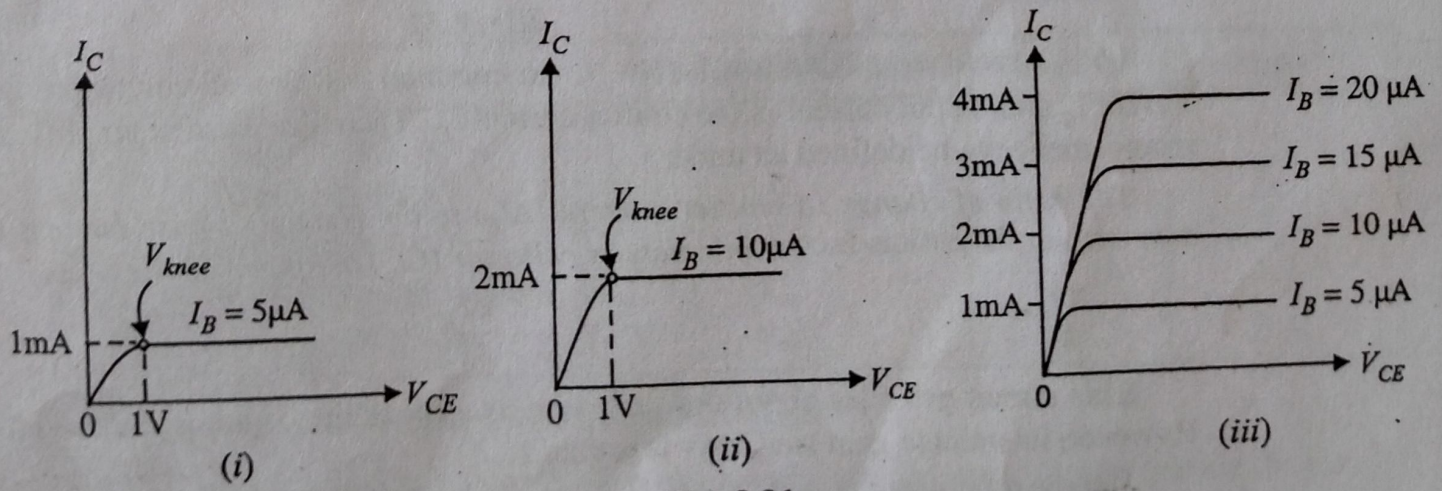


Fig. 8.31

The following points may be noted from the characteristics:

(*i*) The collector current I_C varies with V_{CE} for V_{CE} between 0 and 1V only. After this, collector current becomes *almost* constant and independent of V_{CE}. This value of V_{CE} upto which collector

current I_C changes with V_{CE} is called the *knee voltage* (V_{knee}). *The transistors are always operated in the region above knee voltage.*

(*ii*) Above knee voltage, I_C is almost constant. However, a small increase in I_C with increasing V_{CE} is caused by the collector depletion layer getting wider and capturing a few more majority carriers before electron-hole combinations occur in the base area.

(*iii*) For any value of V_{CE} above knee voltage, the collector current I_C is approximately equal to $\beta \times I_B$.

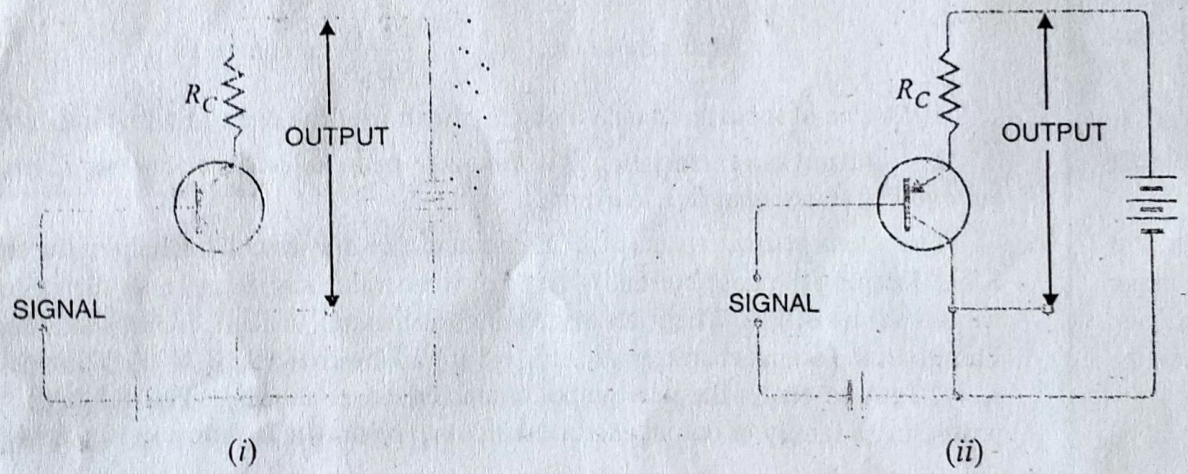
Output resistance. It is the ratio of change in collector-emitter voltage (ΔV_{CE}) to the change in collector current (ΔI_C) at constant I_B *i.e.*

$$\text{Output resistance, } r_o = \frac{\Delta V_{CE}}{\Delta I_C} \text{ at constant } I_B$$

It may be noted that whereas the output characteristics of *CB* circuit are horizontal, they have noticeable slope for the *CE* circuit. Therefore, the output resistance of a *CE* circuit is less than that of *CB* circuit. Its value is of the order of 50 kΩ.

8.13 Common Collector Connection

In this circuit arrangement, input is applied between base and collector while output is taken between the emitter and collector. Here, collector of the transistor is common to both input and output circuits and hence the name common collector connection. Fig. 8.32 (*i*) shows common collector *npn* transistor circuit whereas Fig. 8.32 (*ii*) shows common collector *pnp* circuit.



(*i*) (*ii*)

Fig. 8.32

(*i*) Current amplification factor γ. In common collector circuit, input current is the base current I_B and output current is the emitter current I_E. Therefore, current amplification in this circuit arrangement can be defined as under :

The ratio of change in emitter current (ΔI_E) to the change in base current (ΔI_B) is known as **current amplification factor** *in common collector (CC) arrangement i.e.*

$$\gamma = \frac{\Delta I_E}{\Delta I_B}$$

This circuit provides about the same current gain as the common emitter circuit as $\Delta I_E \simeq \Delta I_C$ However, its voltage gain is always less than 1.

Relation between γ and α

$$\gamma = \frac{\Delta I_E}{\Delta I_B} \quad ...(i)$$

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

Now $$I_E = I_B + I_C$$

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

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

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

$$\gamma = \frac{\Delta I_E}{\Delta I_E - \Delta I_C}$$

Dividing the numerator and denominator of R.H.S. by ΔI_E, we get,

$$\gamma = \frac{\frac{\Delta I_E}{\Delta I_E}}{\frac{\Delta I_E}{\Delta I_E} - \frac{\Delta I_C}{\Delta I_E}} = \frac{1}{1-\alpha} \qquad \left(\because \alpha = \frac{\Delta I_C}{\Delta I_E}\right)$$

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

(*ii*) Expression for collector current

We know $$I_C = \alpha I_E + I_{CBO}$$ (See Art. 8.8)

Also $$I_E = I_B + I_C = I_B + (\alpha I_E + I_{CBO})$$

$$\therefore \quad I_E(1-\alpha) = I_B + I_{CBO}$$

or $$I_E = \frac{I_B}{1-\alpha} + \frac{I_{CBO}}{1-\alpha}$$

or $$I_C \simeq I_E = {}^{*}(\beta+1) I_B + (\beta+1) I_{CBO}$$

(*iii*) Applications. The common collector circuit has very high input resistance (about 750 kΩ) and very low output resistance (about 25 Ω). Due to this reason, the voltage gain provided by this circuit is always less than 1. Therefore, this circuit arrangement is seldom used for amplification. However, due to relatively high input resistance and low output resistance, this circuit is primarily used for impedance matching *i.e.* for driving a low impedance load from a high impedance source.

8.16 Transistor as an Amplifier in CE Arrangement

Fig. 8.33 shows the common emitter *npn* amplifier circuit. Note that a battery V_{BB} is connected in the input circuit in addition to the signal voltage. This d.c. voltage is known as *bias voltage* and its magnitude is such that it always keeps the emitter-base junction forward *biased regardless of the polarity of the signal source.

Operation. During the positive half-cycle of the **signal, the forward bias across the emitter-base junction is increased. Therefore, more electrons flow from the emitter to the collector *via* the base. This causes an increase in collector current. The increased collector current produces a greater voltage drop across the collector load resistance R_C. However, during the negative half-cycle of the

* If d.c. bias voltage is not provided, then during negative half-cycle of the signal, the emitter-base junction will be reverse biased. This will upset the transistor action.

** Throughout the book, we shall use sine wave signals because thes are convenient for testing amplifiers. But it must be realised that signals (*e.g.* speech, music etc.) with which we work are generally complex having little resemblance to a sine wave. However, fourier series analysis tells us that such complex signals may be expressed as a sum of sine waves of various frequencies.

signal, the forward bias across emitter-base junction is decreased. Therefore, collector current decreases. This results in the decreased output voltage (in the opposite direction). Hence, an amplified output is obtained across the load.

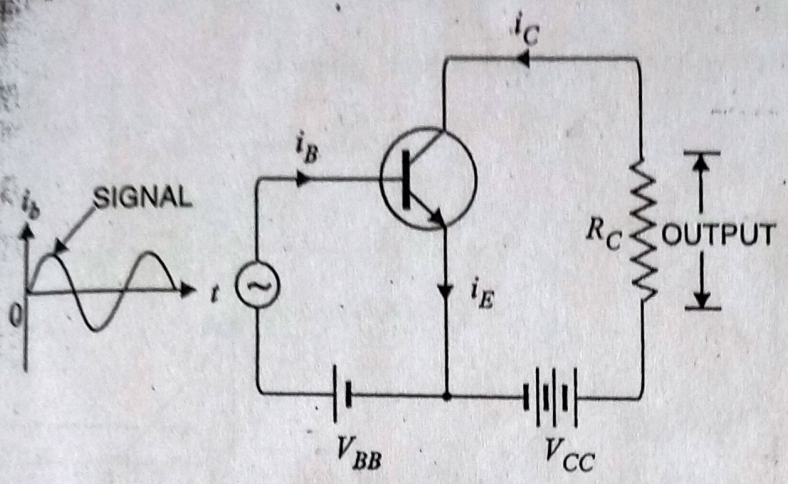


Fig. 8.33

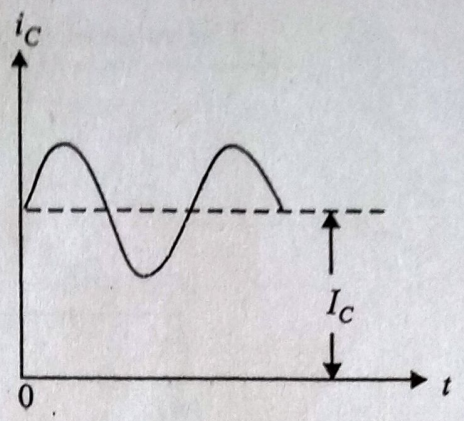


Fig. 8.34

Analysis of collector currents. When no signal is applied, the input circuit is forward biased by the battery V_{BB}. Therefore, a d.c. collector current I_C flows in the collector circuit. This is called *zero signal collector current*. When the signal voltage is applied, the forward bias on the emitter-base junction increases or decreases depending upon whether the signal is positive or negative. During the positive half-cycle of the signal, the forward bias on emitter-base junction is increased, causing total collector current i_C to increase. Reverse will happen for the negative half-cycle of the signal.

Fig. 8.34 shows the graph of total collector current i_C versus time. From the graph, it is clear that total collector current consists of two components, namely ;

(*i*) The d.c. collector current I_C (zero signal collector current) due to bias battery V_{BB}. This is the current that flows in the collector in the absence of signal.

(*ii*) The a.c. collector current i_c due to signal.

$\therefore$ Total collector current, $i_C = i_c + I_C$

The useful output is the voltage drop across collector load R_C due to the a.c. component i_c. The purpose of zero signal collector current is to ensure that the emitter-base junction is forward biased at all times. The table below gives the symbols usually employed for currents and voltages in transistor applications.

S. No.	Particular	Instantaneous a.c.	d.c.	Total
1.	Emitter current	i_e	I_E	i_E
2.	Collector current	i_c	I_C	i_C
3.	Base current	i_b	I_B	i_B
4.	Collector-emitter voltage	v_{ce}	V_{CE}	v_{CE}
5.	Emitter-base voltage	v_{eb}	V_{EB}	v_{EB}

$= I_C + V_{CE}/R_{AC}$

10.8 Load Line Analysis

The output characteristics are determined experimentally and indicate the relation between V_{CE} and I_C. However, the same information can be obtained in a much simpler way by representing the mathematical relation between I_C and V_{CE} graphically. As discussed before, the relationship between V_{CE} and I_C is linear so that it can be represented by a straight line on the output characteristics. This is known as a *load line*. The points lying on the load line give the possible values of V_{CE} and I_C in the output circuit. As in a transistor circuit both d.c. and a.c. conditions exist, therefore, there are two types of load lines, namely ; d.c. load line and a.c. load line. The former determines the locus of I_C and V_{CE} in the zero signal conditions and the latter shows these values when the signal is applied.

(*i*) **d.c. load line.** *It is the line on the output characteristics of a transistor circuit which gives the values of I_C and V_{CE} corresponding to zero signal or d.c. conditions.*

* For faithful amplification.

Consider the transistor amplifier shown in Fig. 10.12. In the absence of signal, d.c. conditions prevail in the circuit as shown in Fig. 10.13 (*i*). Referring to this circuit and applying Kirchhoff's voltage law,

$$V_{CE} = V_{CC} - I_C R_C - I_E R_E$$

or

$$V_{CE} = V_{CC} - I_C (R_C + R_E) \quad ...(i)$$

$(\because I_E \simeq I_C)$

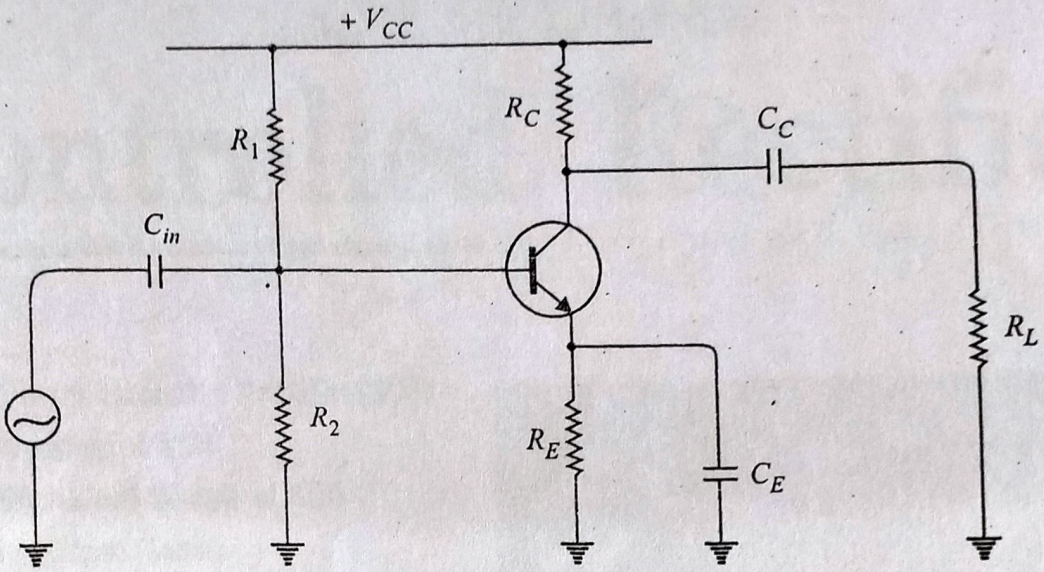


Fig. 10.12

As for a given circuit, V_{CC} and $(R_C + R_E)$ are constant, therefore, it is a first degree* equation and can be represented by a straight line on the output characteristics. This is known as *d.c. load line* and determines the loci of V_{CE} and I_C points in the zero signal conditions. The d.c. load line can be readily plotted by locating two *end points* of the straight line.

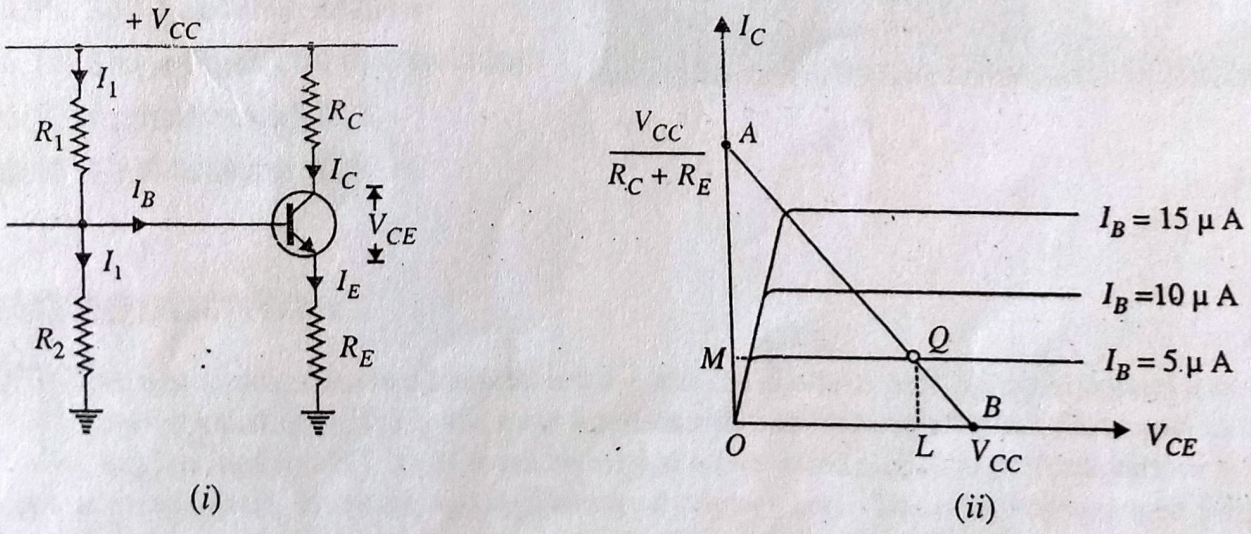


Fig. 10.13

The value of V_{CE} will be maximum when $I_C \cong 0$. Therefore, by putting $I_C = 0$ in exp. (*i*), we get,

$$\text{Max. } V_{CE} = V_{CC}$$

This locates the first point B $(OB = V_{CC})$ of the d.c. load line.

* This equation is known as **load line equation** since it relates the collector-emitter voltage (V_{CE}) to the collector current (I_C) flowing through the load.

The value of I_C will be maximum when $V_{CE} = 0$.

$$\therefore \quad \text{Max. } I_C = \frac{V_{CC}}{R_C + R_E}$$

This locates the second point A ($OA = V_{CC}/R_C + R_E$) of the d.c. load line. By joining points A and B, d.c. load line AB is constructed [See Fig. 10.13 (*ii*)].

Alternatively. The two end points of the d.c. load line can also be determined in another way.

$$V_{CE} + I_C (R_C + R_E) = V_{CC}$$

Dividing throughout by V_{CC}, we have,

$$\frac{V_{CE}}{V_{CC}} + \frac{I_C}{(V_{CC}/R_C + R_E)} = 1 \qquad ...(i)$$

The equation of a line having intercepts a and b on x-axis and y-axis respectively is given by ;

$$\frac{x}{a} + \frac{y}{b} = 1 \qquad ...(ii)$$

Comparing eqs. (*i*) and (*ii*), we have,

$$\text{Intercept on } x\text{-axis} = V_{CC}$$

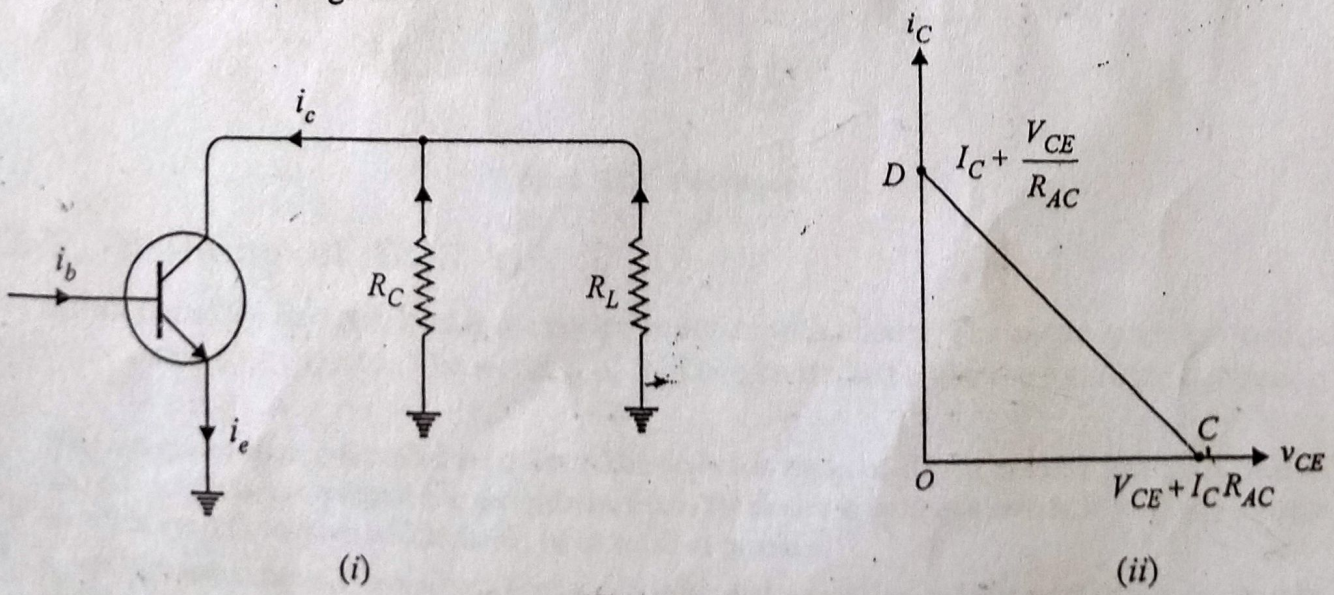
$$\text{Intercept on } y\text{-axis} = \frac{V_{CC}}{R_C + R_E}$$

With the construction of d.c. load line on the output characteristics, we get the complete information about the output circuit of transistor amplifier in the zero signal conditions. All the points showing zero signal I_C and V_{CE} will obviously lie on the d.c. load line. At the same time I_C and V_{CE} conditions in the circuit are also represented by the output characteristics. Therefore, actual operating conditions in the circuit will be represented by the point where d.c. load line intersects the base current curve under study. Thus, referring to Fig. 10.13 (*ii*), if $I_B = 5$ μA is set by the biasing circuit, then Q (*i.e.* intersection of 5 μA curve and load line) is the operating point.

(*ii*) **a.c. load line.** *This is the line on the output characteristics of a transistor circuit which gives the values of i_C and v_{CE} when signal is applied.*

Referring back to the transistor amplifier shown in Fig. 10.12, its a.c. equivalent circuit as far as output circuit is concerned is as shown in Fig. 10.14 (*i*). To add a.c. load line to the output characteristics, we again require two end points–one maximum collector-emitter voltage point and the other maximum collector current point. Under the application of a.c. signal, these values are (refer to example 10.4) :

Max. collector-emitter voltage = $V_{CE} + I_C R_{AC}$. This locates the point C of the a.c. load line on the collector-emitter voltage axis.



(*i*) (*ii*)

Fig. 10.14

9.2 Transistor Biasing

It has already been discussed that for faithful amplification, a transistor amplifier must satisfy three basic conditions, namely : (*i*) proper zero signal collector current, (*ii*) proper base-emitter voltage at any instant and (*iii*) proper collector-emitter voltage at any instant. It is the fulfilment of these conditions which is known as transistor biasing.

The proper flow of zero signal collector current and the maintenance of proper collector-emitter voltage during the passage of signal is known as **transistor biasing.**

The basic purpose of transistor biasing is to keep the base-emitter junction properly forward biased and collector-base junction properly reverse biased during the application of signal. This can be achieved with a bias battery or associating a circuit with a transistor. The latter method is more efficient and is frequently employed. The circuit which provides transistor biasing is known as *biasing circuit.* It may be noted that transistor biasing is very essential for the proper operation of transistor in any circuit.

Example 9.1. *An npn silicon transistor has $V_{CC} = 6$ V and the collector load $R_C = 2.5$ kΩ. Find :*

(i) The maximum collector current that can be allowed during the application of signal for faithful amplification.

(ii) The minimum zero signal collector current required.

Solution. Collector supply voltage, $V_{CC} = 6$ V

Collector load, $R_C = 2.5$ kΩ

(*i*) We know that for faithful amplification, V_{CE} should not be less than 1V for silicon transistor.

$\therefore$ Max. voltage allowed across $R_C = 6 - 1 = 5$ V

$\therefore$ Max. allowed collector current $= 5\text{ V}/R_C = 5\text{ V}/2.5\text{ k}\Omega = \mathbf{2\text{ mA}}$

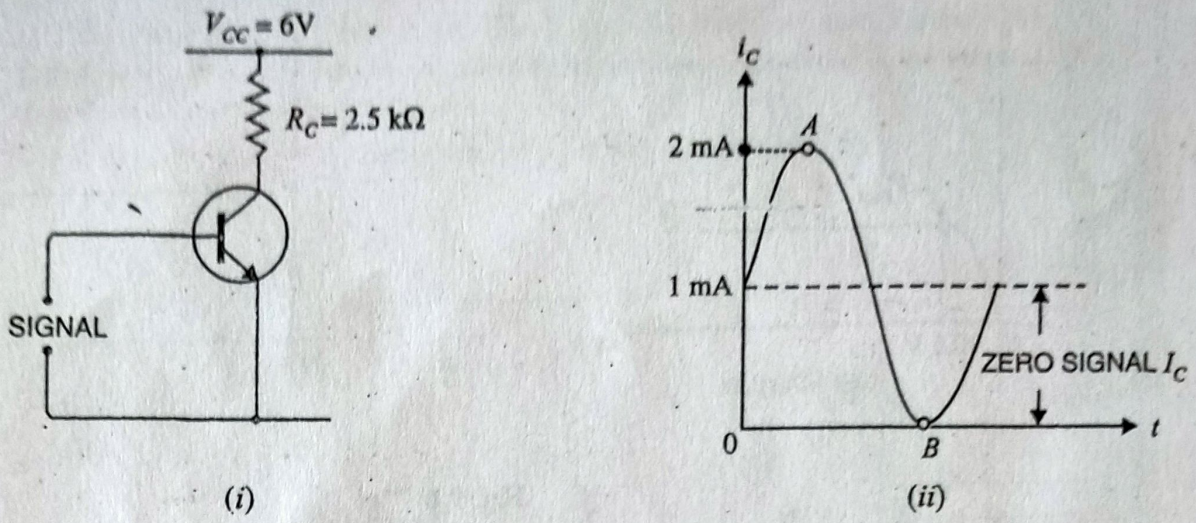


Fig. 9.5

Thus, the maximum collector current allowed during any part of the signal is 2 mA. If the collector current is allowed to rise above this value, V_{CE} will fall below 1 V. Consequently, value of β will fall, resulting in unfaithful amplification.

(ii) During the negative peak of the signal, collector current can at the most be allowed to become zero. As the negative and positive half cycles of the signal are equal, therefore, the change in collector current due to these will also be equal but in opposite direction.

∴ Minimum zero signal collector current required = 2 mA/2 = **1 mA**

During the positive peak of the signal [point *A* in Fig. 9.5 (*ii*)], $i_C = 1 + 1 = 2$mA and during the negative peak (point *B*),

$$i_C = 1 - 1 = 0 \text{ mA}$$

Example 9.2. *A transistor employs a 4 kΩ load and V_{CC} = 13V. What is the maximum input signal if β = 100 ? Given V_{knee} = 1V and a change of 1V in V_{BE} causes a change of 5mA in collector current.*

Solution.

Collector supply voltage, V_{CC} = 13 V

Knee voltage, V_{knee} = 1 V

Collector load, R_C = 4 kΩ

∴ Max. allowed voltage across R_C = 13 − 1 = 12 V

∴ Max. allowed collector current, $i_C = \dfrac{12\text{V}}{R_C} = \dfrac{12\text{V}}{4\text{ k}\Omega} = 3$ mA

Maximum base current, $i_B = \dfrac{i_C}{\beta} = \dfrac{3\text{ mA}}{100} = 30\ \mu\text{A}$

Now $\dfrac{\text{Collector current}}{\text{Base voltage (signal voltage)}} = 5$ mA/V

∴ Base voltage (signal voltage) $= \dfrac{\text{Collector current}}{5\text{ mA/V}} = \dfrac{3\text{ mA}}{5\text{ mA/V}} = 600$ mV

9.4 Stabilisation

The collector current in a transistor changes rapidly when

(*i*) the temperature changes,

(*ii*) the transistor is replaced by another of the same type. This is due to the inherent variations of transistor parameters.

When the temperature changes or the transistor is replaced, the operating point (*i.e.* zero signal I_C and V_{CE}) also changes. However, for faithful amplification, it is essential that operating point remains fixed. This necessitates to make the operating point independent of these variations. This is known as stabilisation.

The process of making operating point independent of temperature changes or variations in transistor parameters is known as **stabilisation.**

Once stabilisation is done, the zero signal I_C and V_{CE} become independent of temperature variations or replacement of transistor *i.e.* the operating point is fixed. A good biasing circuit always ensures the stabilisation of operating point.

Need for stabilisation. Stabilisation of the operating point is necessary due to the following reasons :

(*i*) Temperature dependence of I_C

(*ii*) Individual variations

(*iii*) Thermal runaway

(*i*) **Temperature dependence of I_C.** The collector current I_C for CE circuit is given by:

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

The collector leakage current I_{CBO} is greatly influenced (especially in germanium transistor) by temperature changes. A rise of 10°C doubles the collector leakage current which may be as high as 0.2 mA for low powered germanium transistors. As biasing conditions in such transistors are generally so set that zero signal I_C = 1mA, therefore, the change in I_C due to temperature variations cannot be tolerated. This necessitates to stabilise the operating point *i.e.* to hold I_C constant inspite of temperature variations.

(*ii*) **Individual variations.** The value of β and V_{BE} are not exactly the same for any two transistors even of the same type. Further, V_{BE} itself decreases when temperature increases. When a transistor is replaced by another of the same type, these variations change the operating point. This necessitates to stabilise the operating point *i.e.* to hold I_C constant irrespective of individual variations in transistor parameters.

(*iii*) **Thermal runaway.** The collector current for a *CE* configuration is given by :

$$I_C = \beta I_B + (\beta + 1) I_{CBO} \qquad ...(i)$$

The collector leakage current I_{CBO} is strongly dependent on temperature. The flow of collector current produces heat within the transistor. This raises the transistor temperature and if no stabilisation is done, the collector leakage current I_{CBO} also increases. It is clear from exp. (*i*) that if I_{CBO} increases, the collector current I_C increases by $(\beta + 1)\, I_{CBO}$. The increased I_C will raise the temperature of the transistor, which in turn will cause I_{CBO} to increase. This effect is cumulative and in a matter of seconds, the collector current may become very large, causing the transistor to burn out.

The self-destruction of an unstabilised transistor is known as **thermal runaway.**

In order to avoid thermal runaway and consequent destruction of transistor, it is very essential that operating point is stabilised *i.e.* I_C is kept constant. In practice, this is done by causing I_B to decrease automatically with temperature increase by circuit modification. Then decrease in βI_B will compensate for the increase in $(\beta + 1)\, I_{CBO}$, keeping I_C nearly constant. In fact, this is what is always aimed at while building and designing a biasing circuit.

9.5 Essentials of a Transistor Biasing Circuit

It has already been discussed that transistor biasing is required for faithful amplification. The biasing network associated with the transistor should meet the following requirements :

(*i*) It should ensure proper zero signal collector current.

(*ii*) It should ensure that V_{CE} does not fall below 0.5 V for *Ge* transistors and 1 V for silicon transistors at any instant.

(*iii*) It should ensure the stabilisation of operating point.

9.6 Stability Factor

It is desirable and necessary to keep I_C constant in the face of variations of I_{CBO} (sometimes represented as I_{CO}). The extent to which a biasing circuit is successful in achieving this goal is measured by stability factor S. It is defined as under :

The rate of change of collector current I_C w.r.t. the collector leakage current I_{CO} at constant β and I_B is called **stability factor** *i.e.*

$$\text{Stability factor, } S = \frac{dI_C}{dI_{CO}} \text{ at constant } I_B \text{ and } \beta$$

The stability factor indicates the change in collector current I_C due to the change in collector leakage current I_{CO}. Thus a stability factor 50 of a circuit means that I_C changes 50 times as much as any change in I_{CO}. In order to achieve greater thermal stability, it is desirable to have as low stability factor as possible. The ideal value of S is 1 but it is never possible to achieve it in practice. Experience shows that values of S exceeding 25 result in unsatisfactory performance.

The general expression of stability factor for a C.E. configuration can be obtained as under:

$$I_C = \beta I_B + (\beta + 1)\, I_{CO}$$

Differentiating above expression *w.r.t.* I_C, we get,

$$1 = \beta \frac{dI_B}{dI_C} + (\beta + 1) \frac{dI_{CO}}{dI_C}$$

or
$$1 = \beta \frac{dI_B}{dI_C} + \frac{(\beta + 1)}{S} \qquad \left[\because \frac{dI_{CO}}{dI_C} = \frac{1}{S}\right]$$

or
$$S = \frac{\beta + 1}{1 - \beta \left(\frac{dI_B}{dI_C}\right)}$$

. . . . . .

$I_{CBO} = I_{CO}$ = collector leakage current in *CB* arrangement

Assuming β to be independent of I_C

9.7 Methods of Transistor Biasing

In the transistor amplifier circuits drawn so far biasing was done with the aid of a battery V_{BB} which was separate from the battery V_{CC} used in the output circuit. However, in the interest of simplicity and economy, it is desirable that transistor circuit should have a single source of supply—the one in the output circuit (*i.e.* V_{CC}). The following are the most commonly used methods of obtaining transistor biasing from one source of supply (*i.e.* V_{CC}) :

(*i*) Base resistor method
(*ii*) Emitter bias method
(*iii*) Biasing with collector-feedback resistor
(*iv*) Voltage-divider bias

In all these methods, the same basic principle is employed *i.e.* required value of base current (and hence I_C) is obtained from V_{CC} in the zero signal conditions. The value of collector load R_C is selected keeping in view that V_{CE} should not fall below 0.5 V for germanium transistors and 1 V for silicon transistors.

For example, if $\beta = 100$ and the zero signal collector current I_C is to be set at 1mA, then I_B is made equal to $I_C/\beta = 1/100 = 10\ \mu A$. Thus, the biasing network should be so designed that a base current of 10 μA flows in the zero signal conditions.

9.8 Base Resistor Method

In this method, a high resistance R_B (several hundred kΩ) is connected between the base and +ve end of supply for *npn* transistor (See Fig. 9.6) and between base and negative end of supply for *pnp* transistor. Here, the required zero signal base current is provided by V_{CC} and it flows through R_B. It is because now base is positive *w.r.t.* emitter *i.e.* base-emitter junction is forward biased. The required value of zero signal base current I_B (and hence $I_C = \beta I_B$) can be made to flow by selecting the proper value of base resistor R_B.

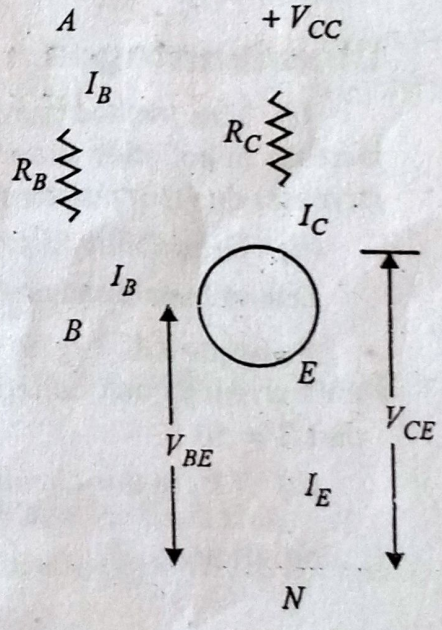


Fig. 9.6

Circuit analysis. It is required to find the value of R_B so that required collector current flows in the zero signal conditions. Let I_C be the required zero signal collector current.

$$\therefore \qquad I_B = \frac{I_C}{\beta}$$

Considering the closed circuit *ABENA* and applying Kirchhoff's voltage law, we get,

$$V_{CC} = I_B R_B + V_{BE}$$

or $$I_B R_B = V_{CC} - V_{BE}$$

$$\therefore \qquad R_B = \frac{V_{CC} - V_{BE}}{I_B} \qquad \ldots (i)$$

As V_{CC} and I_B are known and V_{BE} can be seen from the transistor manual, therefore, value of R_B can be readily found from exp. (*i*).

Since V_{BE} is generally quite small as compared to V_{CC}, the former can be neglected with little error. It then follows from exp. (*i*) that :

$$R_B = \frac{V_{CC}}{I_B}$$

It may be noted that V_{CC} is a fixed known quantity and I_B is chosen at some suitable value. Hence R_B can always be found directly, and for this reason, this method is sometimes called *fixed-bias method*.

Stability factor. As shown in Art. 9.6,

$$\text{Stability factor, } S = \frac{\beta + 1}{1 - \beta\left(\frac{dI_B}{dI_C}\right)}$$

In fixed-bias method of biasing, I_B is independent of I_C so that $dI_B/dI_C = 0$. Putting the value of $dI_B / dI_C = 0$ in the above expression, we have,

$$\text{Stability factor, } S = \beta + 1$$

Thus the stability factor in a fixed bias is $(\beta + 1)$. This means that I_C changes $(\beta + 1)$ times as much as any change in I_{CO}. For instance, if $\beta = 100$, then $S = 101$ which means that I_C increases 101 times faster than I_{CO}. Due to the large value of S in a fixed bias, it has poor thermal stability.

Advantages :

(*i*) This biasing circuit is very simple as only one resistance R_B is required.

(*ii*) Biasing conditions can easily be set and the calculations are simple.

(*iii*) There is no loading of the source by the biasing circuit since no resistor is employed across base-emitter junction.

Disadvantages :

(*i*) This method provides poor stabilisation. It is because there is no means to stop a self-increase in collector current due to temperature rise and individual variations. For example, if β increases due to transistor replacement, then I_C also increases by the same factor as I_B is constant.

(*ii*) The stability factor is very high. Therefore, there are strong chances of thermal runaway.

Due to these disadvantages, this method of biasing is rarely employed.

Example 9.3. *Fig. 9.7 (i) shows biasing with base resistor method. (i) Determine the collector current I_C and collector-emitter voltage V_{CE}. Neglect small base-emitter voltage. Given that $\beta = 50$.*

(ii) If R_B in this circuit is changed to 50 kΩ, find the new operating point.

Solution.

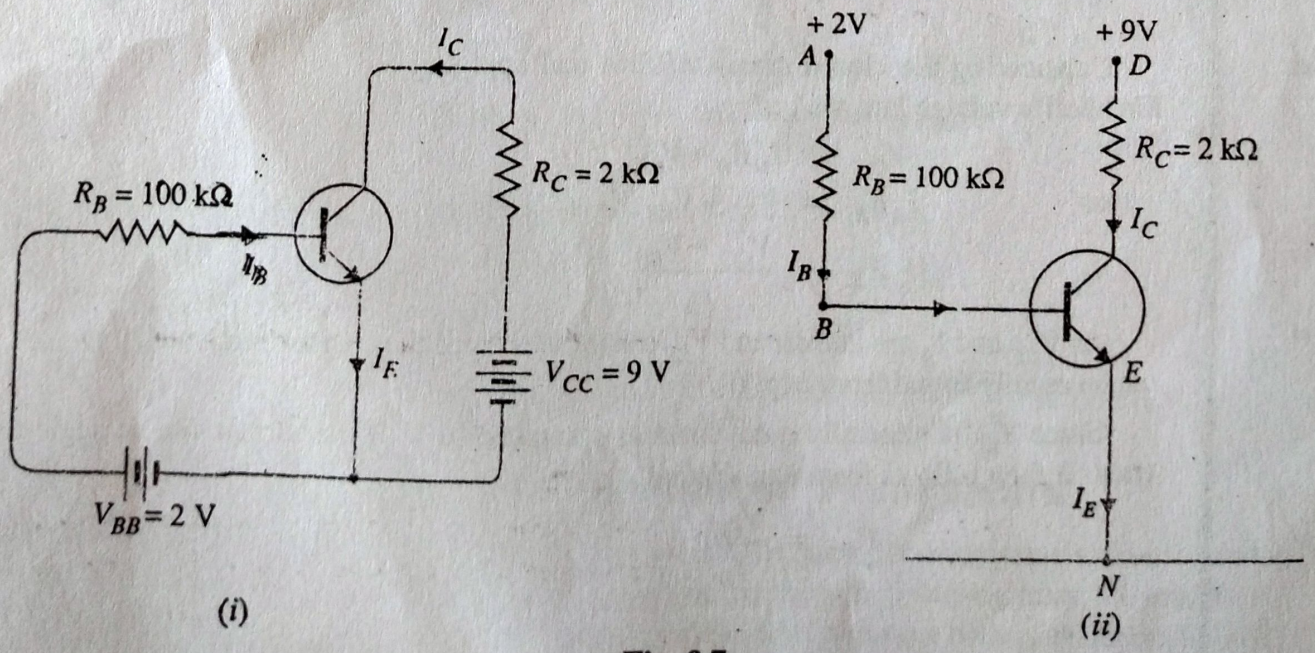


Fig. 9.7

$$\therefore \quad V_{CE} = V_C - V_E = 11.7 - (-2.4) = 14.1\text{V}$$

$$\% \text{ age change in } I_C = \frac{1.76\text{ mA} - 1.73\text{ mA}}{1.73\text{ mA}} \times 100 = \mathbf{1.7\%}\ (\textit{increase})$$

$$\% \text{ age change in } V_{CE} = \frac{14.1\text{V} - 14.6\text{V}}{14.1\text{V}} \times 100 = \mathbf{-3.5\%}\ (\textit{decrease})$$

9.11 Biasing with Collector Feedback Resistor

In this method, one end of R_B is connected to the base and the other end to the collector as shown in Fig. 9.19. Here, the required zero signal base current is determined *not* by V_{CC} but by the collector-base voltage V_{CB}. It is clear that V_{CB} forward biases the base-emitter junction and hence base current I_B flows through R_B. This causes the zero signal collector current to flow in the circuit.

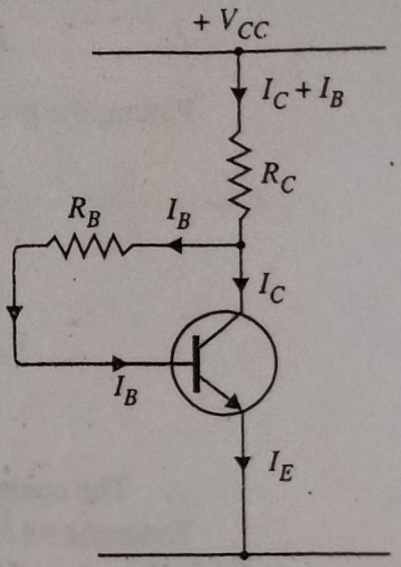


Fig. 9.19

Circuit analysis. The required value of R_B needed to give the zero signal current I_C can be determined as follows. Referring to Fig. 9.19,

$$V_{CC} = {}^*I_C R_C + I_B R_B + V_{BE}$$

or
$$R_B = \frac{V_{CC} - V_{BE} - I_C R_C}{I_B}$$

$$= \frac{V_{CC} - V_{BE} - \beta I_B R_C}{I_B} \quad (\because I_C = \beta I_B)$$

Alternatively, $V_{CE} = V_{BE} + V_{CB}$

or
$$V_{CB} = V_{CE} - V_{BE}$$

$$\therefore \quad R_B = \frac{V_{CB}}{I_B} = \frac{V_{CE} - V_{BE}}{I_B}; \quad \text{where } I_B = \frac{I_C}{\beta}$$

It can be shown mathematically that stability factor S for this method of biasing is less than $(\beta + 1)$ *i.e.*

Stability factor, $S < (\beta + 1)$

Therefore, this method provides better thermal stability than the fixed bias.

Note. It can be easily proved (See **example 9.17) that Q-point values (I_C and V_{CE}) for the circuit shown in Fig. 9.19 are given by ;

$$I_C = \frac{V_{CC} - V_{BE}}{R_B/\beta + R_C}$$

and
$$V_{CE} = V_{CC} - I_C R_C$$

Advantages

(*i*) It is a simple method as it requires only one resistance R_B.

(*ii*) This circuit provides some stabilisation of the operating point as discussed below :

$$V_{CE} = V_{BE} + V_{CB}$$

---

* Actually voltage drop across $R_C = (I_B + I_C)\, R_C$.
However, $I_B \ll I_C$. Therefore, as a reasonable approximation, we can say that drop across $R_C = I_C R_C$.

** Put $R_E = 0$ for the expression of I_C in exmaple 9.17. It is because in the present circuit (Fig. 9.19), there is no R_E.

Now $I_B + I_C \simeq I_C$; $I_E \simeq I_C$ and $I_B = \frac{I_C}{\beta}$

$$\therefore \quad V_{CC} - I_C R_C - \frac{I_C}{\beta} R_B - V_{BE} - I_C R_E = 0$$

or $$I_C \left(R_E + \frac{R_B}{\beta} + R_C\right) = V_{CC} - V_{BE}$$

$$\therefore \quad I_C = \frac{V_{CC} - V_{BE}}{R_E + R_B/\beta + R_C}$$

Putting the given circuit values, we have,

$$I_C = \frac{12\text{V} - 0.7\text{V}}{1\ \text{k}\Omega + 400\ \text{k}\Omega/100 + 4\ \text{k}\Omega}$$

$$= \frac{11.3\text{V}}{9\ \text{k}\Omega} = 1.26\ \text{mA}$$

$$V_{CE} = V_{CC} - I_C (R_C + R_E)$$

$$= 12\text{V} - 1.26\ \text{mA}\ (4\text{k}\Omega + 1\ \text{k}\Omega)$$

$$= 12\text{V} - 6.3\text{V} = 5.7\text{V}$$

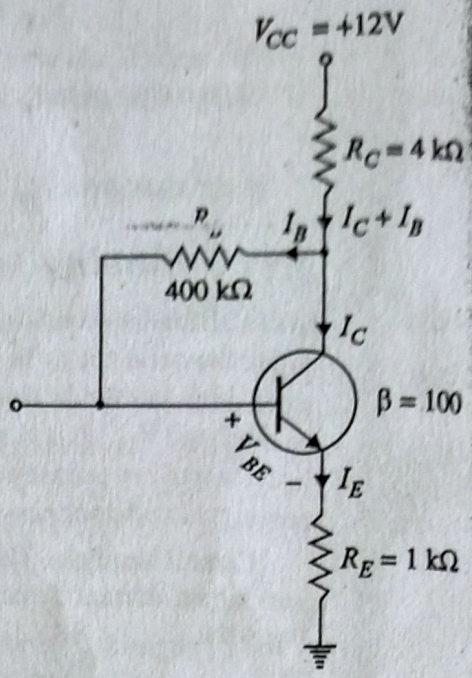


Fig. 9.22

∴ The operating point is 5.7V, 1.26 mA.

Example 9.18. *Find the d.c. bias values for the collector-feedback biasing circuit shown in Fig. 9.23. How does the circuit maintain a stable Q point against temperature variations ?*

Solution. The collector current is

$$I_C = \frac{V_{CC} - V_{BE}}{R_E + R_B/\beta + R_C}$$

$$= \frac{10\text{V} - 0.7\text{V}}{0 + 100\ \text{k}\Omega/100 + 10\ \text{k}\Omega}$$

$$= \frac{9.3\text{V}}{11\ \text{k}\Omega} = 0.845\ \text{mA}$$

$$V_{CE} = V_{CC} - I_C R_C$$

$$= 10\text{V} - 0.845\ \text{mA} \times 10\ \text{k}\Omega$$

$$= 10\text{V} - 8.45\ \text{V} = 1.55\text{V}$$

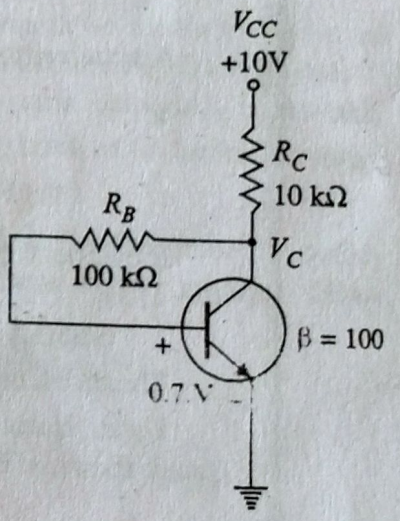


Fig. 9.23

∴ Operating point is **1.55V, 0.845 mA.**

Stability of Q-point. We know that β varies directly with temperature and V_{BE} varies inversely with temperature. As the temperature goes up, β goes up and V_{BE} goes down. The increase in β increases I_C (= βI_B). The decrease in V_{BE} increases I_B which in turn increases I_C. As I_C tries to increase, the voltage drop across R_C ($= I_C R_C$) also tries to increases. This tends to reduce collector voltage V_C (See Fig. 9.23) and, therefore, the voltage across R_B. The reduced voltage across R_B reduces I_B and offsets the attempted increase in I_C and attempted decrease in V_C. The result is that the collector-feedback circuit maintains a stable Q-point. The reverse action occurs when the temperature decreases.

9.12 Voltage Divider Bias Method

This is the most widely used method of providing biasing and stabilisation to a transistor. In this method, two resistances R_1 and R_2 are connected across the supply voltage V_{CC} (See Fig. 9.24) and provide biasing. The emitter resistance R_E provides stabilisation. The name "voltage divider" comes from the voltage divider formed by R_1 and R_2. The voltage drop across R_2 forward biases the base-

emitter junction. This causes the base current and hence collector current flow in the zero signal conditions.

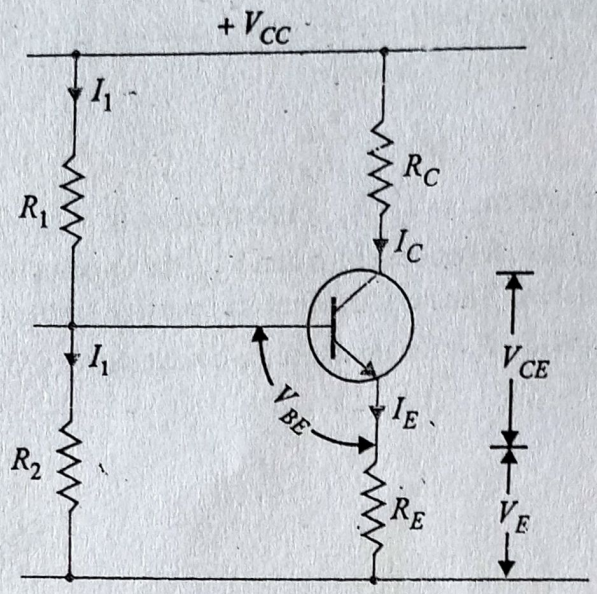


Fig. 9.24

Circuit analysis. Suppose that the current flowing through resistance R_1 is I_1. As base current I_B is very small, therefore, it can be assumed with reasonable accuracy that current flowing through R_2 is also I_1.

(i) Collector current I_C :

$$I_1 = \frac{V_{CC}}{R_1 + R_2}$$

$\therefore$ Voltage across resistance R_2 is

$$V_2 = \left(\frac{V_{CC}}{R_1 + R_2}\right) R_2$$

Applying Kirchhoff's voltage law to the base circuit of Fig. 9.24,

$$V_2 = V_{BE} + V_E$$

or $$V_2 = V_{BE} + I_E R_E$$

or $$I_E = \frac{V_2 - V_{BE}}{R_E}$$

Since $I_E \simeq I_C$

$\therefore$ $$I_C = \frac{V_2 - V_{BE}}{R_E} \quad ...(i)$$

It is clear from exp. (*i*) above that I_C does not at all depend upon β. Though I_C depends upon V_{BE} but in practice $V_2 >> V_{BE}$ so that I_C is practically independent of V_{BE}. Thus I_C in this circuit is almost independent of transistor parameters and hence good stabilisation is ensured. It is due to this reason that potential divider bias has become universal method for providing trans stor biasing.

(ii) Collector-emitter voltage V_{CE}. Applying Kirchhoff's voltage law to the collector side,

$$V_{CC} = I_C R_C + V_{CE} + I_E R_E$$

$$= I_C R_C + V_{CE} + I_C R_E \qquad (\because I_E \simeq I_C)$$

$$= I_C (R_C + R_E) + V_{CE}$$

$$\therefore \quad V_{CE} = V_{CC} - I_C (R_C + R_E)$$

Stabilisation. In this circuit, excellent stabilisation is provided by R_E. Consideration of eq. (*i*) reveals this fact.

$$V_2 = V_{BE} + I_C R_E$$

Suppose the collector current I_C increases due to rise in temperature. This will cause the voltage drop across emitter resistance R_E to increase. As voltage drop across R_2 (*i.e.* V_2) is * independent of I_C, therefore, V_{BE} decreases. This in turn causes I_B to decrease. The reduced value of I_B tends to restore I_C to the original value.

Stability factor. It can be shown mathematically (See Art. 9.13) that stability factor of the circuit is given by :

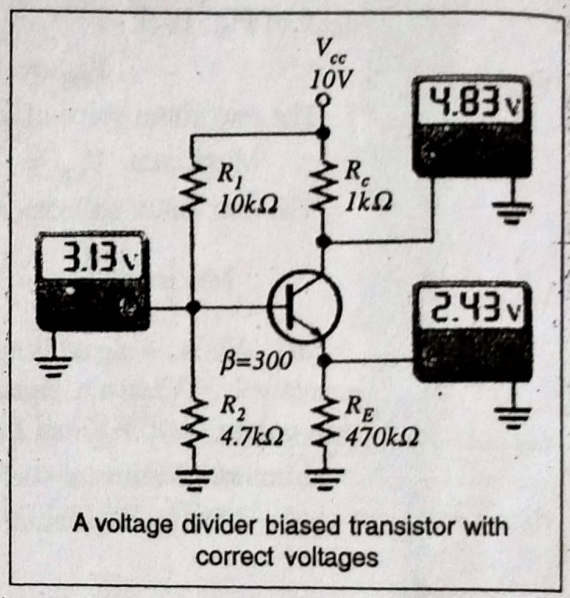
$$\text{Stability factor, } S = \frac{(\beta + 1)(R_0 + R_E)}{R_0 + R_E + \beta R_E}$$

$$= (\beta + 1) \times \frac{1 + \dfrac{R_0}{R_E}}{\beta + 1 + \dfrac{R_0}{R_E}}$$

$$\text{where } R_0 = \frac{R_1 R_2}{R_1 + R_2}$$

If the ratio R_0/R_E is very small, then R_0/R_E can be neglected as compared to 1 and the stability factor becomes :

$$\text{Stability factor} = (\beta + 1) \times \frac{1}{\beta + 1} = 1$$



A voltage divider biased transistor with correct voltages

This is the smallest possible value of S and leads to the maximum possible thermal stability. Due to design ** considerations, R_0 / R_E has a value that cannot be neglected as compared to 1. In actual practice, the circuit may have stability factor around 10.

Example 9.19. *Fig. 9.25 (i) shows the voltage divider bias method. Draw the d.c. load line and determine the operating point. Assume the transistor to be of silicon.*

Solution.

d.c. load line. The collector-emitter voltage V_{CE} is given by :

$$V_{CE} = V_{CC} - I_C (R_C + R_E)$$

When $I_C = 0$, $V_{CE} = V_{CC} = 15$V. This locates the first point B ($OB = 15$V) of the load line on the collector-emitter voltage axis.

$$\text{When } V_{CE} = 0, \quad I_C = \frac{V_{CC}}{R_C + R_E} = \frac{15 \text{ V}}{(1 + 2)\ \text{k}\Omega} = 5 \text{ mA}$$

This locates the second point A ($OA = 5$ mA) of the load line on the collector current axis. By joining points A and B, the d.c. load line AB is constructed as shown in Fig. 9.25 (*ii*).

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* Voltage drop across $R_2 = \left(\dfrac{V_{CC}}{R_1 + R_2}\right) R_2$

** Low value of R_0 can be obtained by making R_2 very small. But with low value of R_2, current drawn from V_{CC} will be large. This puts restrictions on the choice of R_0. Increasing the value of R_E requires greater V_{CC} in order to maintain the same value of zero signal collector current. Therefore, the ratio R_0/R_E cannot be made very small from design point of view.