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a) Physical: Enantiomers have identical physical properties with the exception that they rotate the plane of polarized light in opposite directions although $|\alpha|$ is identical.

b) Chemical: They have identical chemical properties except for their reaction with reagents which are, themselves, optically active. In this case, reaction rates differ and depend on which enantiomer of the reagent is used.

(+)-Glucose is central to the fermentation process whereas (-)-glucose doesn't react!

PLANE-POLARIZED LIGHT

Ordinary light is a moving wave whose vibrations take place in all directions perpendicular to the direction in which the light is travelling. One can envisage each vibration as the vector of two vibrations which are mutually at right angles.



One of these components can be eliminated by passing ordinary light through a polarizer - Polaroid filter. The resulting light is said to be polarized - all its vibrations are parallel to a single plane.



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SPECIFIC ROTATION

 α is proportional to the concentration of the sample and the length of the sample tube:

$$[\alpha]_{\lambda}^{t} = \underline{\alpha}$$

- $\alpha\,$ angle of rotation measured in degrees
- t temperature
- $\lambda~$ wavelength of light
- I length of sample cell
- c concentration in grams of substance contained in 1 mL of solution

RACEMIC MIXTURES

An equimolar mixture of two enantiomers.

Prefix the name with +.

Reactions performed using an achiral reagent can form products have a tetrahedral stereogenic centre. However the product will be a racemic mixture.

If the reagent is chiral, one can often produce a single enantiomer of the product molecule.

MOLECULES WITH MORE THAN ONE STEREOGENIC CENTRE

$\mathsf{CH}_3\mathsf{CHCICHCICH}_2\mathsf{CH}_3$

How many stereoisomers exist for this compound?







MESO COMPOUNDS

A meso compound is one which is superimposable on its mirror image even though it contains stereogenic centers.

The molecule is achiral.



