**Topic0020**

**Acquisitive Convention**

This convention refers to the sign associated with communication between a system and its surroundings. The convention describes changes as seen from the standpoint of the system. The convention guides chemists concerning the ‘sign’ of changes in thermodynamic variables for a given system.

For example, if heat $q$ flows from the surroundings into a system, $q$ is positive. If thermodynamic energy $U$ is lost by a system to the surroundings, $\Delta U$ is negative. In fact this convention is intuitively attractive to chemists. For example, when told that the volume of a system increases during a given process, then chemists conclude that the volume of the surroundings (i.e. the rest of the universe!) decreases.