N6 – Intro to the Nucleus

Target: I can describe how the nucleus can change to become more stable if needed.

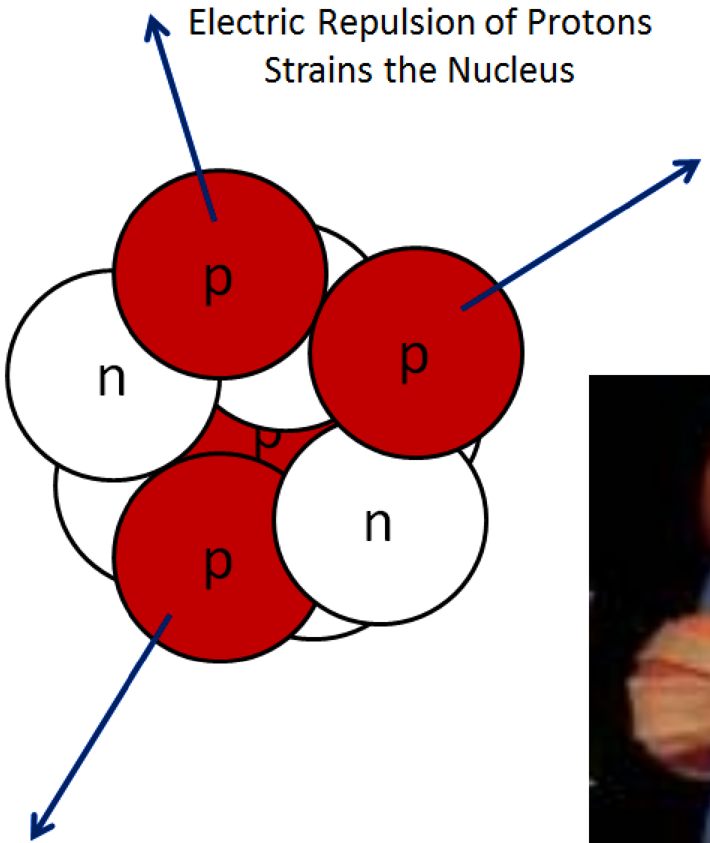
Link to YouTube Presentation: https://youtu.be/LrCO_eciSLQ

Not all atoms are stable!

- Sometimes the nucleus of an atom is unstable and cannot stay together.
- This is called being **radioactive.**

What keeps nuclei together normally?

- **STRONG FORCE** – Holds the nucleus together, even though the protons want to repel each other.

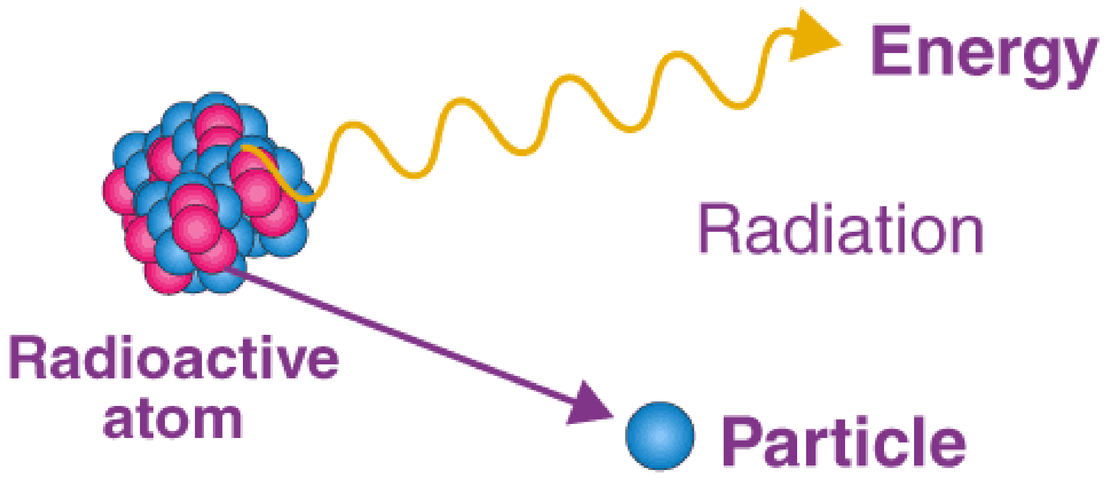


Why do nuclei come apart sometimes?

- **Too many neutrons!**
- Strong force won't be strong enough.
- Like a rubber band that is stretched too far...it will break!

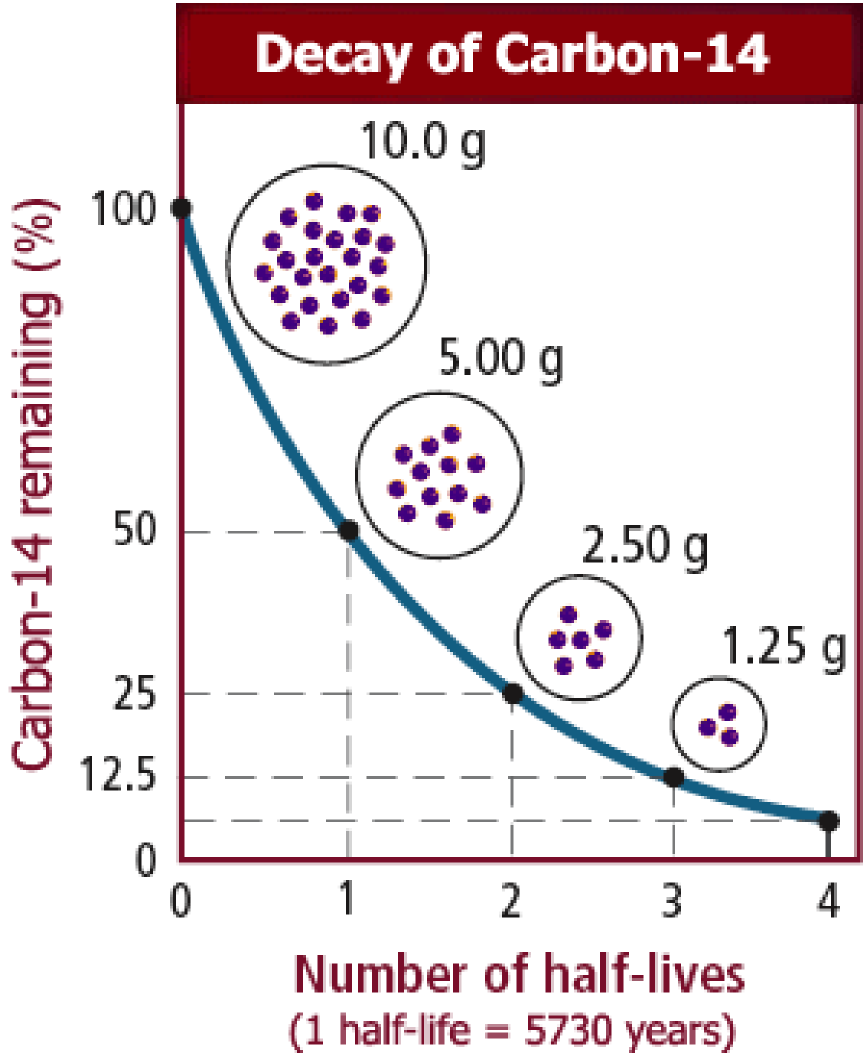
What happens when it comes apart?

- **Radiation!**
- Also called **Radioactive Decay**
- Particles and energy come flying out of the nucleus at high speeds/energies
- Radioactivity is these particles being released



How long does it take?

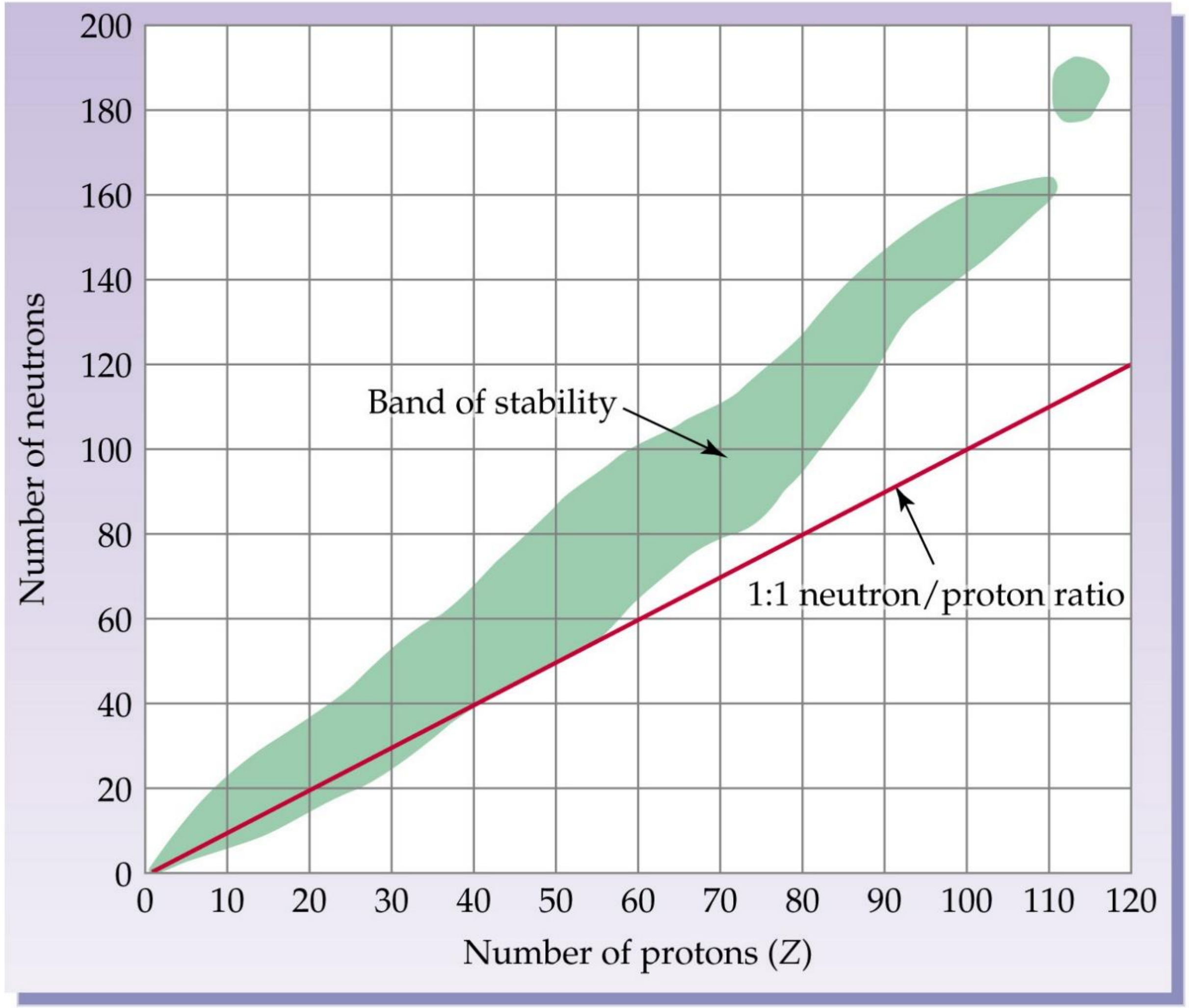
- Depends **only** on which isotope you have. Each one is unique!
- The time it takes for ½ the particles to “decay” is called **half life**



Band of Stability and Island of Stability

- Neutron : Proton ratio larger than 1:1 makes it more likely to be unstable, radioactive

(Clearly the 1:1 ratio is an over simplification – just go with it ☺ If asked which is most stable just calculate the ratio and pick the one closest to 1:1. That is good enough for this level of chemistry!)



Nuclear Stability

Very Stable	Marginally Stable	Unstable/Radioactive

Nuclear Stability

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Atomic #s 1-20	**Atomic #s 21-82**	**Atomic #s > 82**
1:1 ratio Protons : Neutrons	**1:1.5 ratio** Protons : Neutrons	**> 1:1.5 ratio** Protons : Neutrons
Example: Carbon-12 6p : 6n	**Example:** Mercury-200 80p : 120n	**Example:** Uranium Plutonium

Chemical vs. Nuclear Reactions

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Associated with small energy changes	Associated with large energy changes
Reaction rate influenced by temperature, particle size, concentration, etc.	Reaction rate is not influenced by temperature, particle size, concentration, etc.

Nuclear Reactions

Isotopes of one element are changed into isotopes of another element

- Contents of the **nucleus** change
- **Large** amounts of energy released

Uses of Nuclear Reactions

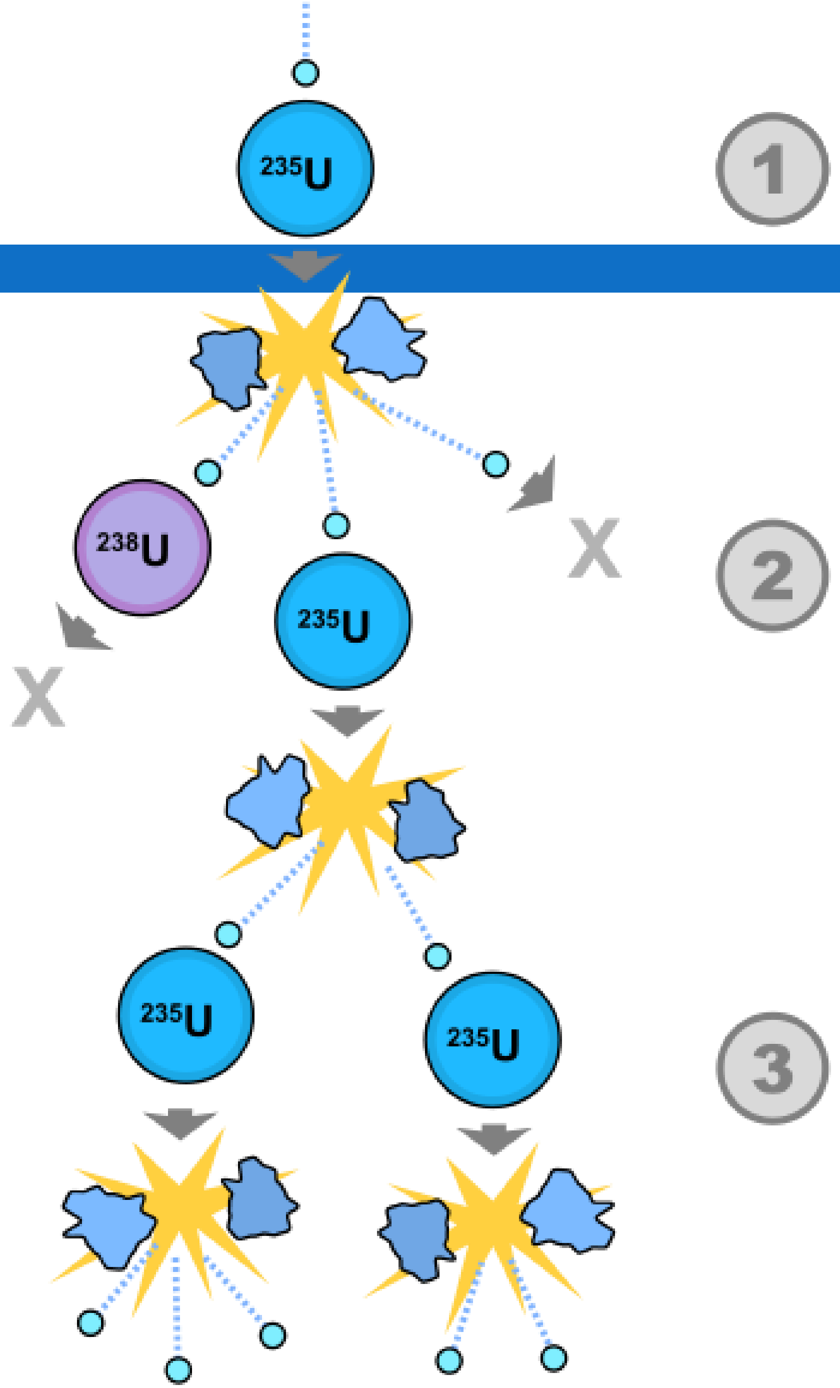
Uncontrolled reactions are dangerous, but when used properly they can be useful!

- Power plants
- Tracking chemical reactions and biological processes
- Radiation therapy for cancer
- Determining the age of dead plants/animals, or even rocks.

Nuclear Fission

- **Splitting of a nucleus**
- **Chain Rxn** – one released particle sets off another atom, keeps happening
- **Nuclear Reactor** – controlled situation, energy released slowly

Nuclear Fission



Nuclear Fission (don't need to write this)

- *1st controlled* nuclear reaction in December 1942.
- *1st uncontrolled* nuclear explosion occurred July 1945.
- **Examples** – atomic bomb, current nuclear power plants

Nuclear Fusion

- **Combining nuclei**
- **Doesn't normally happen** (+ and + repel)
- **Pros** – Inexpensive, no radioactive waste
- **Cons** – Hard to control, large startup energy
- **Examples** – stars, hydrogen bomb, future nuclear power plants

Nuclear Atomic Symbols

- We will be writing our symbols like this:

mass # → $^{14}_{6}C$ ← atomic #

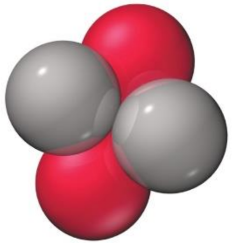
Remember…to find # of neutrons, subtract mass # - atomic #

Type of Decay: Alpha Decay

- Nucleus emits a particle made of two protons and two neutrons – like a helium nucleus (not a helium atom, because it doesn't have any e^-)

Parent nuclide → Daughter nuclide

$$^{238}_{92}U \longrightarrow\ ^{234}_{90}Th +\ ^{4}_{2}He$$



Alpha radiation

Composition	Symbol	Charge	Mass
helium nuclei	${}^{4}_{2}He$, α	+2	4amu
Shielding	**Approx. Energy**	**Penetrating power**	
Paper, clothing	5 MeV	Low 0.05mm body tissue	

Type of Decay - Beta Decay

- Neutron is split into a proton an a “beta particle” which is like an electron

$$^{228}_{88}Ra \longrightarrow \, ^{228}_{89}Ac + \, ^{0}_{-1}e$$

Beta radiation

Composition	Symbol	Charge	Mass
Same as an electron	${}_{-1}^{0}e^{-}$, β	-1	1/1837th (basically 0)
Shielding	**Approx. Energy**	**Penetrating power**	
Aluminum foil	0.05-1MeV	Moderate 4mm body tissue	

Type of Decay - Positron

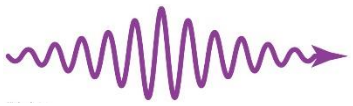
- Proton splits into a neutron and a positron.
- Like a beta particle, but has a charge of +1

$$^{30}_{15}P \longrightarrow {}^{30}_{14}Si + {}^{0}_{+1}e$$

Type of Decay - Gamma Emission

- High energy photons.
- No loss of particles from the nucleus
- Usually after the nucleus undergoes some other type of decay and the remaining particles rearrange

$$^{238}_{92}\mathrm{U}^{*} \longrightarrow {}^{234}_{90}\mathrm{Th} + {}^{4}_{2}\mathrm{He} + {}^{0}_{0}\gamma$$



Gamma radiation

Composition	Symbol	Charge	Mass
High energy electromagnetic radiation	${}^{0}_{0}\gamma$	0	0

Shielding	Approx. Energy	Penetrating power
Lead, Concrete	1MeV	High Penetrates easily

YouTube Link to Presentation

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