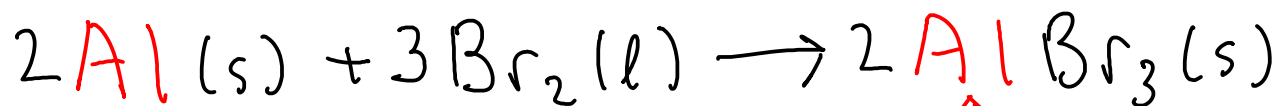


OXIDATION / REDUCTION CHEMISTRY

- Precipitation reactions involve ions pairing up, but the ions themselves are not formed in precipitation reactions. Precipitation reactions (and quite a few others) start with pre-existing ions.

... but ions have to be produced somehow - through a chemistry that involves the transfer of electrons.

- OXIDATION/REDUCTION chemistry ("REDOX" chemistry) involves transfer of electrons and can make ions.

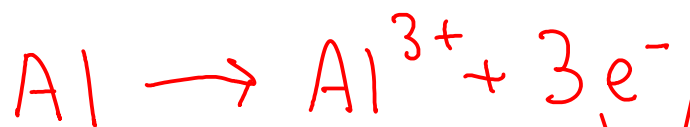


↑
Elemental,
metallic
aluminum.
Uncharged!

↑
Aluminum
cation



These are called
"half-reactions"



electron

oxidation: loss
of electrons

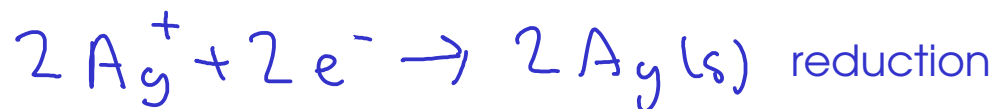
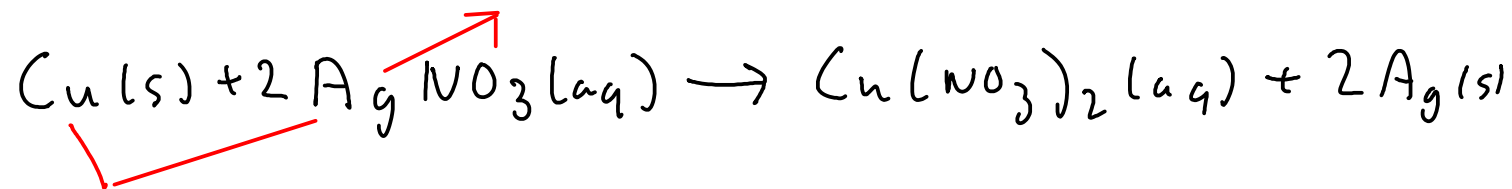


reduction: gain of
electrons

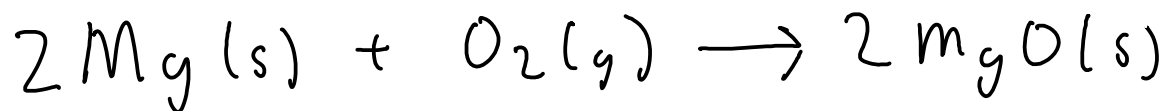
- oxidation and reduction always occur together. In other words, we can't just make free electrons using oxidation without giving them somewhere to go.

- Many of the types of reactions that you might have heard of before are actually redox reactions!

- SINGLE REPLACEMENT reactions



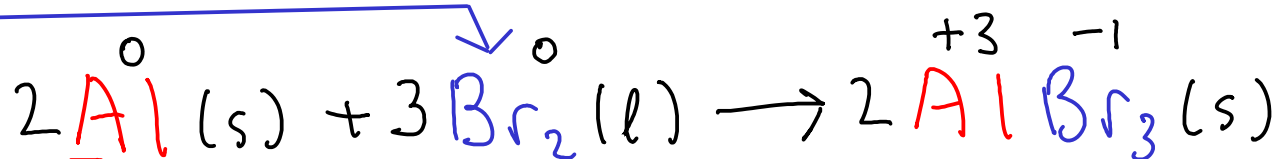
- COMBUSTION reactions (burning)



REDOX LANGUAGE

"oxidizer"

- "Oxidation" is loss of electrons, but an OXIDIZING AGENT is something that causes ANOTHER substance to lose electrons. An oxidizing agent is itself reduced during a redox reaction.
- "Reduction" is gain of electrons, but a REDUCING AGENT is something that causes ANOTHER substance to gain electrons. Reducing agents are themselves oxidized during a redox reaction.



Aluminum is OXIDIZED during this process. We say that metallic aluminum is a REDUCING AGENT!

Bromine is REDUCED during this process. We say that bromine is an OXIDIZING AGENT!

* Strong oxidizers (oxidizing agents) can cause spontaneous fires if placed into contact with combustibles (safety issue!).

* Reactive metals tend to be REDUCING AGENTS, while oxygen-rich ions like NITRATES tend to be OXIDIZING AGENTS. HALOGENS (Group VIIA) also tend to be OXIDIZING AGENTS