

Cations and anions I: Definitions

Chemists teach students to first think of atoms as uncharged entities, where the number of electrons equals the number of protons. Earth scientists more commonly encounter atoms in their charged forms, and thus as ions. This page begins the discussion of ions with some definitions and related comments.

Complex ions, or "radical groups", consist of a strongly charged central atom consistently surrounded by less strongly charged atoms (in most cases, a central atom of large positive charge surrounded by O²⁻s)

