

Book Review

Oxford chemistry primers – Electrode potentials

R. G. Compton and G. H. W. Sanders;
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The concept of a series of primers, each covering a single aspect of chemistry and produced at a student-affordable price, is excellent and, as part of such a series, this text has a number of strengths. The text is clearly illustrated and liberally augmented with marginal notes. It also includes a number of worked examples in addition to the problems.

Unfortunately, the large number of typographical errors, together with errors in the worked examples (such as one which quotes two different values for an electrode potential *neither* of which is the one quoted in the table of electrode potentials *and* also contains a typographical and a grammatical error), tend to detract from the quality of the chemistry. Hopefully, however, these errors will be corrected in any later edition.

A substantial amount of basic electrochemistry is covered with comprehensive thermodynamic explanation which will be excellent for the more able student. The textual style is wordy and the student

may encounter difficulty identifying the salient points. In a primer, punchier, plainer English might have proved much easier to follow and it would, perhaps, have been helpful to the beginner had essential fundamentals such as the distinction between spontaneous (galvanic) and non-spontaneous (electrolytic) cells been clearly defined and highlighted. Students of the 1990s are resourceful and intelligent but many are not comfortable with the older style heavily mathematical treatments. The mathematical treatment provided should stimulate the more able student. At the low cost of approximately £5, this concise text should provide good value for students. Perhaps there should be a move among specialist texts toward the more progressive customer-led style now adopted in many general chemistry texts which stimulates and enhances the students' interest.

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