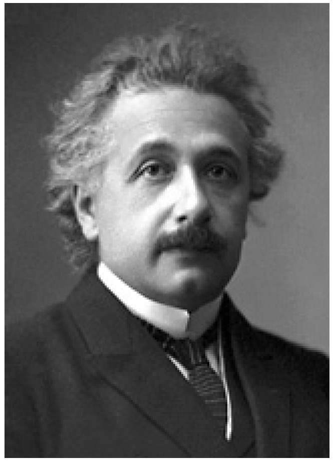
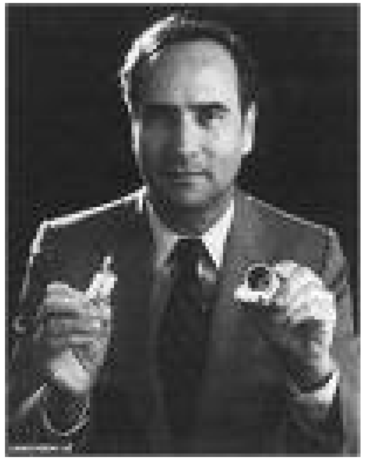
Atoms and radiation: the Einstein picture



Albert Einstein
Nobel prize in Physics
1921
"especially for his discovery of the law of the photo-electric effect"

Max Planck
Nobel prize in Physics
1918
"for his discovery of energy quanta"

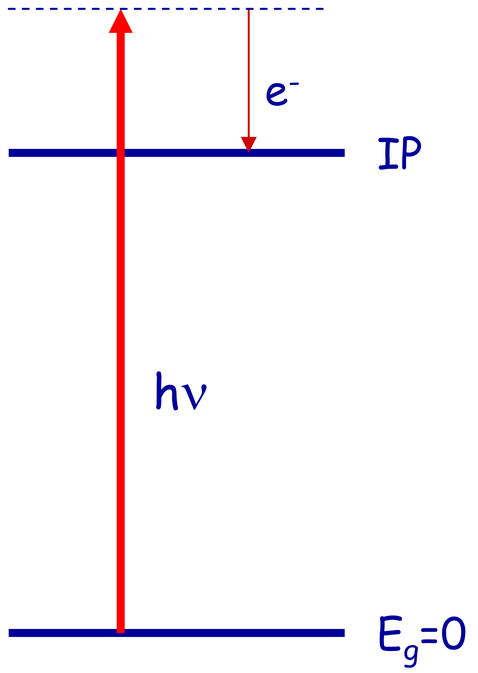
Charles Townes
Nobel prize in Physics
1954
"for the maser-laser principle"
The ammonia maser



Theodor Maiman

The inventor of the LASER

The photo-electric effect in atoms



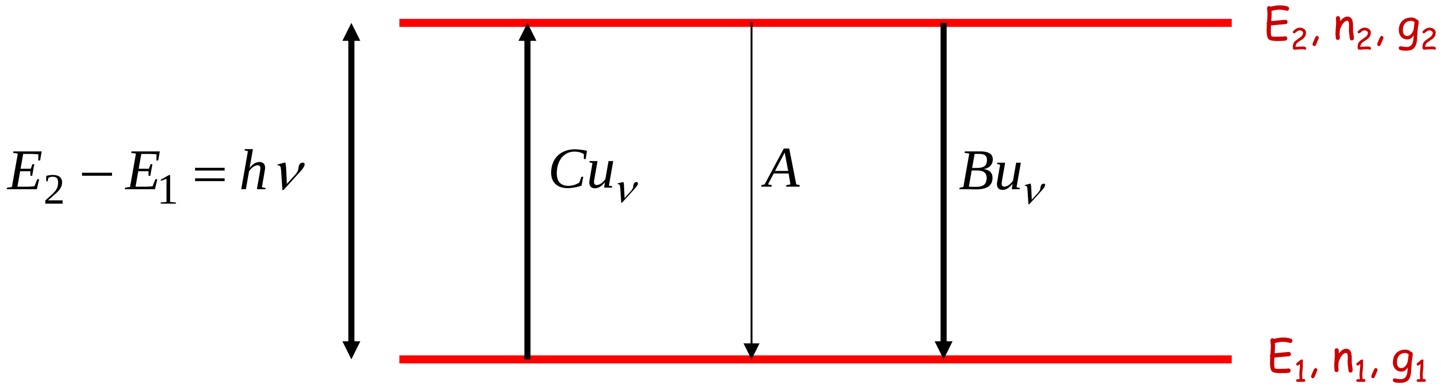
Electrons are released only if the ionization threshold is passed (independent of intensity)

Electron kinetic energy:

$$E(e^-) = \frac{1}{2}mv^2 = h\nu - E_{IP}$$

Note: in solids
IP = "work function"

Radiation in a two-level system

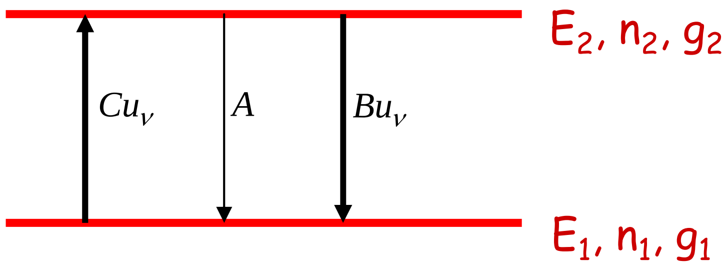


u_ν the incident radiation field (mode density)

Cu_ν	1. Absorption process
A	2. Emission process
Bu_ν	3. Stimulated emission process

A, B, C are the Einstein coefficients

Rate equation model



Population of states:

$$\frac{dn_2}{dt} = Cu_\nu n_1 - An_2 - Bu_\nu n_2$$

Impose an equilibrium condition

$$\frac{dn_2}{dt} = 0$$

In steady state:

$$\frac{n_1}{n_2} = \frac{A + Bu_\nu}{Cu_\nu}$$

Statistical Physics: thermal excitation

$$n(T) = \exp(-E/kT)$$

Relative population:

$$\frac{n_2}{n_1} = \frac{\exp(-E_2/kt)}{\exp(-E_1/kt)} = \exp\left[\frac{h\nu}{kT}\right]$$

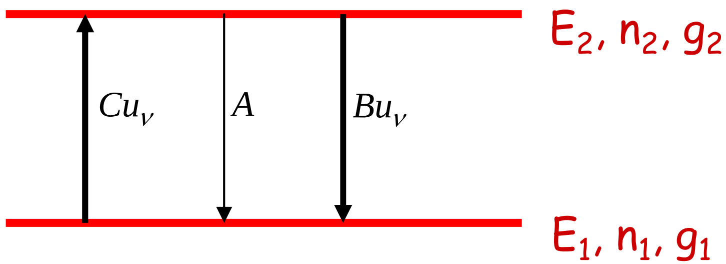
Atomic two-level system in equilibrium with radiation field:

$$u_\nu = \frac{A}{C\exp[h\nu/kT] - B}$$

Compare with Planck's model

A black body is in equilibrium with a radiation field:

$$u_\nu = \frac{8\pi h\nu^3}{c^3}\frac{1}{\exp[h\nu/kT]-1}$$



Einstein scheme

Atomic two-level system in equilibrium with radiation field:

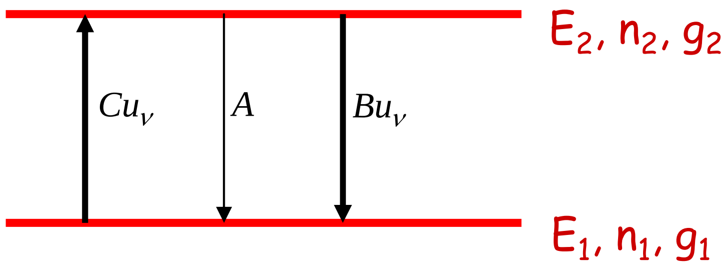
$$u_\nu = \frac{A}{C\exp[h\nu/kT]-B}$$

A two-level atom in equilibrium with a radiation field:

$$C = B$$

$$\frac{A}{B} = \frac{8\pi h\nu^3}{c^3}$$

Results from the Einstein model



A two-level atom in equilibrium with a radiation field:

$$C = B$$

Stimulated emission is equally strong as absorption

From a quantum treatment it follows

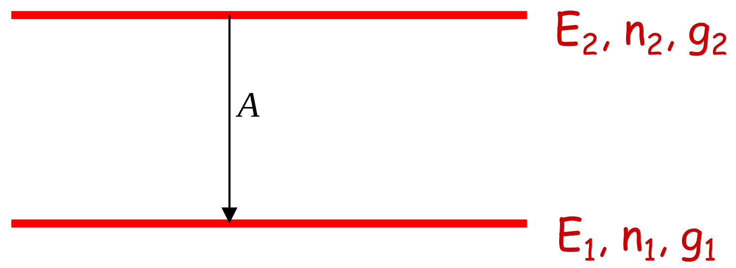
$$B = \frac{\pi e^2}{3\varepsilon_0 \hbar^2} \left|\mu_{ij}\right|^2$$

The B constant related to the Transition dipole moment (the QM radiation strength)

The A-constant follows from

$$\frac{A}{B} = \frac{8\pi h \nu^3}{c^3}$$

Decay of an excited state



In the absence of a radiation field:

$$u_\nu = 0$$

Rate equation reduces:

$$\frac{dn_2}{dt} = -An_2$$

With a boundary condition;

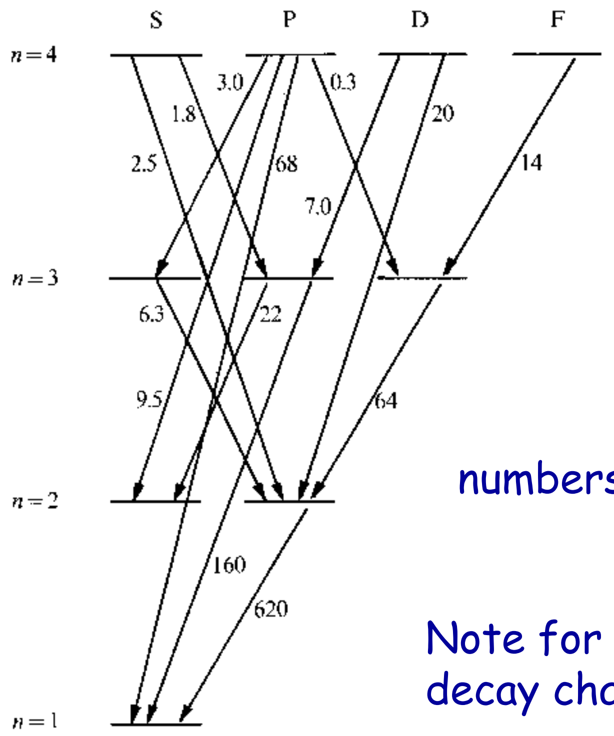
$$n_2(0) = N$$

Solution:

$$n_2(t) = Ne^{-At} = Ne^{-t/\tau}$$

Lifetime of an excited state

$$\tau = \frac{1}{A}$$



numbers in $10^6\ s^{-1}$

Note for multiple decay channels

$$\tau = \frac{1}{\sum_i A_i}$$

Properties of a two-level system

Under all circumstances, i.e.
for arbitrary radiation fields u_ν

$$Cu_\nu < A + Bu_\nu$$

Emission is stronger than absorption

So if we start at

$$n_1(0) = N$$

(all population in the ground state)

It is not possible to reach:

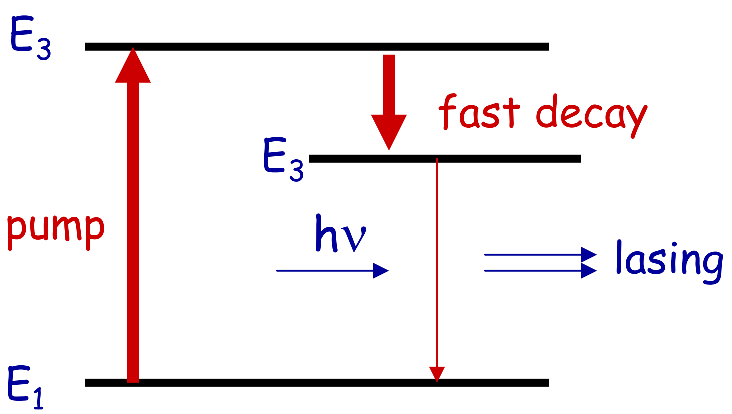
$$n_2 > n_1$$

Optical pumping can never result in a population inversion

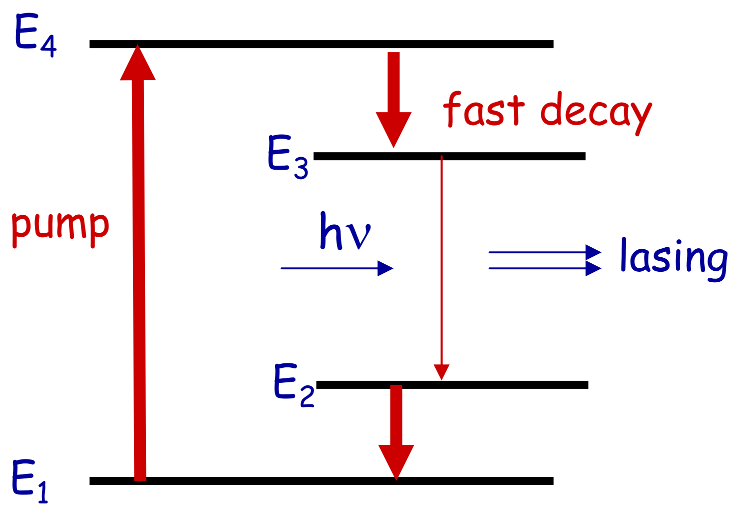
A two-level LASER is impossible

Level schemes for lasers

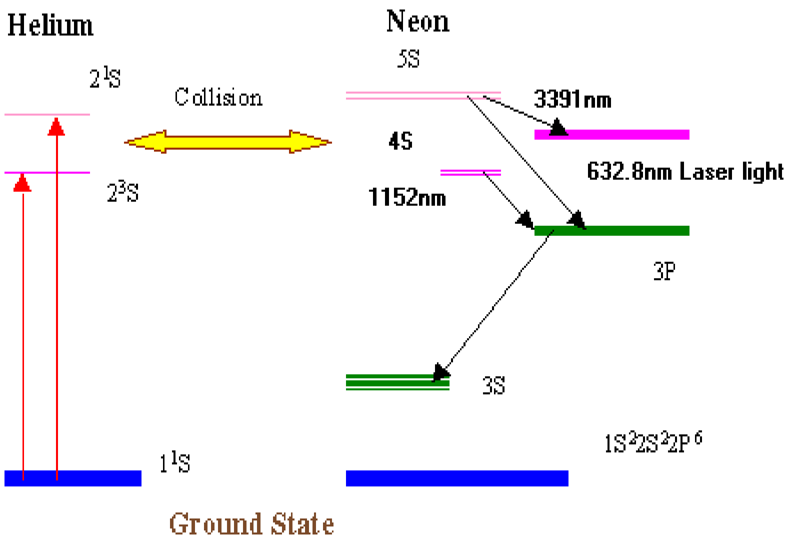
Three-level LASER



Four-level LASER



The He-Ne Laser



The CO_2 Laser