

Curiosity: Where do the electrons go?

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A redox equation is an accounting statement. Oxidation numbers mark which atoms are assigned an increase or decrease in electron ownership, and half-reactions make the matching electron count visible. When the half-reactions are combined, electrons cancel because the model records the same transfer from two perspectives.

That accounting power has limits. A balanced equation can establish conservation for the stated species and medium, but it cannot tell us how quickly a reaction occurs, whether a particular device produces a useful voltage, or the detailed path molecules take. Those questions need different evidence.