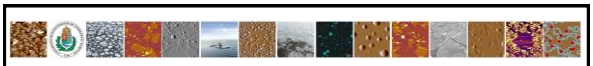


Atomic and molecular interactions

As an example: atomic force microscopy

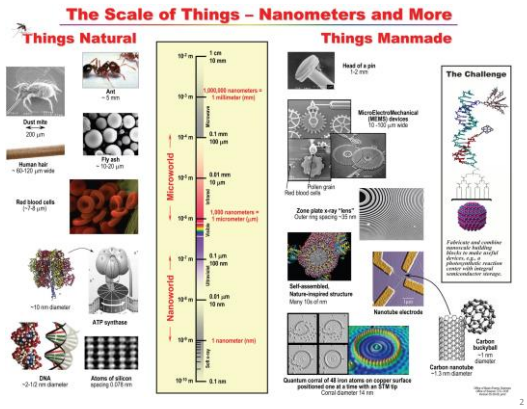
(Textbook chapters: I/2, X/2 Related practice: Resonance)

Tamás Bozó

Nanobiotechnology and Molecular Biophysics Workgroup
Department of Biophysics and Radiation Biology

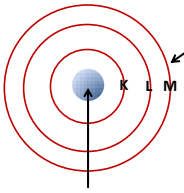
26 October 2018

1



2

Atomic structure



energy levels (shells) with
K: max. 2 e^-
L: max. 8 e^-
M: max. 18 e^-

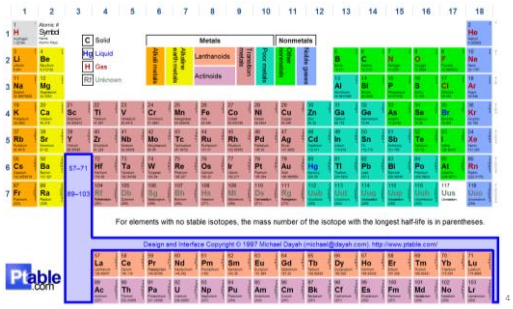
nucleus, including nucleons:
protons (p^+)
neutrons (n^0)

chemical properties!

***Z*: atomic number = number of protons (= number of electrons)**
***N*: neutron number**
A*: mass number = *Z+N
(Nuclear structure will be detailed in Lecture 11.)

Atomic interactions

Noble gases: found in their atomic form in nature *(He, Ne, Ar, Kr, Xe, Rn)*
Other elements: form molecules held together by chemical bonds. *(e.g. H_2, HCl, H_2O, …)* Each atom has a (more or less) fixed position in the molecule.



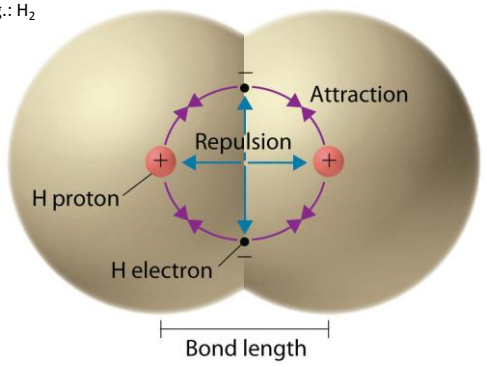
4

Fundamental interactions in physics

Interaction	acts on	effective range	relative strength
Gravity	any particle	infinite (~$1/r^2$)	10^{-40}
Electromagnetic	charged particles	infinite (~$1/r^2$)	10^{-2}
Strong nuclear	nucleons	10^{-15} m	1
Weak nuclear	any particle	10^{-18} m	10^{-13}

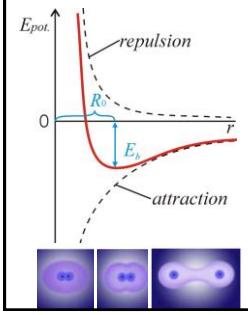
Atomic interactions

e.g.: H_2



Atomic interactions

Bringing two atoms (ions/molecules/…) close to each other attractive and repulsive forces emerge between them resulting in a net potential energy function with an energy minimum at a certain distance:



$$E_{pot} = E_{attraction} + E_{repulsion}$$

$$E_{pot} = -\frac{A}{r^n} + \frac{B}{r^m}$$

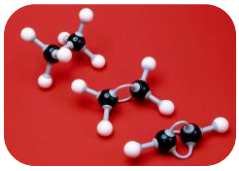
E_{pot}: potential energy of the system
$E_{attraction}$: E contribution of attractive forces
$E_{repulsion}$: E contribution of repulsive forces
A and B: interaction-specific constants (atom dependent)
$n<m$
r: distance of atoms
E_b: bindig energy
R_0: binding distance

Bond Types

Classification systems:

- Intra/intermolecular bonds
- According to the strength of bonds:
  - Strong/weak
  - Primary (covalent, metallic, ionic)
  - Secondary (dispersion, dipole-dipole, hydrogen)
- Other Bond types…

I. Covalent bond



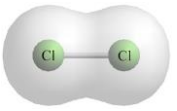
	r_0	E_b
$H_3C\text{-}CH_3$ ethane	154 pm	-331 KJ·mol^{-1}
$H_2C{=}CH_2$ ethylene	139,9 pm	-590 KJ·mol^{-1}
$HC{\equiv}CH$ acetylene	120,3 pm	-812 KJ·mol^{-1}

- Atoms are held together by electrons of common orbitals, called molecular orbitals.
- Valence electrons interact the most.
- Single, double or triple bond depending on the number of shared electrons.
- Some electrostatic component may be present (see later), but not predominant.
- Strong interaction: E_b>1 eV
- *(1 eV = 1.6*10^{-19}J = 96 kJ/mol ~ 100 kJ/mol)*

I. Covalent bond

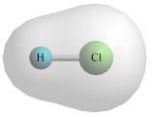
Apolar (nonpolar or homeopolar) bond

Center of (+) és (-) charges of the molecule coincides
Binding electron(s) shared equally
„purely covalent"
E.g. H_2, Cl_2, O_2, …



Polar (heteropolar) bond

Centers of (+) and (-) charges do not coincide
Electrostatic contribution appears
Electron cloud is polarized
Electric dipole is formed
E.g.: HCl, HF, H_2O, …

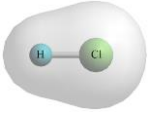


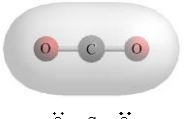
I. Covalent bond

Electric dipole moment: measure of the separation of positive and negative electric charges.

$$p = q \cdot d$$

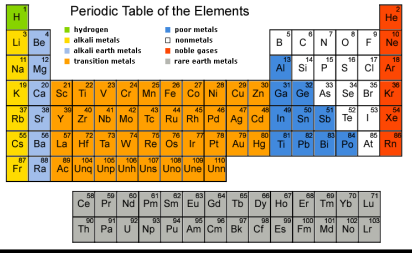
p: electric dipole moment
q: charge (positive and negative)
d: distance of separation
[D, debye] *(1D = 3.34*10^{-30} Cm)*



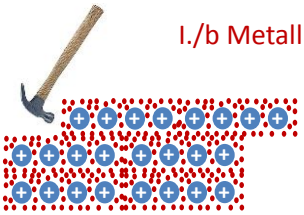


I./b Metallic bond

- Atoms are held together by common electrons (delocalized orbital)
- Valence electrons form continous electron band
- Strong interaction: E_b>1 eV
- Multi atomic systems



I./b Metallic bond



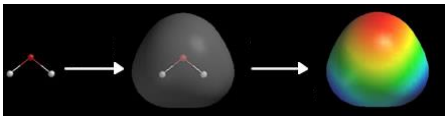
Metallic lattice: positively charged metal ions in a crystall lattice surrounded by a cloud of delocalized electrons.

Physical properties:
Metals are:
- Non transparent
- Ductile (shapeable)
- Good electric conductors
- etc.

13

II. Bond types involving electrostatic interactions

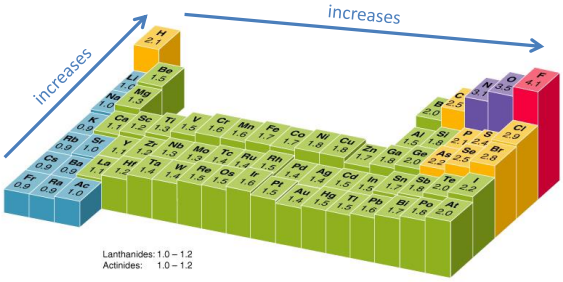
Electronegativity
- is a chemical property that describes the tendency of an atom or a functional group to attract electrons towards itself.
- The higher the associated electronegativity number, the more an element or compound attracts electrons towards it.
- Approximately proportional to the sum of ionization energy and electon affinity.
- Calculated with different methods *(Pauling, Mulliken, Sanderson…)*



14

II. Bond types involving electrostatic interactions

Electronegativity according to L. **Pauling** (dimensionless units)

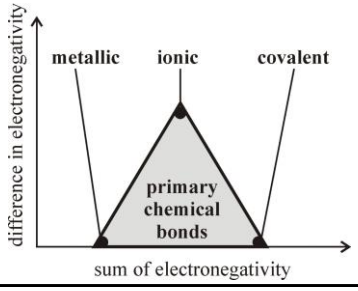


15

II. Bond types involving electrostatic interactions

Classic bonds classified according to electronegativity:

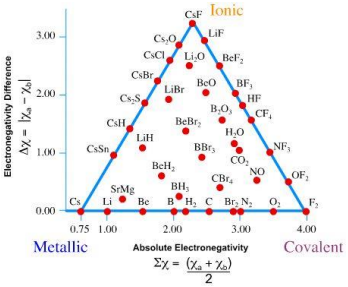
ΔEN : < 0.6 (apolar covalent) **0.6 – 2.1** (polar covalent) **2.1 <** (ionic)



16

II. Bond types involving electrostatic interactions

Classic bonds classified according to electronegativity: an example



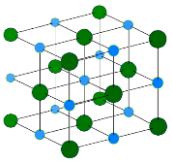
(This modell utilizes Norman (and not Pauling) EN values.)

17

II./a Ionic bond

- Model: atoms are held together by Coulombic forces between (+) and (-) point charges
- „Limiting case of heteropolar bonds"
- Formed between atoms of significantly different electronegativity (e.g.: NaCl, ΔEN = 3 – 0.9 = 2.1)
- Can form between two atoms, but ions are usually multi-atom systems.
- Long range interaction - attraction is inversely proportional to the distance (decreases slowly with it).
- Electrostatic interaction can be largely affected by other charged components *(eg. dissociation in water!)*
- Strong interaction (E_b > 1 eV)

II./a Ionic bond

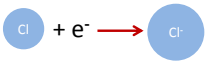


Ionic crystals: stochiometric ratio of positive and negative ions are structured into a periodic crystalline structure. *(e.g.:NaCl)*

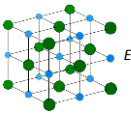
19

II./a Ionic bond

E_i = 496 kJ/mol



E_{aff} = -349 kJ/mol



$E_{lattice}$= -788 kJ/mol

Ionization energy: is the energy *required* to remove electrons from gaseous atoms or ions.

Electron affinity: amount of energy *released* when an electron is added to a neutral atom or molecule to form a negative ion (measured in the gaseous state).

Lattice energy: measure of the strength of bonds in an ionic compound. Energy *required to* completely *separate* one mole of a solid ionic compound into gaseous ionic constituents.

20

II./b Dipole-dipole interaction

- Constant charge distribution is present in a (given part of a) molecule
- Partially (+) and (-) segments are held together by electrostatic interactions (Coulombic forces)
- Intra/intermolekular interaction.
- Weak interaction (E_b = 0.003-0.02 eV)

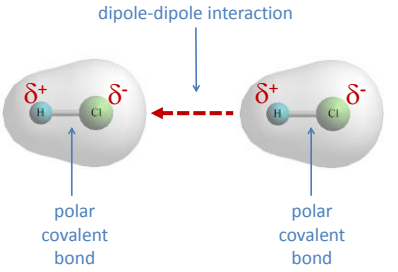
- Energy of attracting interaction between dipoles:

$$E_{attraction} = p \cdot E$$

p: dipole momentum
E: electric field strength generated by the surrounding partners

21

II./b Dipole-dipole interaction



22

III. Van der Waals-interactions

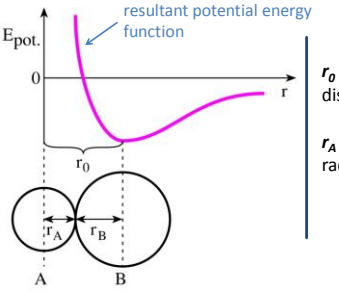
- Sum of attractive and repulsive interactions between two apolar atoms, molecules or apolar molecular parts.
- The attractive contribution (also called *London-*, or *dispersion force*) is a result of temporarily created dipoles that can induce the polarization of other apolar molecule or molecular part.
- Intermolecular or intramolecular interaction.
- Important biological role: formation of organic structures.
- Week connection (E_b ~ 0.02 eV)

- *[according to other classifications Van der Waals interactions involve all types of weak electrostatic connections (permanent dipole-permanent dipole; permanent dipole-induced dipole, induced dipole-induced-dipole)]*

23

III. Van der Waals-interactions

Equilibrium distance of a Van der Waals interaction can be considered as one definition of atomic size.



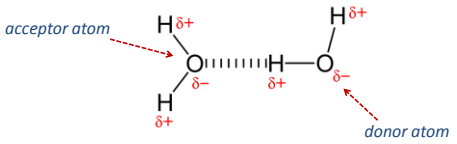
r_0 : equilibrium (binding) distance

r_A **and** r_B **:** Van der Waals radii of atom A and B

24

IV. Hydrogen bond

- Two atoms of high electronegativity are held together with a Hydrogen-bridge.
- Primarily between **F, N, O** atoms (pillar atoms).
- Intermolecular/intramolecular interaction
- Typical bond distance: 0.23 – 0.35 nm
- Well defined geometry.
- Important role in structural biology and biochemical reactions.
- Medium strong interaction (typical E_b = 0.2 eV)



25

V. Hidrophobic interaction

- Appears in aqeous systems (like biological environments!)
- Apolar, hydrophobic molecules tend to aggregate (form bonds with each other) in aqeous environment in order to exclude the polar water molecules and minimize their surface area exposed to water.
- Intra/intermolecular interaction
- It has mostly entropic origin *(see later at Thermodynamics)* through reduction of highly structured water cage around the apolar surfaces. *(see Organisation of Water later)*
- Important role in structural biology and biochemical reactions.
- Weak interaction.

Scanning Probe Microscopy (SPM)

Family of instruments used for studying surface properties of various materials.

How do they work?

Etimology and function:

Microscopy: a method being able to form image of small objects.

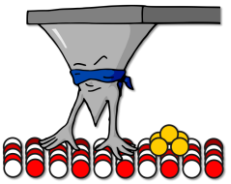
How small? Size of resolvable objects spans from few pm-s to several μm-s.

They are not *„scope"*-s in the classic sense of the word: They do not *„see"* the object, they *„touch"* it.

Scanning Probe Microscopy (SPM)

Probe:

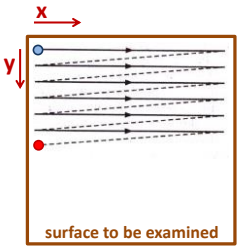
- A tiny, specifically designed component particularly sensitive to *atomic interactions*.
- The probe is brought very closed to the sample surface.



- The sensed interactions can be correlated with the distance between the probe and the sample.
- Various interactions can be observed depending on the design of the probe.
- SPM methods are named after the type of atomic interaction sensed by a certain probe.

Scanning Probe Microscopy (SPM)

Scan pattern:

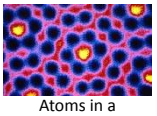


starting point
actual position of the probe

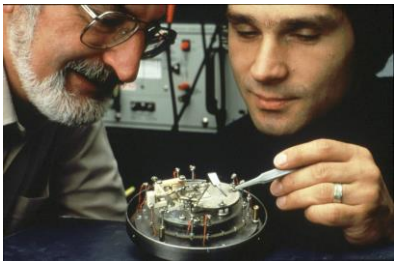
Scanning:

- A scanner controls the precise *position* (X; Y) of the probe and its *distance* (Z) from the surface to be imaged.
- The probe can be moved with pm sensitivity in X; Y; Z directions.
- The surface of region of interest (ROI) is scanned point by point during a measurement.
- (The material that enables such precise positioning is *piezoelectric ceramic*. If voltage is applied on it, the ceramic changes its geometry. *See details in Ultrasound lecture, 2nd semester*)

Scanning Tuneling Microscope (STM) 1981

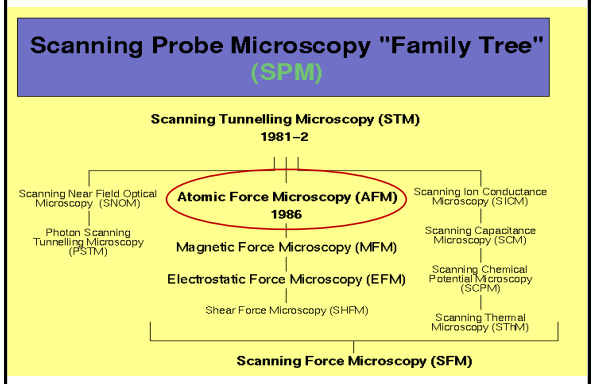


Atoms in a silicon chip



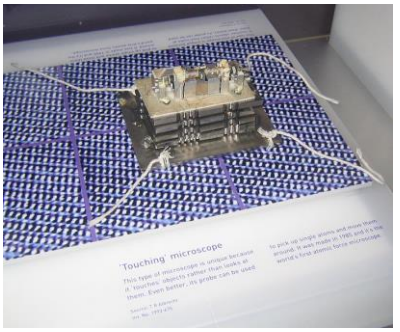
Heinrich ROHRER and Gerd BINNING
Nobel prize: 1986

30



31

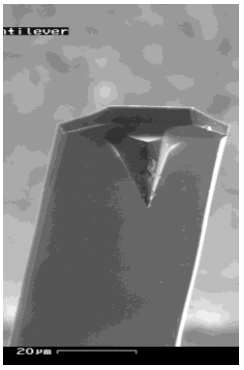
Atomic Force Microscopy



The first one. 1986.

32

Atomic Force Microscopy

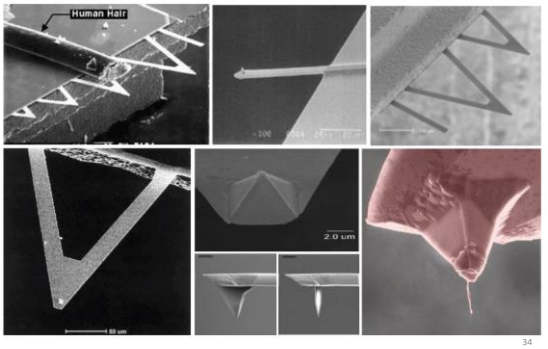


- The probe is a tiny, sharp tip, usually few μm-s tall, and only few nm-s in diameter at the apex.
- The tip is located at the free end of a cantilever that is usually 100-500 μm long.
- Material: usually silicon nitride
- May be coated with a thin metal layer.
- Radius: 0.1 nm – 100 μm
- spring constant: ~0.1-10 N/m
- f_0:~50-500 kHz

33

Atomic Force Microscopy

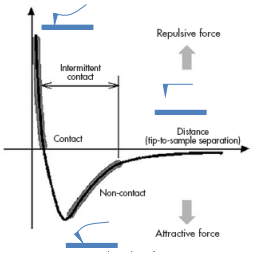
Different types of AFM cantilevers.



34

Atomic Force Microscopy

- Bringing the tip very close (few nm-s) to the sample atomic interactions arise between the very last atoms of it and the atoms of the sample.

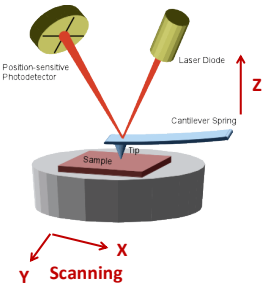


Depending on the tip-sample distance:

- Net attraction or repulsion may occur.
- Attraction at „longer" distances.
- Repulsion at very short distances.

35

Atomic Force Microscopy

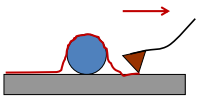


- Attractive and repulsive effects cause the cantilever to bend.
- Deflection of the cantilever is detected by an optical system.
- A laser beam is pointed at the very end of the cantilever, and reflected back to be sensed by a position-sensitive photodetector (PSD).
- Thus vertical deflection of the cantilever is amplified and can be detected with sub-Å sensitivity..

Atomic Force Microscopy

Contact mode:

- The tip is in perpetual contact with the sample surface.
- The deflection of the cantilever (i.e. the force exerted on the sample by the tip) is held constant.
- A Z feedback system is utilized to maintain the deflection at a constant value (setpoint) by lifting or lowering the cantilever.
- Topography data (i.e.: height) in each X;Y point is calculated from these Z movements



Disadvantage:

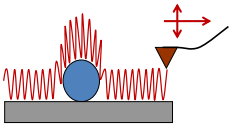
- Lateral forces exerted by the scanning tip may damage softer samples.

37

Atomic Force Microscopy

Oscillating mode: (Tapping mode, Non-contact mode)

- Cantilever is oscillated close to its resonant frequency.
- The tip taps the surface gently
- The amplitude of cantilever oscillation changes with surface topography.
- A Z feedback system is utilized to maintain the amplitude at a constant value (setpoint) by lifting or lowering the oscillating cantilever.
- Topography data (i.e.: height) in each X;Y point is calculated from these Z movements



Advantage:

- Virtually eliminated lateral forces.
- Allows more gentle imaging.
- Applicable for soft samples.

38

Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM)

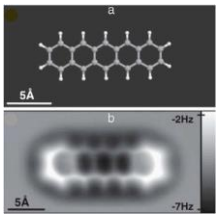
Main advantages:

- ✓ 3D surface profile.
- ✓ Images are collected with ~10 pm vertical and somewhat worse horizontal resolution.
- ✓ Any surfaces (conductors, insulators and semiconductors) can be imaged.
- ✓ Works in ambient air, special gas or in fluid environment as well.
- ✓ Usually does not require fixation or staining of the sample.
- ✓ Biological samples can be examined in their native state and physiological environment.

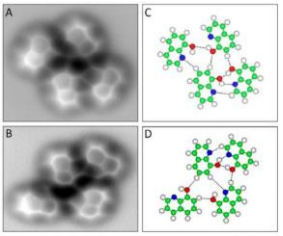
Main disadvantages:

- x Samples must adhere to a substrate. Surface adhesion may lead to distortion.
- x Slow scan speed.
- x Scan height limited to few microns („the flatter the better").
- x Scan size limited to few tens of microns.
- x High cost

Atomic Force Microscopy
Images

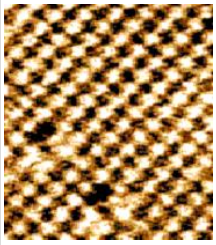


Pentacene molecule imaged with AFM
Nature Chemistry ***1****, 597 - 598 (2009)*

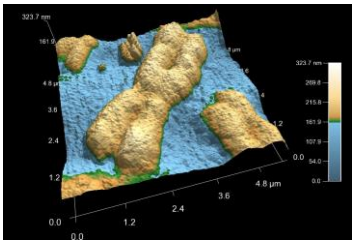


Hydrogen bonds between 8-hydroxiquinoline molecules scanned with AFM
Science, 2013: 342 (6158), 611-614

Atomic Force Microscopy
Images



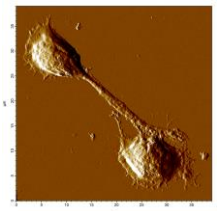
NaCl crystal surface



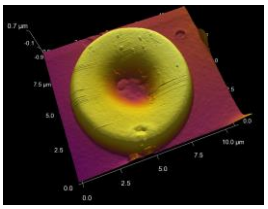
Human metaphase chromosomes

41

Atomic Force Microscopy
Images



B-lymphocytes interconnected by a membrane nanotube



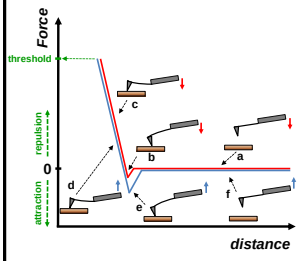
Human red blood cell
with „VÉR" nanolitographed on its surface

Atomic Force Microscopy

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrsoS5e39H8

Atomic Force Microscopy

Force spectroscopy: Force-distance traces registered upon push-pull cycles of the AFM tip (movement only in Z direction)
~10 pN sensitivity



force curve taken on a hard surface

Deflection of the cantilever (Δx) is proportiaonal to the force (F) (Hooke's law):

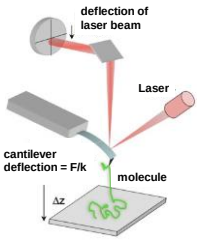
$$F = k \cdot \Delta x$$

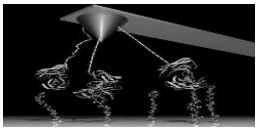
k : spring constant of the cantilever

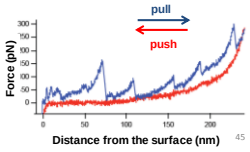
Binding forces, viscous and elastic properties can be measured perturbing the sample with the tip and registering the force response.

Atomic Force Microscopy

Force spectroscopy: Force-distance traces registered upon push-pull cycles of the AFM tip (movement only in Z direction)
~10 pN sensitivity

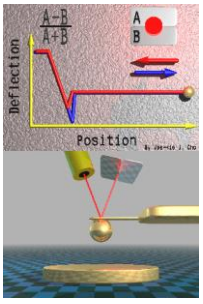






Atomic Force Microscopy

Force spectroscopy:



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Thank you for your attention!

AFM phase image of nanolithographically etched polycarbonate, 5μm scan. The original JPEG scan is a copy of Pablo Picasso's, "Don Quixote". Image from Asylum Research.