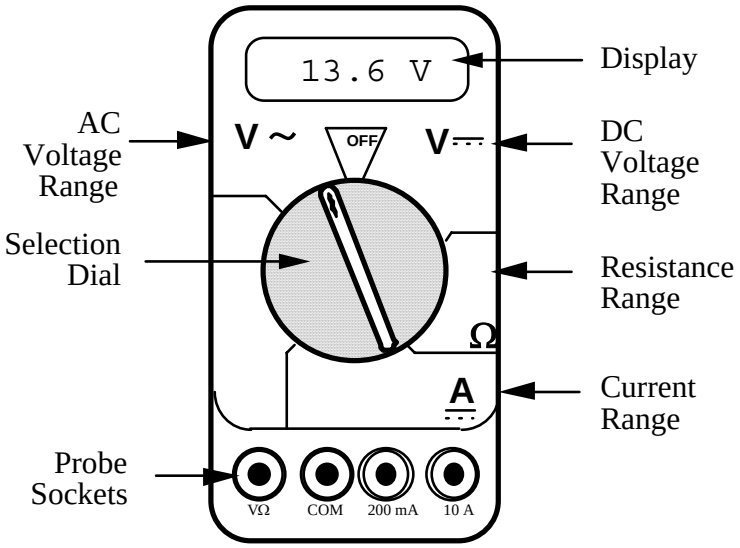
Appendix A: Equipment

THE DIGITAL MULTIMETER (DMM)

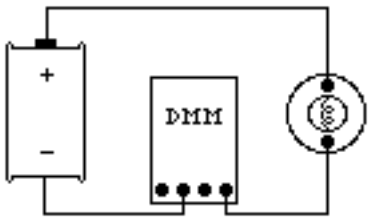
The DMM is a common piece of lab equipment that can be used to measure various electrical quantities, most often current, resistance, and potential. The DMM's you will be using are capable of measuring both "direct current" (DC) and "alternating current" (AC) circuits. Be careful to know which type of measurement you need to make, then set your DMM accordingly. Some DMM's might be slightly different from the one pictured to the right.



The DMM can measure currents anywhere from 10 amps to a microamp (10^{-6} amps). This versatility makes the DMM fragile. For example, measuring a 1 ampere current while the DMM is on the 2 milliamp scale will definitely blow a fuse! If this happens, your instructor can change the fuse. However, you can damage the DMM beyond repair, so follow the instructions below when you use it.

Measuring Current:

1. Set the selection dial of the DMM to the **highest** current measurement setting (10 amps). Insert one wire into the socket labeled '10A' and a second wire into the socket labeled 'COM'.
2. Attach the DMM into the circuit as shown below:

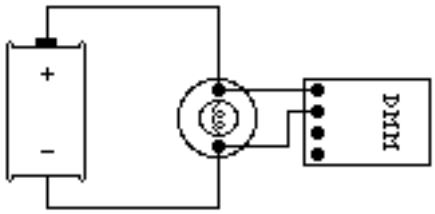


To measure current, the DMM must be placed in the circuit so that all the current you want to measure goes **through** the DMM.

3. If no number appears while the DMM is at the 10A setting, move the wire from the 10A socket to the 200mA socket and then turn the selection dial to the 200 milliamp (200m) setting. If there is still no reading, change the dial to the 20 milliamp setting, etc.
4. When you have taken your measurement, return the DMM selection dial to the highest current setting (10 amps) and move the wire back to the 10A socket.

Measuring Voltage:

1. Set the DMM selection dial to read DC volts (V⎓). Insert one wire into the socket labeled 'VΩ' and a second wire into the socket labeled 'COM'.
2. Set the selection dial of the DMM to the **highest** voltage measurement setting. Connect the two wires from the DMM to the two points between which you want to measure the voltage, as shown below.



To measure voltage, the DMM must be placed in the circuit so that the voltage difference across the circuit element you want to measure is **across** the DMM.

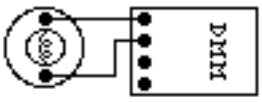
3. If no number appears, try a different measurement scale. Start at the highest voltage scale and work your way down the scales until you get a satisfactory reading.

Measuring Resistance:

*The element whose resistance you are measuring **must** be free from all other currents (due to other batteries, power supplies, etc.) for the DMM to work*. That means you must **remove** it from a circuit.

To measure resistance:

1. Set the DMM selection dial to measure ohms (Ω). Insert one wire into the socket labeled 'VΩ' and a second wire into the socket labeled 'COM'.
2. *Make sure that the circuit element whose resistance you wish to measure is free of any currents.*
3. Attach the wires across the circuit element, as shown in the example below.



4. If no number appears, try a different measurement scale. Begin at the largest scale (20 MΩ) and work your way down.