

Using Density in the Ideal Gas Law

What is the density of oxygen, O₂, in grams per liter at 25 °C and 0.850 atm?

Solution:

Because density equals mass per unit volume, calculating the mass of 1 L (exact) of gas will give you the density of the gas.

$$\begin{aligned}P &= 0.850 \text{ atm} \\V &= 1 \text{ L} \\T &= 25^\circ\text{C} + 273 = 298 \text{ K} \\n &= ?\end{aligned}$$

$$PV = nRT \quad n = \frac{PV}{RT}$$

$$n = \frac{0.850 \text{ atm} * 1 \text{ L}}{0.0821 \frac{\text{L atm}}{\text{mol K}} * 298 \text{ K}} = 0.0347 \text{ mol O}_2$$

Now you can convert moles of O₂ to grams:

$$0.0347 \text{ mol O}_2 \times 32.0 \text{ g/mol} = 1.11 \text{ grams O}_2 \text{ that had been in the 1.00 L} \quad \text{OR}$$

You can solve the entire problem by substituting grams/Mwt for moles in the Ideal Gas Law Equation.

$$\text{Since } n = \frac{\text{mass}}{\text{Mwt}} \text{ and } PV = nRT \quad PV = \frac{\text{mass } RT}{\text{Mwt}} \text{ and } \text{mass} = \frac{PV \text{ Mwt}}{RT}$$

The Molecular weight of O₂ can be found on the Periodic Table adding to the factors already known.

$$\text{mass} = \frac{0.850 \text{ atm} * 1 \text{ L} * 32.0 \text{ g/mol}}{0.0821 \frac{\text{L atm}}{\text{mol K}} * 298 \text{ K}} = \boxed{1.11 \text{ g/L}}$$