

# Solar ray collector with Cobra SMARTsense



Physics

Thermodynamics

Temperature &amp; Heat



Difficulty level

medium



Group size

-



Preparation time

10 minutes



Execution time

10 minutes

This content can also be found online at:

<http://localhost:1337/c/66b4af09ec034d0002d01183>

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# General information

## Application

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Fig.1: Experimental set-up

The principle behind a solar ray collector is fundamental for the solar industry.

This experiment can be used to gain a first understanding of how a solar ray collector works.

The measurements of all experimental data are measured through Cobra SMARTSense sensors.

This experiment is measureAPP or measureLAB compatible.

## Other information (1/2)

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### Prior knowledge



The prior knowledge required for this experiment is found in the theory section.

### Scientific principle



The solar ray collector is illuminated with a halogen lamp of known light intensity. The heat energy absorbed by the collector can be calculated from the volume flow and the difference in the water temperatures at the inlet and outlet of the absorber, if the inlet temperature stays almost constant by releasing energy to a reservoir. In this way the efficiency of the collector can be determined. The measurement is made with various collector arrangements and at various absorber temperatures.

## Other information (2/2)

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### Learning objective



The goal of this experiment is to investigate the principles of a solar ray collector.

### Tasks



Determine the efficiency of the solar ray collector under various experimental conditions.

1. Absorption of energy from the environment (20 °C) without illumination by sun or halogen lamp, water temperature at the absorber inlet  $\vartheta_i \approx 5^\circ\text{C}$
2. Illumination with halogen lamp. Water temperature  $\vartheta_i \approx 20^\circ\text{C}$
3. Illumination with halogen lamp. Water temperature  $\vartheta_i \approx 50^\circ\text{C}$

## Safety instructions

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For this experiment the general instructions for safe experimentation in science lessons apply.

## Theory (1/4)

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A solar ray collector is used to heat water by means of radiant energy. In order to be able to make statements concerning the efficiency of a collector or a solar installation it is essential to be aware not only of its construction but also of the weather situation, the mounting angle relative to the sun and other operating conditions, such as the temperature of the absorber. In the experiment a halogen lamp and a stream of cold air reproducibly simulate the weather. The collector is optimally aligned with the halogen lamp in each series of measurements. The mean absorber temperature can be approximately preset by means of the selected reservoir temperature. The glass covering of the collector absorbs or reflects the incident radiant energy to a small extent. The portion passing through impinges on the absorber and is to a very large extent absorbed by it.

$$q_a = \alpha \cdot \tau \cdot q_i \quad (1)$$

With  $q_a$  = Radiant energy converted into heat in the absorber per unit time and area,  $q_i$  = Light intensity at the position of the collector,  $\alpha$  = Absorption factor of the absorber and  $\tau$  = Transmission factor of the glass covering.

## Theory (2/4)

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The radiant energy converted into heat is not all available as useful energy. Some of it is lost through heat radiation, heat conduction or heat flow. A further portion may lead to an increase in temperature of the absorber, i.e. this portion is stored in the collector. The useful energy  $q_u$  produced per unit time and area is therefore

$$q_u = q_a - q_l - q_{st} \quad (2)$$

with  $q_l$  = Lost energy / s · m<sup>2</sup> and  $q_{st}$  = Stored energy/s · m<sup>2</sup> .

Under the conditions in the experiment

$$q_{st} \approx 0 \quad (3)$$

as the temperature difference is measured in the stationary state with (almost) constant inlet temperature.

## Theory (3/4)

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The heat losses of the absorber are greater the higher its temperature. The rear insulation determines the heat conduction losses; losses occur at the front due to radiation and convection. All the losses can be described by the following formula:

$$q_l = k \cdot (\vartheta_{Ab} - \vartheta_{Am}) \quad (4)$$

with  $k$  = Coefficient of heat transmission,  $\vartheta_{Ab}$  = Absorber temperature and  $\vartheta_{Am}$  = Ambient temperature.

The efficiency of a solar ray collector states the ratio of useful energy to irradiated energy.

$$\eta = \frac{q_u}{q_i} = \alpha\tau - \frac{k \cdot (\vartheta_{Ab} - \vartheta_{Am})}{q_i} \quad (5)$$

The absorber temperature is not known, the inlet and outlet temperatures  $\vartheta_i$  and  $\vartheta_{out}$  of the water are measured. Moreover, equation (5) does not take account of the heat transfer from the absorber to the water, for which an absorber efficiency factor  $f$  is introduced:

## Theory (4/4)

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$$\eta = f \cdot \left( \alpha \tau - \frac{k \cdot (\vartheta_W - \vartheta_{Am})}{q_i} \right) \quad (6)$$

where  $\vartheta_W$  is the mean water temperature.

$$\vartheta_W = \frac{\vartheta_{in} - \vartheta_{out}}{2} \quad (7)$$

The useful power  $P_U$  can be determined in the stationary state from the volume flow of the water

$$\dot{m} = 100 \text{ g/min}$$

and the outlet and inlet temperature difference.

$$P_U = c \cdot m \cdot (\vartheta_{out} - \vartheta_{in}) \quad (8)$$

$c$  = Specific thermal capacity of water.

The light intensity at the position of the collector is

$$A = 0.12 \text{ m}^2$$

## Equipment

Position	Material	Item No.	Quantity
1	Solar ray collector	06753-00	1
2	Circulating pump w.flowmeter	06754-01	1
3	PHYWE Power supply, 230 V, DC: 0...12 V, 2 A / AC: 6 V, 12 V, 5 A	13506-93	1
4	Heat exchanger	06755-00	1
5	Solar collector stand, teaching aid	06757-00	1
6	Immersion heater,1000W,220-250V	04020-93	1
7	Hot/cold air blower	04030-93	1
8	Tripod base PHYWE	02002-55	1
9	Support rod, stainless steel, l = 250 mm, d = 10 mm	02031-00	2
10	Right angle clamp expert with fulcrum screw	02054-00	2
11	Universal clamp	37715-01	1
12	Beaker, DURAN®, tall form, 2000 ml	36010-00	1
13	Beaker, Boorosilicate, low form, 5000 ml	46059-00	1
14	Safety gas tubing, DVGW, sold by metre	39281-10	3
15	Measuring tape, l = 2 m	09936-00	1
16	Digital stopwatch, 24 h, 1/100 s and 1 s	24025-00	1
17	Connecting cord, 32 A, 750 mm, red	07362-01	1
18	Connecting cord, 32 A, 750 mm, blue	07362-04	1
19	Plate holder, opening width 2 - 35 mm	06509-00	1
20	Cobra SMARTsense Temperature - Sensor for measuring temperature -40 ... 125 °C (Bluetooth)	12903-00	3
21	Ceramic lamp socket E27, with reflector, switch and security plug	06751-01	1
22	Filament lamp, 220V/120W, with reflector	06759-93	1
23	Support rod, stainless steel, l=370 mm, d=10 mm	02059-00	1
24	measureLAB, multi-user license	14580-61	1

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# Setup and Procedure

## Setup (1/5)

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To measure the temperature, you need the Cobra SMARTsense Temperature sensor and the measureAPP. Check whether "Bluetooth" is activated on your device (tablet, smartphone) (the app can be downloaded free of charge from the App Store - QR codes below). Now open the measureAPP on your device.



measureAPP for

Android operating systems



measureAPP for

iOS operating systems

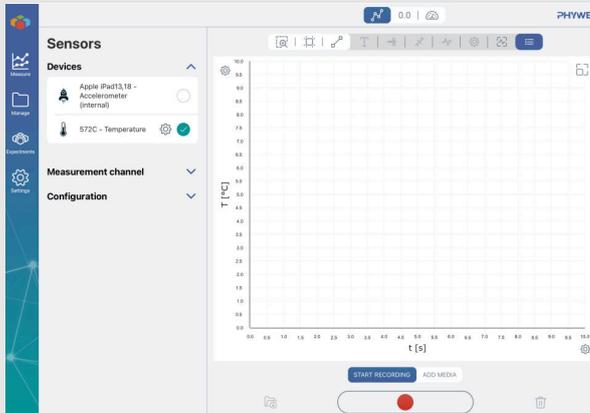


measureAPP and

Tablets and PCs with Windows 10

## Setup (2/5)

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measureAPP for Temperature  
SMARTsense

- Switch on the SMARTsense sensor "Temperature" by pressing and holding the power button.
- Connect the sensor to the device in the measureAPP under the item "Measure" as shown in the illustration on the left.
- The SMARTSense sensor "Temperature" is now displayed in the app.
- Repeat the procedure for all three SMARTsense sensors "Temperature".

## Setup (3/5)

PHYWE

The experiment is set up as in Fig. 1. The temperatures are measured with Cobra SMARTsense temperature sensors at three different locations.

The first one is measuring the water temperature inside the beaker. The other two sensors are measuring the temperature on each side of the collector circuit.

At the start of the experiment it should be checked that these two temperatures agree and if not, any difference being taken into account in the evaluation.



Fig.1: Experimental set-up

## Setup (4/5)

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To fill the solar ray collector circulation system, the heat exchanger is first connected to the pump inlet (at the bottom) by a rubber tube. A tube is also to be connected to the pump outlet (at the top) and the other side of the heat exchanger. The flowmeter valve is opened, the system is carefully filled with water (in such a way that water flows first through the heat exchanger and then through the pump) and sealed with a pinchcock.

## Setup (5/5)

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The solar ray collector is filled via the filler connection on the underside (plug thermometers into measuring sockets!). The short connecting tube between the outlet and inlet of the absorber is removed in order to connect the pump and heat exchanger to them (see Fig. 1). The pump requires a voltage of approx. 3...6 V DC for this experiment. The residual air is expelled from the circuit by squeezing the tubing and water is added, if necessary.

A 120 W halogen lamp ensures uniform, reproducible illumination. The heat exchanger is placed in a water reservoir (beaker). The valve on the flowmeter is to be fully opened before each separate series of measurements, so that, with maximum volume flow, the temperatures at all points of the circulation system have assumed roughly the temperature of the water reservoir.

The volume flow is set by the valve to  $\dot{V} = 100 \text{ cm}^3/\text{min}$  in each case for recording of the series of measurements. The temperatures at the inlet and outlet of the absorber are measured, for example, every minute. They remain approximately constant after about 15 min.

## Procedure (1/2)

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The duration of each series of measurements is 20 min.

- The heat exchanger is to be placed in the 2 l beaker which is filled with ice-water. Both series of measurements are recorded without illuminating the collector. In the first instance the collector is complete, for the second series of measurements the glass plate and the rear insulation are removed. During the series of measurements the beaker must always contain sufficient ice for the temperature at the inlet of the absorber not to exceed 5 °C by a substantial amount.
- 4.5 l of water at room temperature is poured into the 5 l beaker; the heat exchanger is put into it. The distance between the solar ray collector and the halogen lamp is 70 cm. Both series of measurements are recorded with illumination. In the first instance the collector is complete, for the second series of measurements the glass plate is removed, and rear insulation is left in place. Care must be taken to see that the outlet temperatures are as constant as possible ( $\pm 2$  K).

## Procedure (2/2)

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- The water in the 5 l beaker is heated to approx. 60 °C with an immersion heater so that the temperatures in the collector circuit reach at least 50 °C before starting the series of measurements. The distance between the solar ray collector and the halogen lamp is 70 cm. The hot air blower (with cold air setting) is to be set up at the side at a distance of approx. 30 cm so that the stream of air impinges on the collector at an angle of approx. 30°. The first two series of measurements are recorded with the collector complete, first without and then with a stream of cold air. The third and fourth series of measurements are made without the glass plate, again first without and then with a stream of cold air. Pay attention that the outlet temperatures are as constant as possible ( $\pm 2$  K).

## Evaluation (1/3)

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Table 1 shows the collector efficiency measured under various conditions

$$\eta = \frac{P_U}{q_i \cdot A} \quad (9)$$

Table 1: Water Temperatures and Collector Efficiency under Various Experimental Conditions  $m = 100 \text{ cm}^3/\text{min}$ ,  $q_i = 1 \text{ kW}/\text{m}^2$ ,  $A = 0.12 \text{ m}^2$

Exp. No.	Glass plate	Light	Cold air	$\vartheta_{in}$ [°C]	$\vartheta_{out} - \vartheta_{in}$ [K]	$\eta$ [%]
1.1	+*	-	-	$\approx 5$	2.5	15
1.2	-*	-	-	$\approx 5$	5.0	29
2.1	+	+	-	$\approx 20$	11.0	64
2.2	-	+	-	$\approx 20$	12.5	73
3.1	+	+	-	$\approx 50$	8.0	47
3.2	-	+	+	$\approx 50$	8.0	47
3.3	+	+	-	$\approx 50$	6.0	35
3.4	-	+	+	$\approx 50$	3.0	17

\* This series of measurements without rear insulation

## Evaluation (2/3)

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Comparison of measurements 2.1 and 3.1, or of 2.2 and 3.3, clearly shows that the losses of the collector increase as the absorber temperature increases. Conversely, if the absorber cools below the ambient temperature, energy can be taken up from the environment even without solar irradiation (measurements 1.1 and 1.2). An absorber which is not insulated is more effective in this case. In practice, cooling of the liquid in the absorber circuit below ambient temperature is achieved by releasing energy to a heat pump.

The measurements under 2 and 3 show the effect of the glass covering. When the collector is operated at ambient temperature, the heat losses are negligible. The transmission factor of the glass covering can be read off from the comparison of 2.1 and 2.2. In accordance with equation (6):

With glass  $\eta = f \cdot \alpha \cdot \tau$

without glass  $\eta = f \cdot \alpha$

$\tau \approx 88 \%$

## Evaluation (3/3)

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Comparison of measurements 3.1 and 3.2 shows that the glass covering reduces the heat losses of the absorber: greenhouse effect! The solar radiation is for the most part allowed through by the glass plate, the heat radiation of the hot absorber is for the most part absorbed and reflected.

In the case of a collector with glass covering, the wind has no measurable effect on the efficiency, whereas the increase in temperature in the case of a collector without glass is markedly reduced (measurements 3.2 and 3.4). Which type of glass covering is used in practice (single, double, selectively coated) depends upon the range of application of the collector, i.e. especially upon the desired absorber temperature. Double glazing reduces the heat losses at the front but also decreases the transmission of sunlight, so the expense is only worthwhile in the case of high absorber temperatures.

**Important note:** The circular pump should be taught completely after performing the experimnt before storing a longer time. You should drain residual water in order to avoid that lime and other minerals in the water deposite on the gears and could damage the pump.