

GUIDELINES FOR DRAWING RESONANCE FORMS

1. Draw all resonance structures (canonical forms) with exactly the same geometry, the same atom-pair linkages, and the same orientation on the page.
2. Do not move atoms from form to form. Only bonds to the same atoms change from form to form.
3. Where the "octet rule" is observed, all forms obey it. (Do not arbitrarily introduce hypervalent forms.)
4. The number of electron pairs must be the same across all forms.
5. Resonance forms that minimize formal charges, minimize formal charge separations, and avoid placing like formal charges on adjacent atoms are more reasonable and will be greater contributors to the overall description of the molecule.
6. **Remember: Resonance forms are not real states of the molecule.** The average of all the hypothetical resonance forms is *suggestive* of the actual electron distribution across the molecule.