



Flipping Physics Lecture Notes:  
 Inductors vs. Resistors: Exploring the Fundamental Differences  
<http://www.flippingphysics.com/inductors-resistors.html>

It is important to understand the difference between resistance, resistivity, resistors, inductance, self-inductance, and inductors.

- **Resistance** is an opposition to current. (*concept*)
  - The units for resistance are ohms,  $\Omega$ .
  - The resistance of a circuit is often assumed to be zero. (self-resistance?)
  - A *resistor* is a circuit element with a specific resistance. (*physical object*)
    - “R” is the resistance of a resistor.
    - A resistor is made of a material with a material property called *resistivity*,  $\rho$ .
      - The units for resistivity are ohm meters,  $\Omega \cdot m$ .
      - A resistor can be added to a circuit to change the resistance of the circuit.
      - A resistor can be added to a circuit diagram to model the resistance of the circuit itself.

$$R = \frac{\Delta V}{I}$$

$$\rho = \frac{RA}{L}$$



- **Inductance** is an opposition to changes in current. (*concept*)
  - The units for inductance are henrys, H.
  - The opposition of a circuit to the change in the current in that circuit is called *self-inductance*. (*concept*)
    - The self-inductance of a circuit is often assumed to be zero.
  - An *inductor* is a circuit element with a specific inductance. (*physical object*)
    - “L” is the inductance of an inductor.
    - A typical shape for an inductor is a small, ideal solenoid.
      - There is no material property called “inductivity” because the inductance of an inductor is mostly caused by the shape, not the material, of the inductor. A magnetic material in its core can affect the inductance through its magnetic permeability, but not the material of the wire coil.

$$L = -\frac{\epsilon_L}{dI/dt}$$

