

Lecture 30: Biasing MOSFET Amplifiers. MOSFET Current Mirrors.

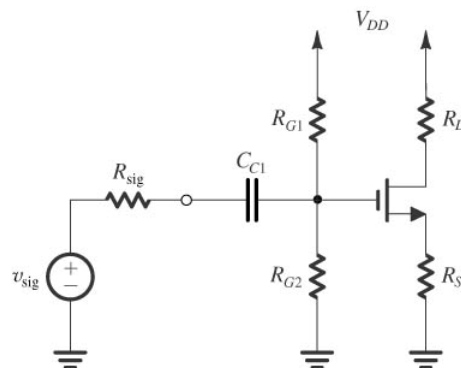
There are two different environments in which MOSFET amplifiers are found, (1) **discrete circuits** and (2) **integrated circuits** (ICs). The methods of biasing transistor amplifiers are different in these two environments.

Why? Primarily because it's “**expensive**” to **fabricate resistors** (and large capacitors) on ICs. Of course, this is not a problem for discrete component circuits.

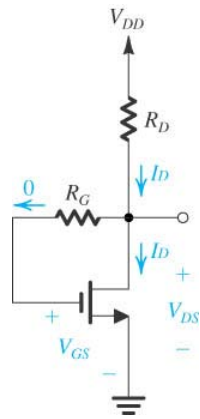
We will discuss these two environments separately.

Biasing Discrete MOSFET Amplifier Circuits

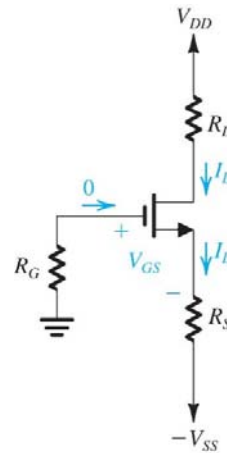
The methods we can use here are virtually identical to the BJT amplifier circuits we saw in earlier in Lecture 17. A few of these biasing topologies are:



(Fig. 7.48d)

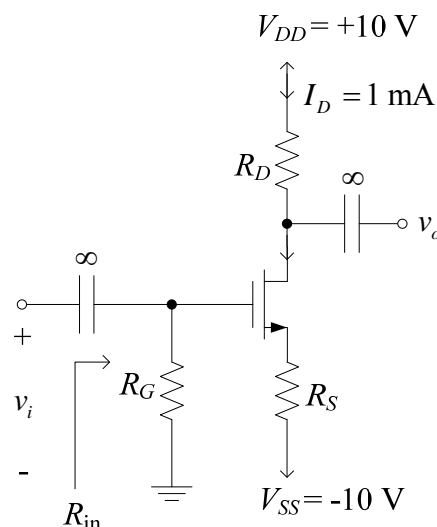


(Fig. 7.50)



(Fig. 7.48e)

Example N30.1. Design the MOSFET amplifier below so that $I_D = 1$ mA and allow for a **drain voltage swing** of ± 2 V. The amplifier is to present a 1-M Ω input resistance to a capacitively coupled input signal. The transistor has $k_n' W/L = 0.5$ mA/V² and $V_t = 2$ V.



We can see directly from this circuit that at DC, $V_G = 0$. Recall that for operation in the saturation mode $V_{GD} \leq V_t$ (with $V_{GS} > 0$).

Now, for ± 2 -V swing in v_o and large AC gain, we want R_D to be large. Hence, let's choose $V_D = 0$ (since $V_t = 2$ V). Then for this ± 2 -V swing in v_o

$$V_{GD}|_{\min} = 0 - 2 = -2 \text{ V} < V_t$$

and

$$V_{GD}|_{\max} = 0 + 2 = 2 \text{ V} = V_t$$

Because of these results, the MOSFET stays in saturation.

Consequently, with $V_D = 0$

$$R_D = \frac{V_{DD} - V_D}{I_D} = \frac{10 - 0}{1 \text{ mA}} = 10 \text{ k}\Omega$$

For a saturated MOSFET

$$I_D = \frac{1}{2} k_n' \frac{W}{L} (V_{GS} - V_t)^2 = 0.25 \times 10^{-3} (V_{GS} - 2)^2$$

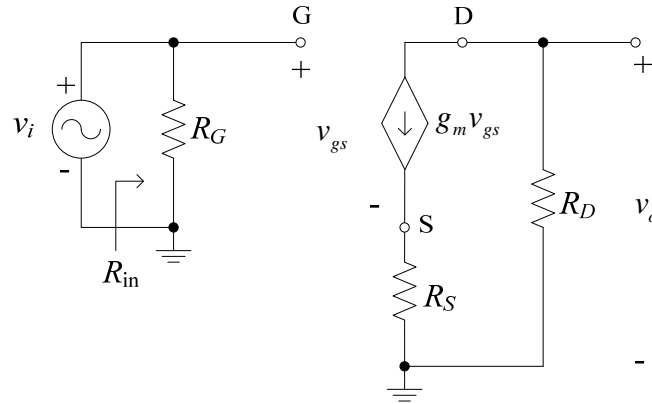
$$\text{For } I_D = 1 \text{ mA} \Rightarrow (V_{GS} - 2)^2 = 4$$

$$\text{or } V_{GS} = \pm 2 + 2 = +4 \text{ V or } 0 \text{ V.}$$

With $V_G = 0$ and $V_{GS} = 4$ V then $V_S = -4$ V. Hence,

$$R_S = \frac{-4 - (-10)}{1 \text{ mA}} = 6 \text{ k}\Omega$$

Lastly, for a 1-M Ω AC input resistance, then referring to the input portion of the small-signal model



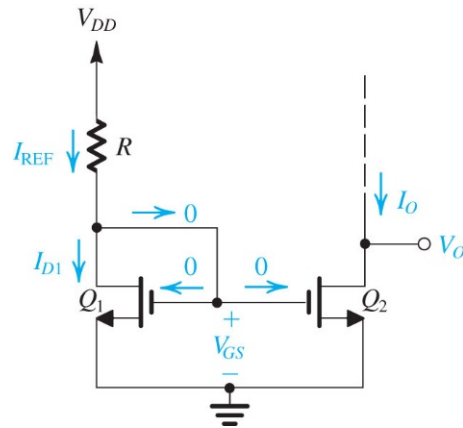
we see that

$$R_{in} = R_G \Rightarrow R_G = 1 \text{ M}\Omega$$

Biasing IC MOSFET Amplifiers. Current Mirrors.

For MOSFET amplifier biasing in ICs, **DC current sources** are sometimes used. As discussed in Lecture 17, “golden currents” are produced using sophisticated multi-component circuits. Then current mirroring (aka current steering) circuits are used to replicate this golden current to provide DC biasing currents at different points in the IC.

The basic MOSFET **current mirror** is shown in Fig. 8.1 for **NMOS**. (This is basically the same circuit we saw with the BJT current mirror in Lecture 17.)



(Fig. 8.1)

Q_1 has the drain and gate terminals connected together. This forces Q_1 to operate in the **saturation mode** in this particular circuit if $I_{D1} \neq 0$. In this mode

$$I_{D1} = \frac{1}{2} k_{n1}' \frac{W_1}{L_1} (V_{GS} - V_{t1})^2 \quad (8.1),(1)$$

With a zero gate current,

$$I_{REF} = I_{D1} \quad (8.2),(2)$$

where we can easily see from the above circuit that

$$I_{REF} = \frac{V_{DD} - V_{GS}}{R} \quad (8.2),(3)$$

Now, we'll assume the two MOSFETs in the circuit have the same V_{GS} . Consequently, the drain current in the second transistor is

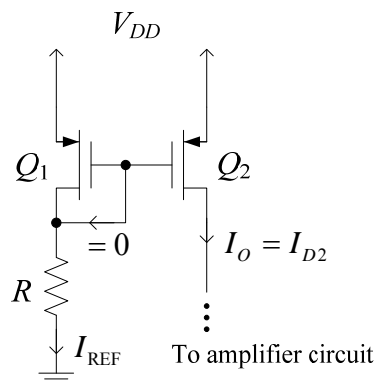
$$I_{D2} = \frac{1}{2} k_{n2}' \frac{W_2}{L_2} (V_{GS} - V_{t2})^2 \quad (8.3),(4)$$

If these two transistors are **perfectly matched** but perhaps fabricated with **different channel dimensions**, then $k_{n1}' = k_{n2}'$, and $V_{t1} = V_{t2}$ so that we see by comparing (1) and (4) that

$$I_{D2} = I_O = \frac{W_2/L_2}{W_1/L_1} I_{D1} = \frac{W_2/L_2}{W_1/L_1} I_{\text{REF}} \quad (8.4),(5)$$

In this NMOS current mirror shown above, Q_2 acts as a **current sink** since it **pulls** current $I_O = I_{D2}$ from the load.

In PMOS this current mirror circuit is constructed as



Here Q_2 acts as a **current source** since it **pushes** current $I_O = I_{D2}$ into the load.

Example N30.2. Design an **NMOS current mirror** with $V_{DD} = 5$ V and $I_{\text{REF}} = 100$ μA . For the matched transistors $L = 10$ μm , $W = 100$ μm , $V_t = 1$ V, and $k_n' = 20$ $\mu\text{A}/\text{V}^2$.

Referring to the NMOS current mirror circuit in Fig. 8.1 above, notice that the drain of Q_1 is connected to its gate so that $V_{GD1} = 0$, which is less than V_t . This means Q_1 is operating in the **saturation mode** (or is possibly cutoff).

Assuming operation in saturation,

$$\begin{aligned} I_{D1} = I_{\text{REF}} &= \frac{1}{2} k_n' \frac{W}{L} (V_{GS} - V_t)^2 \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \cdot 20 \times 10^{-6} \cdot \frac{100}{10} \cdot (V_{GS} - 1)^2 \end{aligned}$$

For $I_{\text{REF}} = 100 \mu\text{A} \Rightarrow 100 = 10 \cdot 10 (V_{GS} - 1)^2$ or
 $V_{GS} = \pm 1 + 1 = 2 \text{ V}$ or 0 V

Now, by KVL

$$V_{DD} = I_{\text{REF}} R + V_{GS}$$

With $V_{GS} = 2 \text{ V}$ then

$$R = \frac{V_{DD} - V_{GS}}{I_{\text{REF}}} = \frac{5 - 2}{100 \mu\text{A}} = 30 \text{ k}\Omega$$

Here are a few additional questions based on this design:

- What is the lowest possible value for $V_O = V_{D2}$ and still have a functioning current mirror?

As with Q_1 , the transistor Q_2 must also operate in **saturation** if it's going to supply a constant current.

Hence

$$\begin{aligned} V_{GD2} \leq V_t &\Rightarrow V_{G2} - V_{D2} \leq V_t \\ \therefore V_O = V_{D2} &\geq V_{G2} - V_t \\ \text{or } V_O &\geq V_{GS} - V_t = 2 - 1 = 1 \text{ V} \end{aligned}$$

Therefore,

$$V_O|_{\text{min}} = 1 \text{ V}$$

- Imagine that $V_A = 10^7 L$. (Notice that V_A is proportional to the channel length, which is commonplace.) What is r_o ?

$$V_A = 10^7 \cdot 10 \times 10^{-6} = 100 \text{ V}$$

$$r_o = \frac{V_A}{I_o} = \frac{100 \text{ V}}{100 \mu\text{A}} = 1 \text{ M}\Omega$$

- What is change in the output current I_o if V_o changes by 3 V?

$$\Delta I_o = \frac{\Delta V_o}{r_o} = \frac{3 \text{ V}}{1 \text{ M}\Omega} = 3 \mu\text{A}$$