

Electronics Engineers. This classification depends primarily on the fraction of input cycle during which plate current is expected to flow under rated full-load conditions. The classes are class A, class AB, class B, and class C. The term "cutoff bias" used in these definitions is the value of grid bias at which plate current is very small (i.e., approaches zero).

Classes of Service

A **class A amplifier** is an amplifier in which the grid bias and alternating grid voltages are such that plate current in a specific tube flows at all times.

A **class AB amplifier** is an amplifier in which the grid bias and alternating grid voltages are such that plate current in a specific tube flows for appreciably more than half but less than the entire electrical cycle.

A **class B amplifier** is an amplifier in which the grid bias is approximately equal to the cutoff value, so that the plate current is approximately zero when no exciting grid voltage is applied, and so that plate current in a specific tube flows for approximately one-half of each cycle when an alternating grid voltage is applied.

A **class C amplifier** is an amplifier in which the grid bias is appreciably greater than the cutoff value, so that the plate current in each tube is zero when no alternating grid voltage is applied, and so that plate current flows in a specific tube for appreciably less than one-half of each cycle when an alternating grid voltage is applied.

The suffix 1 may be added to the letter or letters of the class identification to denote that grid current does not flow during any part of the input cycle. The suffix 2 may be used to denote that grid current flows during part of the cycle.

For radio-frequency (rf) amplifiers which operate into a selective tuned circuit, as in radio transmitter applications, or under requirements where distortion is not an important factor, any of the above classes of amplifiers may be used, either with a single tube or with a push-pull stage. For audio-frequency (af) amplifiers in which dis-

tortion is an important factor, only class A amplifiers permit single-tube operation. In this case, operating conditions are usually chosen so that distortion is kept below the conventional 5 per cent for triodes and the conventional 7 to 10 per cent for tetrodes or pentodes. Distortion can be reduced below these figures by means of special circuit arrangements such as that discussed under **inverse feedback**. With class A amplifiers, reduced distortion with improved power performance can be obtained by using a push-pull stage for audio service. With class AB and class B amplifiers, a balanced stage using two tubes is required for audio service.

Class A Voltage Amplifiers

As a class A voltage amplifier, an electron tube is used to reproduce grid-voltage variations across an impedance or a resistance in the plate circuit. These variations are essentially of the same form as the input signal voltage impressed on the grid, but their amplitude is increased. This increase is accomplished by operation of the tube at a suitable grid bias so that the applied grid input voltage produces plate-current variations proportional to the signal swings. Because the voltage variation obtained in the plate circuit is much larger than that required to swing the grid, amplification of the signal is obtained.

Fig. 34 gives a graphical illustration of this method of amplification and shows, by means of the grid-voltage vs. plate-current characteristics curve, the effect of an input signal (S) applied to

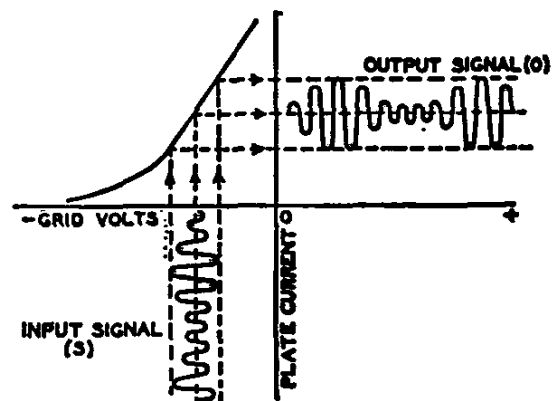


Fig. 34—Current characteristics of class A amplifier.