Mot3.: Noise in amplifiers with feedback

So far we have discussed the amplifiers without feedback ("open loop"). Now we will discuss the impact of feedback.

In general feedback is used to...
• change the gain,
• change impedances,
• change the frequency response,
• reduce distortions etc.

NB! Feedback loops does not reduce the input noise! (Resistance in the feedback will add more noise.)

This will be shown in the following .....

Cascoded amplifiers with feedback.

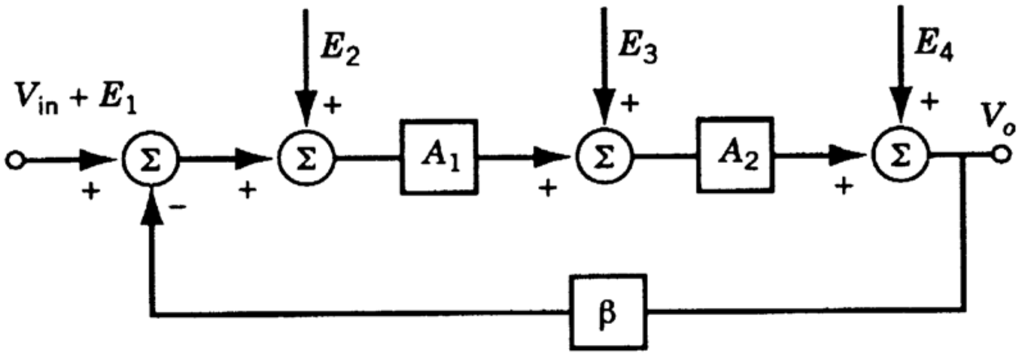


Figure 3-1 Two-stage amplifier with feedback for determining the effects of noise.

Vin: The input signal
E1, *E2*, *E3*, *E4*: Noise
A1, *A2*: Voltage gain in the two amplifiers
β: Voltage gain in the feedback network.
VO: Total signal on output. *VO* can be expressed as:

$$V_O = E_4 + A_2\left[E_3 + A_1\left(E_2 + V_{in} + E_1 - \beta V_O\right)\right]$$

We rearrange so that the *VO* is to the left:

$$V_O = \frac{A_1 A_2}{1 + A_1 A_2 \beta}\left(V_{in} + E_1 + E_2\right) + \frac{A_2 E_3}{1 + A_1 A_2 \beta} + \frac{E_4}{1 + A_1 A_2 \beta}$$

Cascoded amplifiers without feedback

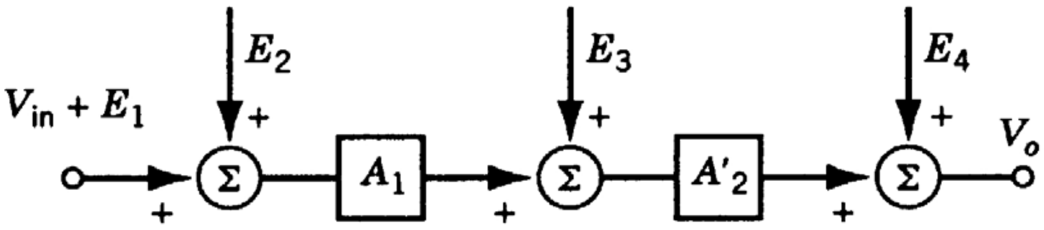


Figure 3-2 Open-loop amplifier used for comparison.

In this case we entitle the gain in stage 2 as *A'2*. All others are identical with the values of the amplifier chain with feedback.

$$V_O = A_1 A'_2 \left(V_{in} + E_1 + E_2\right) + A'_2 E_3 + E_4$$

In order to compare with and without feedback, we chose *A'2* so that the amplification of *Vin* to the output is equal for both cases:

$$A'_2 = A_2 / \left(1 + A_1 A_2 \beta\right)$$

With this value for A'2 so we get:

$$V_O = \frac{A_1 A_2}{1 + A_1 A_2 \beta}\left(V_{in} + E_1 + E_2\right) + \frac{A_2 E_3}{1 + A_1 A_2 \beta} + E_4$$

Comparison:

We compare the expression for the amplifier chain with feedback:

$$V_O = \frac{A_1 A_2}{1 + A_1 A_2 \beta}\left(V_{in} + E_1 + E_2\right) + \frac{A_2 E_3}{1 + A_1 A_2 \beta} + \frac{E_4}{1 + A_1 A_2 \beta}$$

with the expression for the amplifier chain without feedback:

$$V_O = \frac{A_1 A_2}{1 + A_1 A_2 \beta}\left(V_{in} + E_1 + E_2\right) + \frac{A_2 E_3}{1 + A_1 A_2 \beta} + E_4$$

We see that with or without feedback makes no difference for the noise on the inputs (*E1*, *E2* and *E3*).

Noise at the output (*E4*) will be muted through the feedback. For example *E4* may come from a noisy load.

Noise Model for differential amplifier

Most amplifiers are built around a differential amplifier core. Besides being used for two differential signals they can be used for signals in a single inverting or single non-inverting topology decided by connections and external components. A noise model must cover all of these topologies.

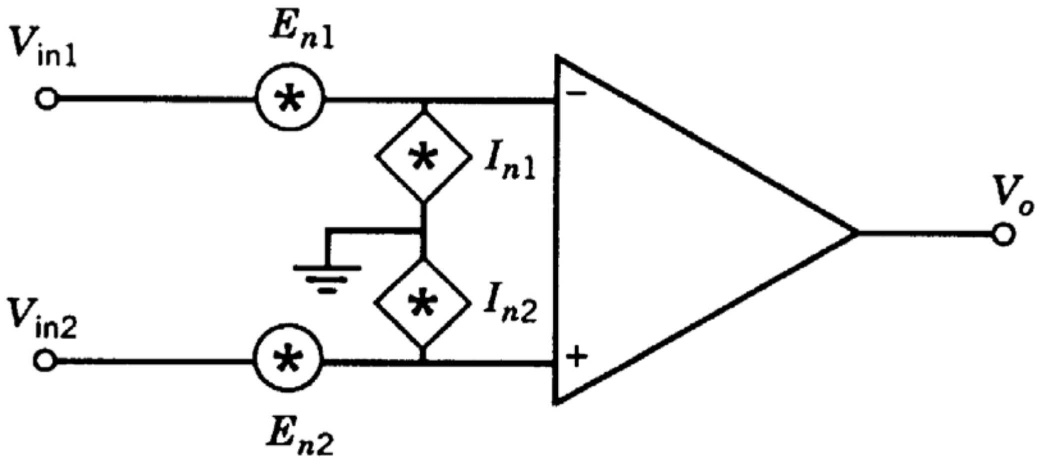
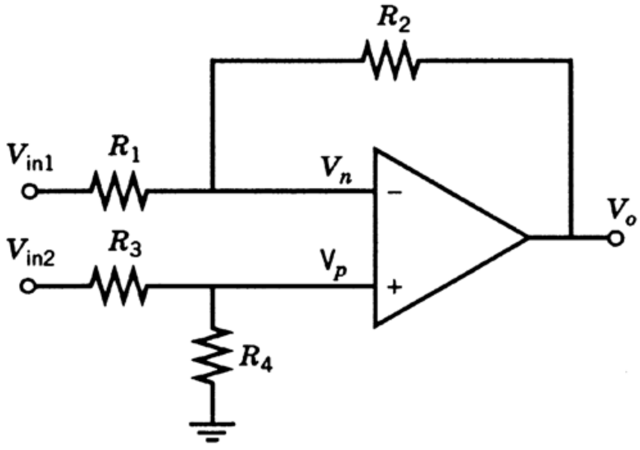


Figure 3-3 Amplifier noise and signal source.

An ordinary differential connection.



(a)

a) We see in a) an ordinary differential connection. The output voltage can be expressed as:

$$V_O = \left(\frac{R_4}{R_3 + R_4}\right)\left(\frac{R_1 + R_2}{R_1}\right)V_{in2} - \left(\frac{R_2}{R_1}\right)V_{in1}$$

We have an ideal differential amplifier when the signal on the positive and negative input have the same but opposite gain.
This is the case when:

$$R_2 / R_1 = R_4 / R_3$$

In this case, we have:

$$V_O = (R_2 / R_1)(V_{in2} - V_{in1})$$

Thevenin equivalent circuit:

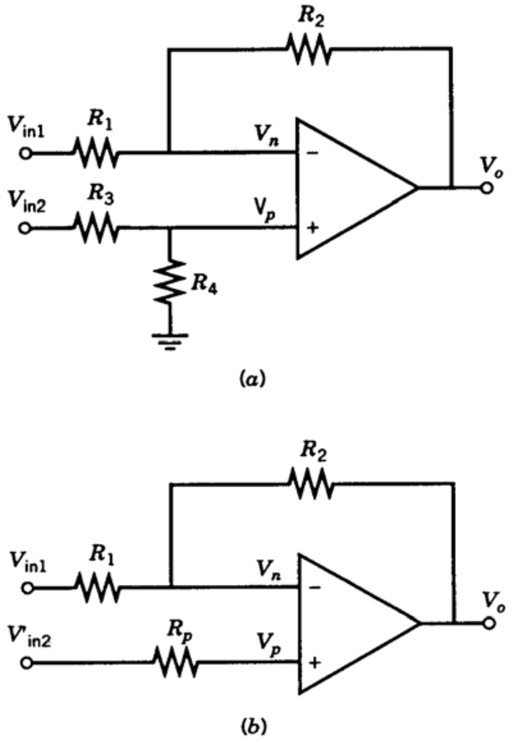


Figure 3-4 Differential amplifier using one op amp: (*a*) complete circuit and (*b*) reduced circuit.

In b), we have made an equivalent circuit of a) where:

$$R_p = R_3 \parallel R_4 \quad and \quad V'_{in2} = \left(R_4 V_{in2}\right) / \left(R_3 + R_4\right)$$

We extend the schematic by adding models for noise sources:

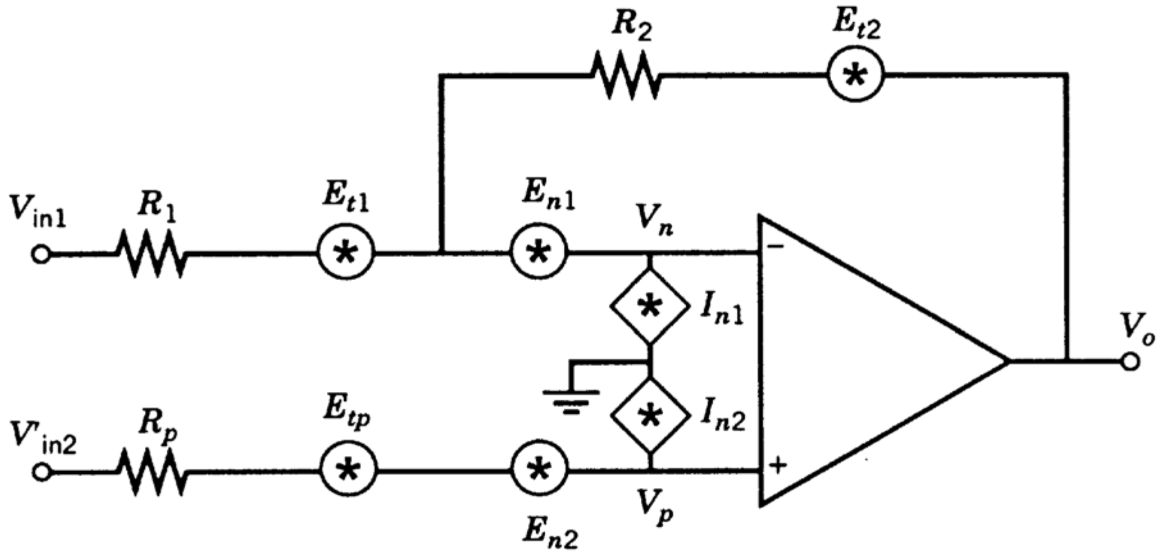


Figure 3-5 Differential amplifier with all noise sources in place.

En1, *En2*, *In1* and *In2* are noise models for the amplifier. The other noise sources are noise models for the resistors.

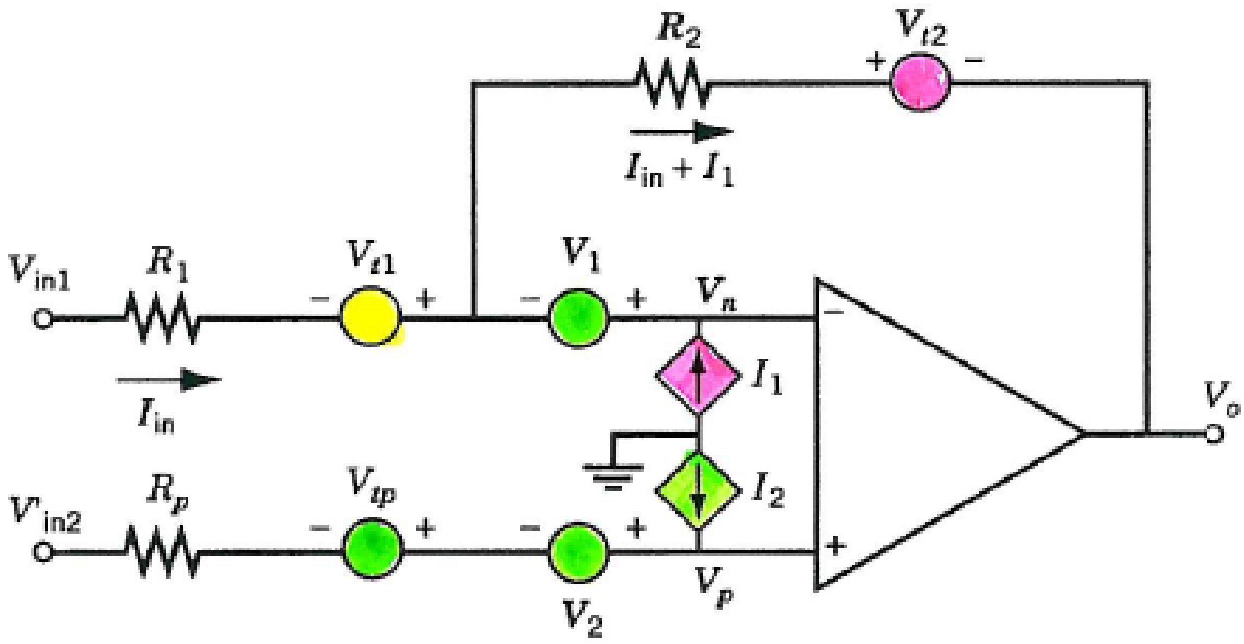


Figure 3-6 Differential amplifier with signal sources in place.

It will be somewhat complicated to calculate the rms values. Instead we choose to replace the noise sources with small voltage and current sources. We also choose to set a polarity of the sources as specified in the figure.

We let *A* be the voltage gain when the amplifier is not connected back ("open loop").

We have then:

$$V_O = A(V_p - V_n)$$

$$V_p = V'_{in2} + R_p I_2 + V_{tp} + V_2$$

$$V_n = V_{in1} - R_1 I_{in} + V_{t1} + V_1$$

$$V_{in1} - R_1 I_{in} + V_{t1} = V_O + V_{t2} + R_2 (I_{in} + I_1)$$

We put together the expressions on the previous page so that we get rid of *Vp*, *Vn* and *Iin*. We will then

$$V_O\left(\frac{1}{A}+\frac{R_1}{R_1+R_2}\right)=$$

$$V'_{in2}-V_{in1}+V_2-V_1+V_{tp}-V_{t1}+R_pI_2+\left(\frac{R_1}{R_1+R_2}\right)(V_{in1}+V_{t1}-V_{t2}-I_1R_2)$$

We let the operation amplifier be ideal by letting A go to infinity and then we have:

$$V_O=\left(1+\frac{R_2}{R_1}\right)(V'_{in2}+V_2+V_{tp}+I_2R_p-V_1)-\frac{R_2}{R_1}(V_{in1}+V_{t1})-V_{t2}-I_1R_2$$

The coefficients for each voltage and current will indicate the gain.

We will now switch back to the noise considerations by replacing the voltages that represents noise with noise. Since we calculate rms we must square all terms. Since we only look at the noise, we must also remove the volatages that represents the signal voltages, ie *Vin1* and *V'in2*. We will then have:

$$E_{no}^2=\left(1+\frac{R_2}{R_1}\right)^2\left(E_{n2}^2+E_{tp}^2+I_{n2}^2R_p^2+E_{n1}^2\right)+\left(\frac{R_2}{R_1}\right)^2\left(E_{t1}^2\right)+E_{t2}^2+I_{n1}^2R_2^2$$

$$E_{no}^2 = \left(1+\frac{R_2}{R_1}\right)^2 \left(E_{n2}^2 + E_{tp}^2 + I_{n2}^2 R_p^2 + E_{n1}^2\right) + \left(\frac{R_2}{R_1}\right)^2 \left(E_{t1}^2\right) + E_{t2}^2 + I_{n1}^2 R_2^2$$

In the first parenthesis with noise, we have the noise source from the positive input of the amplifier. In this parenthesis, we have also noise voltage at the amplifier's negative input. Noise in the *R1* is reflected to the output amplified by the square of the ratio between *R2/R1*. Noise *In1* goes directly through *R2* to the end. Noise voltage in the feedback resistance *R2* will be directly on the output.

The expression we have calculated is the noise at the output. As previously mentioned, it is beneficial to find the equivalent noise level at the input. The method we described earlier did this by dividing the noise level at the output with the system gain. Now we have a little issue since we have two inputs with two different system gains. (Ie unless the amplifier is connected up as an ideal differential amplifier: R2/R1 = R4/R3. In this case the gain is, respectively, plus and minus R2/R1.)

Equivalent input noise for negative input.

First, we find the equivalent noise for the negative (inverting) input. We find it by dividing E^2_{no} with $(R2/R1)^2$. We get:

$$E_{ni1}^2 = \left(1+\frac{R_1}{R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_{n2}^2 + E_{tp}^2 + E_{n1}^2\right) + R_1^2 I_{t2}^2 + E_{t1}^2 + I_{n1}^2 R_1^2 + I_{n2}^2 R_p^2 \left(1+\frac{R_1}{R_2}\right)^2$$

In the first noise-parenthesis, we have the input noise voltages of the amplifier and the noise of the parallel resistance at the positive input. Since R2 is often much greater than R1 the parenthesis will go towards 1 and the noise voltages will contribute with a weight of one. The amplifier noise current on the positive side will give a voltage over the parallel resistance and have the same weight as the previous. The noise in the feedback resistance (R2) and the negative input (In1) will go through R1 and result in a noise voltage that is at product of these currents and the resistance. The noise in R1 is independent of all other resistances.

Equivalent input noise for positive input.

To find the equivalent input noise to the positive input we divide $E^2 no$ by $(1+R1/R2)^2$. We will then:

$$E_{ni2}^2 = \left(E_{n2}^2 + E_{tp}^2 + E_{n1}^2\right) + \left(\frac{R_1}{R_1 + R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_{t2}^2\right) + \left(\frac{R_2}{R_1 + R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_{t1}^2\right) + I_{n1}^2 \left(R_1 \parallel R_2\right)^2 + I_{n2}^2 R_p^2$$

The amplifier input noise voltages and the noise from the parallel resistance are reflected directly to the input. Noise voltage from the feedback resistance is reduced significantly if R2 is much larger than R1. The noise voltage from R1 will also be reduced but most when R2 is small compared with R1. The noise current from the negative input goes through the parallel coupling of R1 and R2 while the noise current from the positive input goes through the parallel resistance on a positive side: Rp.

Ideal differential amplifier connection

Now we will discuss the case when the gain is equal (but opposite) for both inputs. This is the case when: R2/R1 = R4/R3.
The gain factor for negative input will be -R2/R1 while for the positive input it will be R2/R1. The square of the gain for both is equal and we names this as *Kt*. We have then:

$$E_{ni1}^2 = E_{ni2}^2 = E_{ni}^2 = E_{no}^2 \big/ K_t^2$$

The equivalent input noise is for both inputs:

$$E_{ni}^2 = \left(1+\frac{R_1}{R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_{n1}^2 + E_{tp}^2 + E_{n2}^2\right) + \left(\frac{R_1}{R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_{t2}^2\right) + E_{t1}^2 + I_{n1}^2 R_1^2 + I_{n2}^2 R_p^2 \left(1+\frac{R_1}{R_2}\right)^2$$

This is the same expression that we found a little earlier for the negative input.

Example: 741 Op-Amp

Goals: 1) Find the total output noise

2) Find the total equivalent input noise of the negative input.

3) Signal when the S/N=1.

Values: *En = 20nV/√Hz., In = 0.5pA/√Hz*

R1=*R3*=1kΩ

R2=*R4*=50k

Assume a 1MHz gain-bandwidth product.

Ignore other types of noise than those mentioned.

Solution:

We use the expressions for the *Eno* and *Eni1* and sets up the table with the following solutions:

1) and 2)

Noise Source	Noise Value	Gain Multiplier	Output Noise Contribution	Input Noise Contribution
R_1	4nV/√Hz	50	200nV/√Hz	4nV/Hz
R_2	28.3nV/√Hz	1	28.3nV/√Hz	0.556nV/√Hz
R_p	3.96nV/√Hz	51	202nV/√Hz	4.04nV/√Hz
E_{n1}	14.14nV/√Hz	51	721nV/√Hz	14.4nV/√Hz
E_{n2}	14.14nV/√Hz	51	721nV/√Hz	14.4nV/√Hz
I_{n1}	0.5pA/√Hz	50k	25nV/√Hz	0.5nV/√Hz
I_{n2}	0.5pA/√Hz	49.98k	25nV/√Hz	0.5nV/√Hz
Total Noise Contributions			1059.5nV/√Hz	21.16nV/√Hz

We see that *En1* and *En2* are dominating at both output and input.

3)

With a gain of approx. 50 and a gain-bandwidth of 1MHz the -3dB bandwidth is 1MHz/50 = 20kHz. However the noise bandwidth is not equal to the -3dB bandwidth. During our earlier discussions of the signal bandwidth and noise bandwidth, we found that the noise bandwidth is (π/2) times the signal bandwidth. We will then end up with a noise bandwidth equal to *(π/2)*20kHz=31.42kHz*. We calculate for *Eno* and *Eni* and get:

$$E_{no} = 1059.5nV/\sqrt{Hz} \cdot \sqrt{31.42kHz} = 188\mu V$$

and

$$E_{ni} = 21.16nV/\sqrt{Hz} \cdot \sqrt{31.42kHz} = 3.75\mu V$$

In other words: With a S/N ratio of 1 the input signal must be 3.75μV.

Some general comments about differential amplifiers

Typically operational amplifiers contains a balanced differential input stage. Then the inputs will be symmetrical and $En1 = En2$. If the data sheet for the amplifier contains only one *En* value, you can divide this by $\sqrt{2}$ and use the new value at both inputs.

Alternatively, in an inverting configuration, it is often easier to use the standard *En* and *In*, as shown in the figure below.

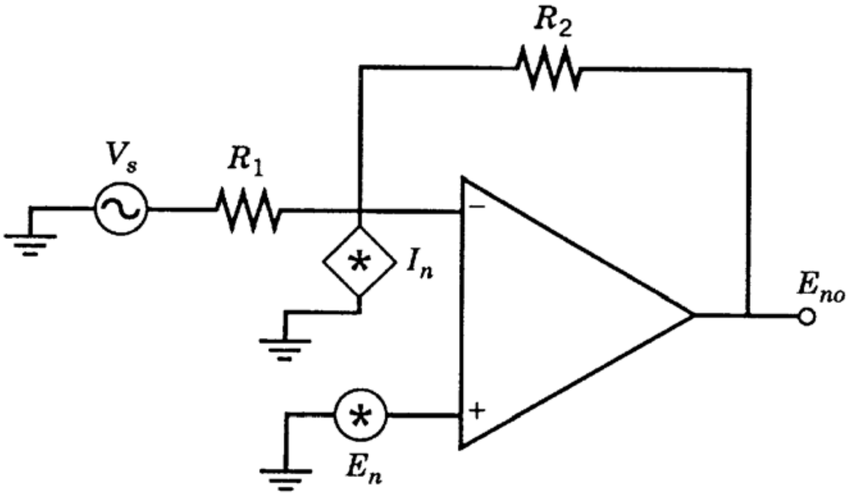


Figure 3-7 Simplified inverting amplifier with noise sources in place.

An expression for the noise on the output is:

$$E_{no}^2 = (1 + R_2/R_1)^2 E_n^2 + R_2^2 I_n^2$$

In this expression we neglect the noise in the resistors.

The noise matched source resistance, *R0*, is as previously discussed: *En/In*. Out from the equation above so we get that *R0* can be expressed as:

$$R_O = E_n/I_n = R_1 R_2/(R_1 + R_2) = R_1 \,||\, R_2$$

When the source resistance R1 is less than R0, *En* is dominant whereas when R1 is greater than R0, *In* is in dominant.

In schematics with high gain is R2 much larger than R1. When this is the case is R0 equal to R1. NB! By setting R1 equal to R0 we get the minimum noise factor but not the smallest noise. (Neglecting the signal level and only focusing on noise we achieve the smallest noise when R1 goes to towards 0.)

Method for Measurement of In.

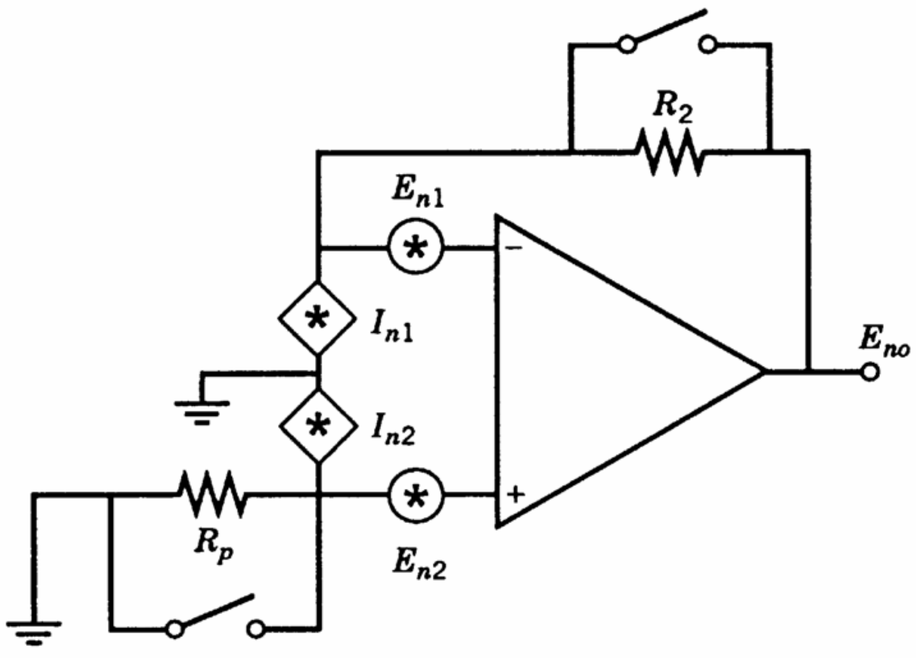


Figure 3-8 Circuit for measuring current noise sources.

The figure shows a method for measuring *In*. It is not suited for the most noise-sensitive amplifiers.
Method:

1) Both switches are closed (conducting) and *Eno* is measured. The noise at the end will be *En*. Since the gain is only 1 contribution from the following stages will also contribute.
2) When the switch over *R2* is open the noise at the output will have contributions from *En*, *In1R2* and *Et2*. Thermal noise through *R2* can be calculated. Now it is only *In1* that remains and it can be calculated from the measurement of output noise and the equations we have found previously.

3) Then we open the switch over Rp and the noise is measured again at the output. The new contributions to the output noise are now *Rp* (which can be beregnes) and *In2Rp*. Thus, we can find *In2*.

When *Rp = 0* we have that *In2* is effectively short circuited and only *In1* contributes with noise to *Eni1*.

When to measure *In* "the source resistance" R1should made so large that $I^2_{n1}R^2_1$ becomes dominant.

Inverted negative feedback

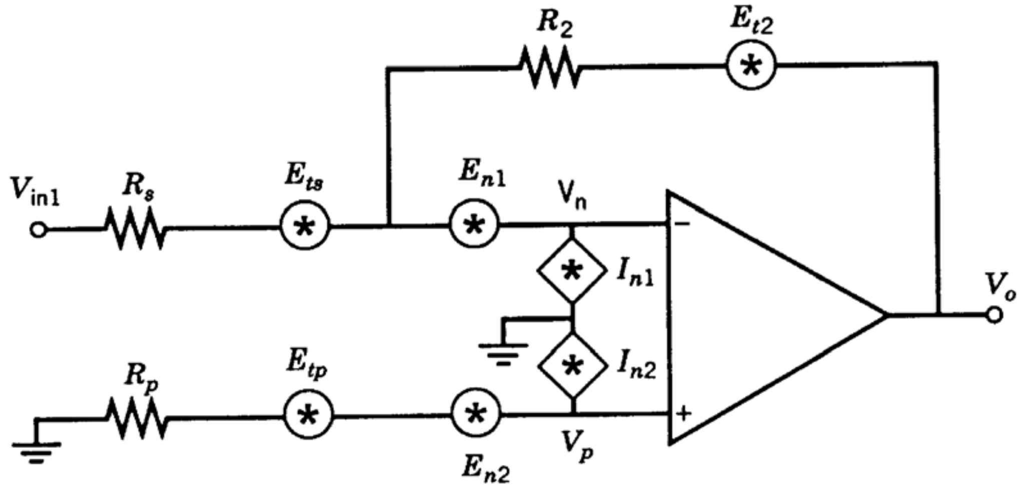


Figure 3-9 Simplified closed-loop inverting amplifier.

The inverted amplifier configuration that we have discussed earlier is much used. It is used by grounding *V'in2*, replace *R1* by *Rs* and by selecting *Rp* so that it is equal to the parallel value of Rs and R2.

When we shall find the equivalent noise at the input, it will be at the *Vin1* input.

We use the term we found earlier, and insert the new indexes:

$$E_{ni1}^2 = \left(1 + \frac{R_S}{R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_{n1}^2 + E_{n2}^2 + E_{tp}^2 + I_{n2}^2 R_p^2\right)$$

$$+ \left(\frac{R_S}{R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_{t2}^2\right) + E_{ts}^2 + I_{n1}^2 R_S^2$$

We just regroup and get:

$$E_{ni1}^2 = E_{ts}^2 + R_s^2\left(I_{n1}^2 + I_{t2}^2\right)$$

$$+ \left(1 + \frac{R_s}{R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_{n1}^2 + E_{n2}^2 + E_{tp}^2 + I_{n2}^2 R_p^2\right)$$

Here is *It2 = Et2/R2*.

In the specifications for an amplifier, *En* and *In* is often given according to:

$$E_n = \sqrt{E_{n1}^2 + E_{n2}^2}$$

and

$$I_n = I_{n1} = I_{n2}$$

By using these relations the expression above is simplified to:

$$E_{ni}^2 = E_{ni1}^2 = E_{ts}^2 + I_n^2 R_s^2 + \left(1 + \frac{R_s}{R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_n^2 + E_{tp}^2 + I_{n2}^2 R_p^2\right) + I_{t2}^2 R_s^2$$

We now define a new equivalent noise voltage *E^2na* expressed as:

$$E_{na}^2 = \left(1 + \frac{R_s}{R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_n^2 + E_{tp}^2 + I_{n2}^2 R_p^2\right) + I_{t2}^2 R_s^2$$

The position of *E^2na* is given in the following figure:

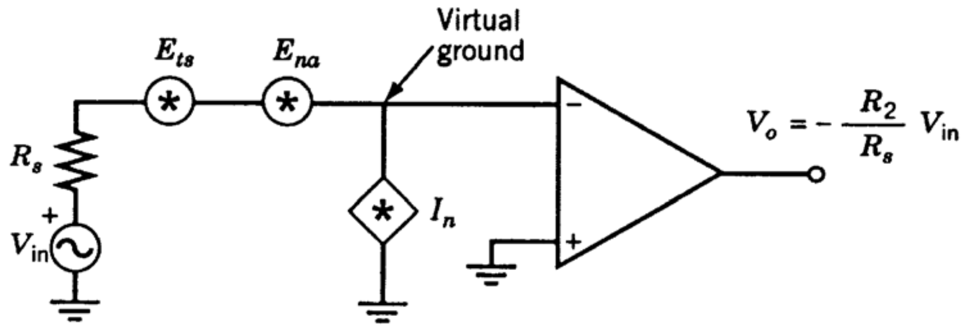


Figure 3-10 Simplified open-loop inverting amplifier with noise sources in place.

The equivalent input noise is now simplified to:

$$E_{ni}^2 = E_{ts}^2 + E_{na}^2 + I_n^2 R_s^2$$

The inverting feedback amplifier can be represented by the equivalent form above. Here *E^2na* represents the noise in *R2, Rp* and the amplifier noise *s*.

In amplifiers with MOSFET input, *Rp* can often be ignored since the amplifier noise current is very small. Moreover, low noise amplifiers often require feedbacks giving a gain of 30 or more. When this is the case *R2* is much larger than *Rs* which is much larger than *Rp*. Then the expression for the equivalent input noise is simplified to:

$$E_{ni}^2 = E_{ts}^2 + E_n^2 + \left(I_n^2 + I_{t2}^2\right)R_s^2$$

Non-inverted negative feedback

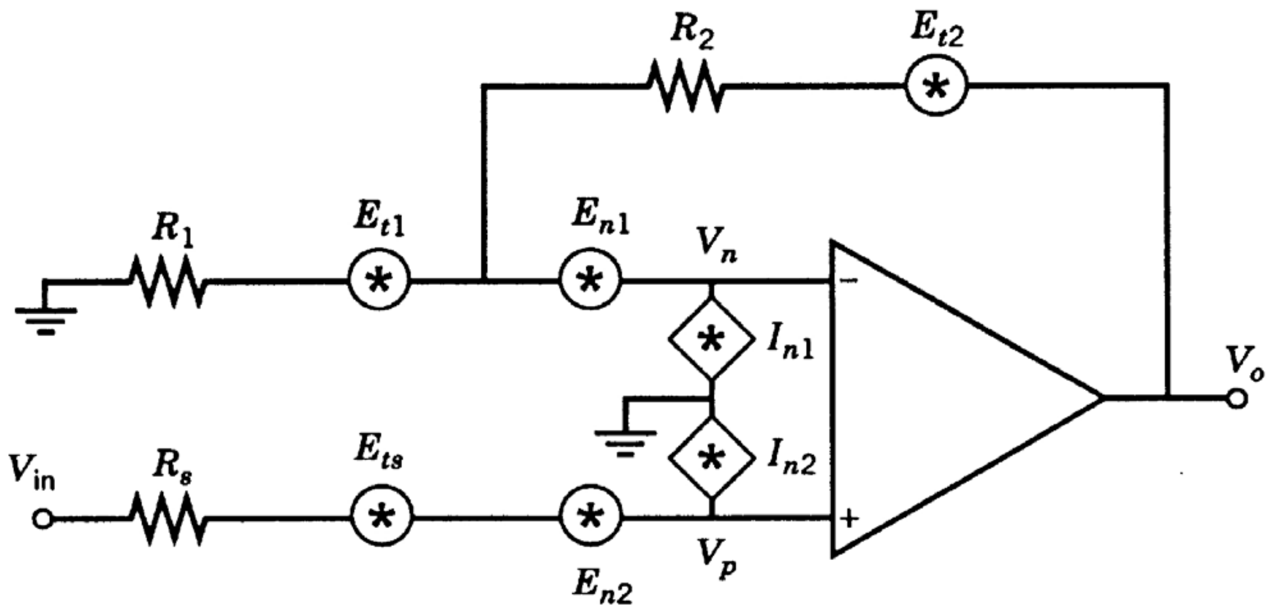


Figure 3-11 Simplified closed-loop noninverting amplifier.

In the non-inverted connection the resistance *Rp* represent the source resistance. Hence we instead will name it *Rs*. We also name the input *V'in2* as *Vin*.

We shall now show how this noise schematic based on a noise assessment may be reduced to a simpler form without feedback.

First, we start with the expression we found earlier and put in the new indexes.

$$E_{no}^2 = \left(1+\frac{R_2}{R_1}\right)^2 \left(E_{n1}^2 + E_{n2}^2 + E_{ts}^2 + I_{n2}^2 R_s^2\right) + \left(\frac{R_2}{R_1}\right)^2 \left(E_{t1}^2\right) + E_{t2}^2 + I_{n1}^2 R_2^2$$

We use the term

$$E_n = \sqrt{E_{n1}^2 + E_{n2}^2}$$

and get:

$$E_{no}^2 = \left(1+\frac{R_2}{R_1}\right)^2 \left(E_n^2 + E_{ts}^2 + I_{n2}^2 R_s^2\right) + \left(\frac{R_2}{R_1}\right)^2 \left(E_{t1}^2\right) + E_{t2}^2 + I_{n1}^2 R_2^2$$

To find the equivalent input noise we divide the noise by the gain. The gain is equal to: *(1+R2/R1)²*. We will then have:

$$E_{ni}^2 = E_{ts}^2 + E_n^2 + \left(\frac{R_1}{R_1+R_2}\right)^2 E_{t2}^2 + \left(\frac{R_2}{R_1+R_2}\right)^2 E_{t1}^2 + I_{n1}^2 \left(R_1 \parallel R_2\right)^2 + I_{n2}^2 R_s^2$$

If we assume:

$$I_n = I_{n1} = I_{n2}$$

we can define a new noise voltage E^2nb:

$$E_{nb}^2 = E_n^2 + \left(\frac{R_1}{R_1+R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_{t2}^2\right) + \left(\frac{R_2}{R_1+R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_{t1}^2\right) + I_{n1}^2 \left(R_1 \parallel R_2\right)^2$$

$$E_{nb}^2 = E_n^2 + \left(\frac{R_1}{R_1 + R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_{t2}^2\right) + \left(\frac{R_2}{R_1 + R_2}\right)^2 \left(E_{t1}^2\right) + I_{n1}^2 \left(R_1 \parallel R_2\right)^2$$

We create a new form with the new noise voltage as follows:

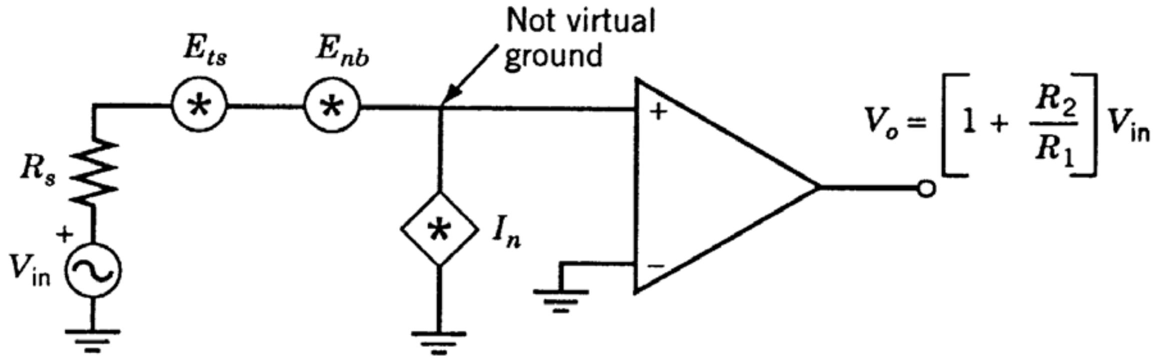


Figure 3-12 Simplified open-loop noninverting amplifier with noise sources in place.

The new equivalent input noise can be expressed as:

$$E_{ni}^2 = E_{ts}^2 + E_{nb}^2 + I_n^2 R_s^2$$

Here, E^2nb contains noise from the feedback and the voltage noise of the amplifier.

Positive feedback

Positive feedback is utilised in oscillators. But often unwanted feedbacks occurs that create undesirable results.

In principle the noise considerations for positive feedbacks are similar with the considerations for negative feedbacks.

Often it will be desirable to create a low noise oscillator. Noise in oscillators results in variations in frequency. This can be seen as a "skirt" around the signal when inspected on a spectrum analyzer. To reduce this, first you have to create a low-noise amplifier and then use a low-noise feedback network around the amplifier.

Example: How can one tell if an amplifier connection is stable?

Assume an amplifier that has a gain of 80dB and poles at 1, 6 and 22MHz. Check if this is stable when it should have a negative feedback that provides a gain of 40dB.

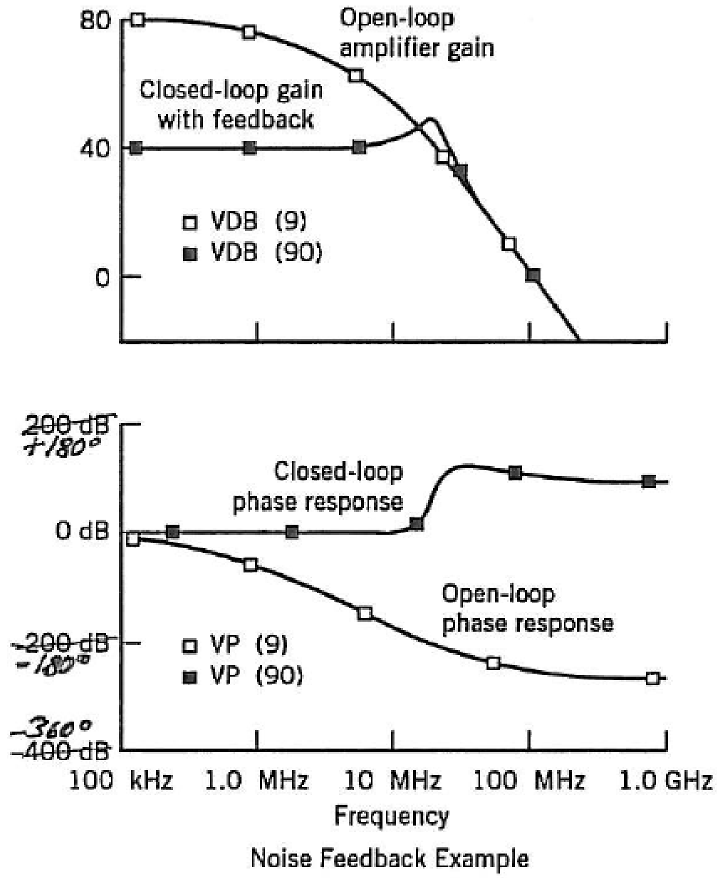


Figure 3-13 Effect of positive feedback as shown by PSpice.

We get simulation results as given above. We find that at 12MHz is the gain larger than what we got with a open-loop! It means that we have positive feedback. The simulation shows that at 12MHz is the phase shift positive. It means that the amplifier is unstable. This is something that the noise analysis will not show.