

Minilab #1: Test the WD mass-radius relation

- In this lab, we'll specify a mass and composition, turn off nuclear burning, and let the resulting star cool down until it becomes a C/O white dwarf. Then, we'll see how our **MESA** models do vs. the simplistic mass-radius relation.
- For various reasons, we can't immediately change the composition of the starting star to C/O. The model star has to be fairly degenerate before we can do that.
 - So, we have to first let it cool down until it reaches some degeneracy criterion and save the model. When we restart it, we can change the composition.

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- The first step is to read through `inlist_makepurewd`. In its current state, it will start with a solar composition main sequence model of a mass you specify between 0.5 and 1.1 M_{sol} , and cool with nuclear burning turned off until the center reaches $\eta = 5$, where η is the normalized electron chemical potential. This is accomplished by the `eta_center_limit` flag.
- So, choose a random mass, compile, and let it run! When the run ends, it will save a degenerate solar composition star as `intermediate.mod`.

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- Now that we have a solar composition degenerate model, we can change its composition by turning on the `relax_initial_to_xaccrete` flag. This relaxes to the composition given in the `controls` part of the inlist.
- We no longer want to stop at an η limit, so turn off that flag. But we do want to stop when the central temperature reaches 2×10^7 K, so turn on that flag.
- Once the relevant flags are turned on and off, including the `load_saved_model` flag, restart with `./rn`. (The composition flag doesn't work on a `./re` from a photostep, which is why we have to `./rn` from the intermediate saved model.)
- Once the WD cools down and the run terminates, report your mass in M_{sol} units and ending radius in R_{sol} units on the Google spreadsheet (available at http://cococubed.asu.edu/mesa_summer_school_2015/agenda.html), and we'll generate a real-time white dwarf mass-radius relation. (You can just read the radius off of the terminal or pgstar output, remembering that the reported quantity is $\log_{10}(R/R_{\text{sol}})$, not R/R_{sol} .)