



category 1: single nucleophilic attack

Nu is LiAlH₄, NaBH₄, RMgX, RLi, H₂O (acid or base cat.), ROH (base cat.)

Attack on carbonyl (read from top down) (basic conditions)
[starting material: aldehyde or ketone]
Nu attacks carbonyl C, breaking π bond to carbonyl O.
[product: alcohol (from H ⁻ or R ⁻), diol (from H ₂ O), hemiacetal or hemiketal (from ROH)]
Formation of diols, hemiacetals, and hemiketals is reversible.

category 2: two nucleophilic attacks by separate atoms (acid catalyzed)

Nu is ROH

Attack on carbonyl (read from top down)	
[starting material: aldehyde or ketone]	[product: aldehyde or ketone]
(Carbonyl O gains a H ⁺ .) Nu attacks carbonyl C, breaking π bond to carbonyl O. (Nu loses a H ⁺ .)*	(Carbonyl O loses a H ⁺ .) "Nu" leaves "carbonyl" C, π bond to "carbonyl" O forms. (Second "Nu" gains a H ⁺ .)*
[intermediate: hemiacetal or hemiketal]	[intermediate: hemiacetal or hemiketal]
("Carbonyl" O gains a H ⁺ .)* "Carbonyl" O leaves (as water). Subsequently, second Nu attacks "carbonyl" C. (Second Nu loses a H ⁺ .)	("Carbonyl" O loses a H ⁺ .)* Subsequently, "carbonyl" O joins "carbonyl" C (as water). "Nu" leaves "carbonyl" C. ("Nu" gains a H ⁺ .)
[product: acetal or ketal]	[starting material: acetal or ketal]
	Revealing hidden carbonyl with H₃O⁺ (BOTTOM UP)

*It is conventional to combine these two steps into a single proton transfer.

organic chemistry: nucleophilic attack on aldehydes and ketones

category 3: two nucleophilic attacks by the same atom (acid or base cat.)

Nu is RNH₂, where R is not necessarily a H or alkyl group

(Nu is: ammonia, if R is H; primary amine, if R is alkyl; hydroxylamine, if R is OH; hydrazine, if R is NH₂ or derivative; semicarbazide, if R is NHCONH₂)

Attack on carbonyl (read from top down)	
[starting material: aldehyde or ketone]	[product: aldehyde or ketone]
(Carbonyl O gains a H ⁺ .) Nu attacks carbonyl C, breaking π bond to carbonyl O. (Nu loses a H ⁺ .)*	(Carbonyl O loses a H ⁺ .) “Nu” leaves “carbonyl” C, π bond to “carbonyl” O forms. (“Nu” gains a H ⁺ .)*
[intermediate: hemiaminal]	[intermediate: hemiaminal]
(“Carbonyl” O gains a H ⁺ .)* “Carbonyl” O leaves (as water), while... ...Nu attacks “carbonyl” C a 2 nd time, forming π bond. (Nu loses a H ⁺ a 2 nd time.)	(“Carbonyl” O loses a H ⁺ .)* ... “carbonyl” O joins “carbonyl” C (as water). “Nu” loses π bond to “carbonyl” C, while... (“Nu” gains a H ⁺ .)
[product: imine (from ammonia or primary amine); oxime (from hydroxylamine); hydrazone (from hydrazine or derivative) semicarbazone (from semicarbazide)]	[starting material: imine, oxime, hydrazone, or semicarbazone]
	Revealing hidden carbonyl with H₃O⁺ (BOTTOM UP)

Mechanism is shown for acid catalyst; you don't need to know the base-catalyzed mechanism.

category 3: two nucleophilic attacks by the same atom, Wittig reaction

Nu is C in R₂C=PPh₃ (phosphorus ylide) (R's are alkyls or hydrogens)

Attack on carbonyl (read from top down)	
[starting material: aldehyde or ketone]	
Nu attacks carbonyl C, breaking pi bond to carbonyl O. (“Carbonyl” O ⁻ attacks P ⁺ .)	[forms “betaine”]
[intermediate: oxaphosphetane]	
“Carbonyl” O leaves by attacking P a 2 nd time... ... <i>while</i> Nu attacks “carbonyl” C a 2 nd time, forming π bond.	
[product: alkene]	

*It is conventional to combine these two steps into a single proton transfer.

category 4: nucleophilic attack followed by elimination (acid or base cat.)

Nu is R₂NH (secondary amine)

Attack on carbonyl (read from top down)	
[starting material: aldehyde or ketone]	[product: aldehyde or ketone]
(Carbonyl O gains a H ⁺ .) Nu attacks carbonyl C, breaking π bond to carbonyl O. (Nu loses a H ⁺ .)*	(Carbonyl O loses a H ⁺ .) “Nu” leaves “carbonyl” C, π bond to “carbonyl” O forms. (“Nu” gains a H ⁺ .)*
[intermediate: hemiaminal]	[intermediate: hemiaminal]
(“Carbonyl” O gains a H ⁺ .)* “Carbonyl” O leaves (as water). <i>Then...</i> ...“α” C loses a H ⁺ , forming π bond to “carbonyl” C.	(“Carbonyl” O loses a H ⁺ .)* ... “carbonyl” O joins “carbonyl” C (as water). “α” C gains a H ⁺ , losing π bond to “carbonyl” C. <i>Then...</i>
[product: enamine]	[starting material: enamine]
	Revealing hidden carbonyl with H₃O⁺ (BOTTOM UP)

Mechanism is shown for acid catalyst; you don't need to know the base-catalyzed mechanism.

*It is conventional to combine these two steps into a single proton transfer.

category 1: single nucleophilic attack, ALDOL REACTION (base catalyzed, cold)
Nu is α -carbon in enolate

Attack on carbonyl (read from top down)	
[starting materials: two aldehydes or ketones]	[products: two aldehydes or ketones]
(Nu loses a H^+ .) Nu attacks carbonyl C, breaking π bond to carbonyl O. ("Carbonyl" O gains a H^+ .)	("Nu" gains a H^+ .) "Nu" leaves "carbonyl" C, π bond to "carbonyl" O forms. ("Carbonyl" O loses a H^+ .)
[product: β -hydroxy aldehyde or ketone]	[starting material: β -hydroxy aldehyde or ketone]
	Revealing hidden carbonyl with HO^-, Δ (BOTTOM UP)

category 3: two nucleophilic attacks by the same atom, ALDOL CONDENSATION
(base cat., Δ)
Nu is α -carbon in enolate

Attack on carbonyl (read from top down)	
[starting materials: two aldehydes or ketones]	[products: two aldehydes or ketones]
("Nu" loses a H^+ .) Nu attacks carbonyl C, breaking π bond to carbonyl O. ("Carbonyl" O gains a H^+ .)*	("Nu" gains a H^+ .) "Nu" leaves "carbonyl" C, π bond to "carbonyl" O forms. ("Carbonyl" O loses a H^+ .)*
[intermediate: β -hydroxy aldehyde or ketone]	[intermediate: β -hydroxy aldehyde or ketone]
("Nu" loses a H^+ .)* "Carbonyl" O leaves (as hydroxide), while... ...Nu attacks "carbonyl" C a 2 nd time, forming π bond.	("Nu" gains a H^+ .)* ... "carbonyl" O joins "carbonyl" C (as hydroxide). "Nu" loses π bond to "carbonyl" C, while...
[product: α,β -unsaturated aldehyde or ketone]	[starting material: α,β -unsaturated aldehyde or ketone]
	Revealing hidden carbonyl with HO^-, Δ (BOTTOM UP)

Label ("*") the carbonyl or hidden carbonyl C acting as electrophile, and keep it labeled.
Label ("*") the past or future carbonyl O, and keep it labeled.
Label (" α ") the alpha-C acting as Nu, and keep it labeled.

*It is conventional to combine these two steps into a single proton transfer.