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Au nanoparticles on citrate-functionalized graphene nanosheets with high peroxidase-like performance

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In this paper, Au nanoparticles (AuNPs) have been homogeneously deposited on citrate-functionalized graphene nanosheets (Cit-GNs) by a simple one-pot reducing method. The morphology and composition of the thus-prepared AuNPs/Cit-GNs were characterized by transmission electron microscopy (TEM), high resolution TEM, energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy and X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy. The results showed that AuNPs with a uniform size are well dispersed on the surface of Cit-GNs. Significantly, the as-prepared AuNPs/Cit-GNs possess intrinsic peroxidase-like activity, which can catalyze the oxidation of peroxidase substrate 3,3,5,5-tetramethylbenzidine (TMB) by hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) to develop a blue color in aqueous solution. The catalysis was in accord with Michaelis-Menten kinetics and the AuNPs/Cit-GNs showed strong affinity for both H_2O_2 and TMB. Moreover, by comparing with Cit-AuNPs, AuNPs/GNs and AuNPs/PVP-GNs, the AuNPs/Cit-GNs composite exhibit higher catalytic ability with a lower Michaelis constant (K_m) value, suggesting that GNs with large surface area and citrate ions with more carboxyl groups around the AuNPs can greatly enhance the peroxidase-like activity of AuNPs/Cit-GNs. Take the advantages of the high catalytic activity, good stability and low cost, the novel AuNPs/Cit-GNs represent a promising candidate as enzyme mimic and may find a wide range of new applications in biochemistry and biotechnology.

Introduction

In recent years, considerable efforts have been expended on constructing enzyme mimics because natural enzymes bear some serious disadvantages, such as their sensitivity of catalytic activity to environmental conditions, low stability due to denaturation and high costs in preparation and purification.[1, 2] As hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) is an important oxidizing agent in biological systems, intense interest has grown in the development of construction efficient peroxidase mimics. By now, a large number of artificial mimics have been constructed by incorporating catalytic centers into various scaffolds to mimic natural peroxidase enzymes, such as hemin,[3] porphyrin,[4] DNAzyme,[5] molecularly imprinted hydrogels[6] and various nanoparticles (NPs).[7-20]

The rapidly emerging research fields of nanoscience and nanotechnology open new opportunities for the application of nanomaterials in catalysis. A series of nanostructured materials, such as magnetic nanomaterials (Fe_3O_4 NPs[7] and Co_3O_4 NPs[8]), carbon nanomaterials (helical carbon nanotubes[9], carbon dots,[10] graphene oxide (GO)[11] and C_{60}-carboxyfullerenes[12]), noble metal NPs (AuNPs,[13-15] AgNPs[16] and PtNPs[17]) and other nanomaterials,[18-20] have been demonstrated to possess peroxidase-like catalytic activity. Among these nanomaterials, AuNPs are especially attractive because of their easy preparation, excellent biocompatibility, and optoelectronic properties.[21-23] Although Au is traditionally considered to be catalytically inert, its catalytic activity can be improved when stabilized on some metal oxide supports such as TiO_2,[24] Fe_2O_3,[25] ZnO,[26] or some capping agents.[13-15] Jv et al. reported that cysteamine-modified positively charged AuNPs can catalyze the oxidation of peroxidase substrate 3, 3, 5, 5-tetramethylbenzidine (TMB) by H_2O_2 to develop a blue color in aqueous solution.[13] However, they found that the positively charged AuNPs are easily to aggregate, therefore, in their further research, they use single-walled carbon nanotubes to disperse these positively-charged AuNPs.[14] In another research, Wang et al. pointed out that comparing with amino modified AuNPs, the negatively charged citrate-capped AuNPs can attract amino groups of TMB electrostatically, which exhibit strong affinity with TMB as reaction substrate.[15] These findings suggested that the modification of AuNPs on a suitable support is of great importance to enhance their peroxidase-like catalytic activity.

Nowadays, graphene nanosheets (GNs) have become a sensational material due to its unique physical and chemical properties, such as extremely high electric and thermal conductivity, high strength and large surface area.[27] These unique properties make GNs become a promising candidate to disperse catalytically active metal NPs and a good support for

heterogeneous catalytic processes.[28-30] In previous researches, AuNPs have been successfully dispersed on GNs by various methods. However, to the best of our knowledge, only few reports using these AuNPs/GNs composites as enzyme mimics,[31, 32] and no reports concerning about the function of capping agents on mimic behaviors of these AuNPs/GNs. Due to the large surface area of GNs and widely applications of AuNPs in biosensors, it is of great interest to study the peroxidase-like catalytic activity of different capping agents modified AuNPs/GNs composites in the oxidation of peroxidase substrate.

In this paper, we described a simple and general approach to grow AuNPs on citrate-functionalized GNs (AuNPs/Cit-GNs) and studied their mimic behavior in the oxidation of TMB. It is surprising that the thus-prepared AuNPs/Cit-GNs possess intrinsic peroxidase-like catalytic activity. To elucidate the effect of citrate and GNs, another three composites, AuNPs/GNs, AuNPs/PVP-GNs and Cit-AuNPs were prepared for a comparison study. Based on the results, the AuNPs/Cit-GNs showed significantly higher catalytic activity in the oxidation of TMB with stronger affinity for both H_2O_2 and TMB comparing with AuNPs/GNs, AuNPs/PVP-GNs and Cit-AuNPs. Different from previous reports, this is the first study concerning the mimic behavior of negative-charged AuNPs/Cit-GNs. This study should provide new insights into the utilization of this peroxidase-like activity of AuNPs/Cit-GNs in medical diagnostics and biotechnology.

Experimental

Materials

H_2O_2, ammonia solution, sodium citrate and ascorbic acid (AA) were purchased from Wako Pure Chemicals, Co. Ltd.; graphite powder, $HAuCl_4$, TMB, 2, 2-azino-bis (3-ethylbenzothiazoline-6-sulfonic acid) (ABTS), Poly (*N*-vinyl-2-pyrrolidone) (PVP, K30, molecular weight=30 000-40 000) and hydrazine were from Aldrich Chem Co.. All other reagents were of analytical grade and used without further purification. The pure water for solution preparation was from a Sartorius arium pro UV/DI system.

Instrumentations

Morphologies and crystal structures of products observed by transmission electron microscopy (TEM) and high-resolution TEM (HRTEM) were performed on a TECNAI F-30 TEM with an acceleration voltage of 300 kV. Energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDX) analysis was used to identify the elemental composition of the complex. All TEM samples were prepared by depositing a drop of diluted suspension in water on a copper grid coated with carbon film. Electronic binding energies of AuNPs/Cit-GNs were measured by X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) analysis which was performed on a PHI Quantum 2000 Scanning ESCA Microprobe with a monochromatised microfocused Al X-ray source. All the binding energies were calibrated by C1s as reference energy (C1s = 284.6 eV). The ultraviolet-visible (UV-vis) absorption spectra of catalysts were measured on a UV 1240V spectrometer (Shimadzu) and the time-dependent absorbance spectra were performed on a USB2000+ miniature fiber optic spectrometer (Ocean Optics).

Preparation procedures

GO was prepared according to a modified Hummer's method.[33] 25 mg as-synthesized product was dispersed in 100 mL water to obtain a yellow-brown aqueous GO solution (0.25 mg mL^{-1}) with the aid of ultra-sonication. For the preparation of Cit-GNs, 100 mg sodium citrate was added into 10 mL 0.25 mg mL^{-1} GO dispersion, followed by stirring for 12 h. Then, 10 μL hydrazine solution (35 wt% in water) and 80 μL ammonia solution (25 wt% in water) were added. After being vigorously stirred for 5 min, the vial was put in an oil bath (95 °C) for 1 h. Finally, the stable black colloids (Cit-GNs) were centrifuged and dissolved in 10 mL water. For the preparation of PVP-GNs, 40 mg PVP was mixed with 10 mL 0.25 mg mL^{-1} GO dispersion, followed by stirring for 12 h. Other procedures were the same with those of Cit-GNs.

The Cit-AuNPs and surfactant-free AuNPs/GNs were prepared according to Ali Umar's[34] and Yin's[35] work, respectively. In a typical synthesis of AuNPs/Cit-GNs, 0.5 mL of the as-prepared Cit-GNs suspension, 0.05 mL of 10 mM $HAuCl_4$, 0.05 mL of 0.1 M NaOH and 0.05 mL of 0.1 M AA were mixed in a vial under vigorous stirring for 1 h at room temperature. Then, the product was centrifuged and washed to remove the remaining reagents. For the preparation of AuNPs/PVP-GNs, PVP-GNs was used instead of Cit-GNs, other procedures were the same with that of AuNPs/Cit-GNs.

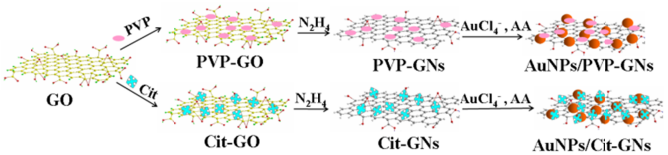
Catalysis procedures

To investigate the peroxidase-like activity of these enzyme mimics, the catalytic oxidation of the peroxidase substrate TMB in the presence of H_2O_2 was measured. As the amount of enzyme mimics has a serious effect on the results, we strictly controlled the amount of Au in the catalytic reactions. In a standard procedure, 50 μL of 8 mM TMB, 20 μL of H_2O_2 (30%) and 20 μL of 0.05 mg mL^{-1} of Au in enzyme mimics were added into 2 mL sodium acetate buffer solution (pH=3.8) at 40 °C. The reaction was carried out in a quartz cuvette with an optical path length of 1 cm and monitored by observing the absorbance evolutions at 652 nm. The kinetic analysis was carried out by using 20 μL enzyme mimics (0.05 mg mL^{-1} of Au) in a reaction volume of 2 mL sodium acetate buffer solution (pH=3.8) with 200 μM TMB or 100 mM H_2O_2, unless otherwise stated. The Michaelis-Menten constant was calculated using the Lineweaver-Burk plot: $1/v_0=(K_m/v_{max}) \cdot (1/[S]+1/K_m)$, where v_0 is the initial velocity, v_{max} is the maximal reaction velocity, and [S] is the concentration of the substrate.

Results and discussion

Characterization of AuNPs/Cit-GNs

A schematic illustration of the reaction mechanism for the synthesis of enzyme mimics is shown in Scheme 1. The progress of reaction was characterized by UV-vis spectroscopy. As shown in Figure 1, the absorption peak of the GO dispersion was at 227 nm, and disappeared after the modification of citrate, indicating the conjugation of GO and citrate. Comparing with GO, the absorption peak of Cit-GNs redshifts to 262 nm, and the absorption in the whole spectral region are increased, indicating that the electronic conjugation within the GNs is restored upon hydrazine reduction. After the reduction of $AuCl_4^-$, a new absorption peak appeared at 525 nm, which suggested the formation of AuNPs. The inset shows the color of the mixture changed from brown (Cit-GO) to black (Cit-GNs) and at last dark wine (AuNPs/Cit-GNs) during the reaction, which are in agreement with the UV-vis absorption results.



Scheme 1 schematic illustration for preparing AuNPs/Cit-GNs and AuNPs/PVP-GNs.

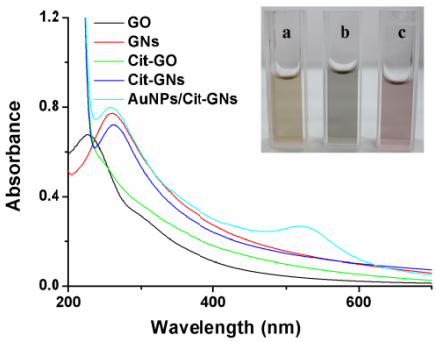


Figure 1 UV-vis absorption spectra of GO, GNs, Cit-GO, Cit-GNs and AuNPs/Cit-GNs. The inset shows the color of (a) Cit-GO, (b) Cit-GNs and (c) AuNPs/Cit-GNs.

Figure 2A-C shows the representative TEM images of the product at different magnifications. Low-magnification TEM image (Figure 2A) shows that all the AuNPs were uniformly dispersed on the surface of GNs. The magnified image (Figure 2B) reveals the average size of these AuNPs was about 25±2 nm. The HRTEM image (Figure 2C) indicates that these AuNPs presented a single-crystalline structure. The inter-planar spacing is 0.24 nm, which agrees well with the (111) lattice spacing of face-centered-cubic (fcc) Au. Figure 2D shows a typical EDX analysis of the prepared AuNPs/Cit-GNs composite, in which an obvious Au peak could be found, suggesting that AuNPs were successful prepared on the GNs surface. The formation of AuNPs/Cit-GNs composite was further characterized by XPS technique (Figure 2E and F). It is clear that the resulting AuNPs/Cit-GNs show the doublets $4f_{7/2}$ and $4f_{5/2}$ peaks, which are corresponding to the metallic state of Au (0). Additionally, from the C1s curves, only one peak associated with C-C can be observed, suggesting that the oxygenated functional groups (C-O, C=O) is substantially reduced by hydrazine. These results further supported the successful formation of AuNPs/Cit-GNs composite. Moreover, it should be mentioned that based on the XPS results, in a typical synthesis of AuNPs/Cit-GNs, AuNPs/PVP-GNs AuNPs/GNs and Cit-AuNPs, the weight ratios of Au in the products were 26.3%, 24.8%, 32.1% and 47.7%, respectively.

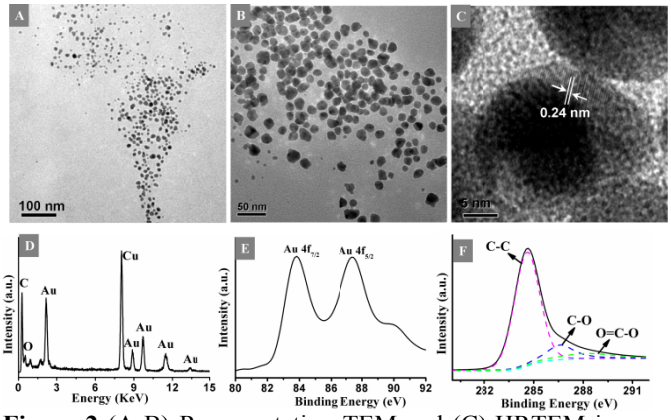


Figure 2 (A-B) Representative TEM and (C) HRTEM images of AuNPs/Cit-GNs. (D) EDX spectrum of AuNPs/Cit-GNs. (E-F) XPS spectra of Au4f and C1s of AuNPs/Cit-GNs.

Peroxidase-like activity of the AuNPs/Cit-GNs composite

To demonstrate the peroxidase-like activity of the AuNPs/Cit-GNs composite, the catalytic oxidation of peroxidase substrate TMB in the presence of H_2O_2 was tested. Figure 3A shows the photographs of TMB solutions with different additions in 10 min. It is clear that TMB solution in the presence of H_2O_2 exhibits no color change, indicating that the oxidation reaction occurs slowly in the absence of enzyme mimics. In contrast, it is interesting that the TMB + H_2O_2 solution changes to blue color after the addition of enzyme mimics. It is also important to mention that with the addition of AuNPs/Cit-GNs composite, the blue color of the solution is much deeper than the other three solutions containing the same Au amount of Cit-AuNPs, AuNPs/GNs and AuNPs/PVP-GNs. Additionally, the addition of AuNPs/Cit-GNs into TMB in the absence of H_2O_2 fails to give a blue colored solution. These results support that AuNPs/Cit-GNs can catalyze the oxidation of TMB in the presence of H_2O_2 and exhibits higher peroxidase-like catalytic ability than the other three composites. The reaction scheme is described in Figure 3B as follows: in the presence of H_2O_2, TMB is catalyzed by the AuNPs/Cit-GNs which act as peroxidase, and then a blue charge-transfer complex (chromogen) is quickly formed. Therefore, the absorbance of converted TMB provides a way to monitor the catalytic reaction at 652 nm.

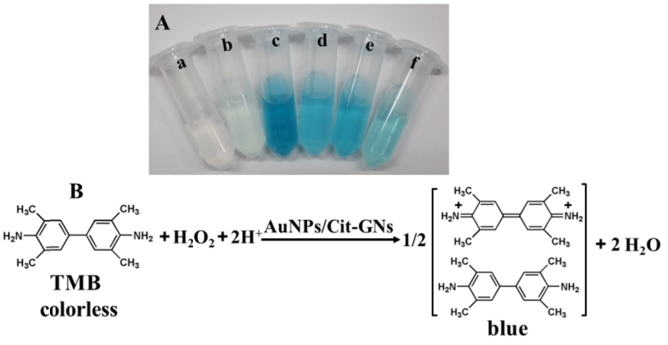


Figure 3 (A) Color evolution of TMB in different reaction systems: (a) TMB + H_2O_2; (b) TMB + AuNPs/Cit-GNs; (c) TMB + H_2O_2 + AuNPs/Cit-GNs; (d) TMB + H_2O_2 + Cit-AuNPs; (e) TMB + H_2O_2 + AuNPs/GNs; (f) TMB + H_2O_2 + AuNPs/PVP-GNs. TMB: 200 μM; H_2O_2: 100 mM; NaAc-HAc buffer: pH=3.8; Time: 10 min. (B) Corresponding reaction scheme for the AuNPs/Cit-GNs catalysis H_2O_2 reduction with TMB.

Similar to peroxidase, the catalytic activity of AuNPs/Cit-GNs is dependent on pH, temperature, and concentrations of TMB and H_2O_2. Our results indicated that the catalytic efficiency of AuNPs/Cit-GNs is higher in acid solution than in neutral solution (Figure 4A). And moreover, like the natural enzyme catalyzed reaction,[11, 17, 36] the AuNPs/Cit-GNs catalyzed reaction is inhibited at high H_2O_2 concentrations (Figure 4D). Based on our experiment, the maximum catalytic activity of AuNPs/Cit-GNs was obtained under the following optimal conditions: pH 3.8, 40 °C, 200 μM TMB and 125 mM H_2O_2 (Figure 4).

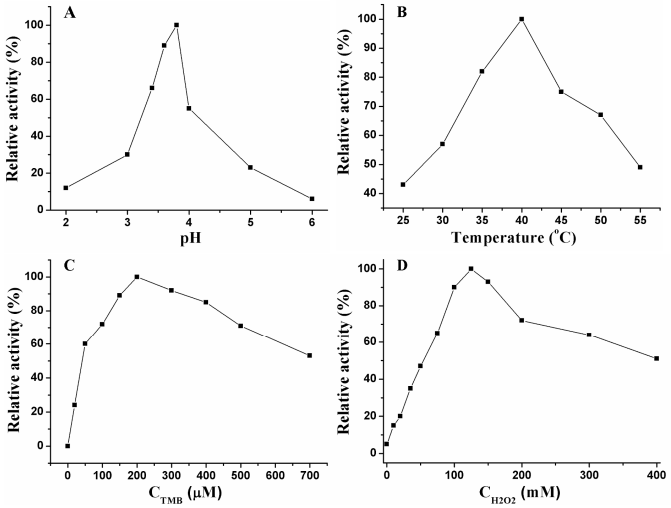


Figure 4 Dependence of the peroxidase-like activity of AuNPs/Cit-GNs on (A) pH, (B) temperature, (C) TMB concentration and (D) H_2O_2 concentration.

Previous research indicated that by simply mixing GO and Cit-AuNPs, the composite showed good performance in the reduction of 4-nitrophenol[37]. Here, to compare the peroxidase-like catalytic ability of the direct and indirect formation of AuNPs on GNs (or GO), we prepared the Cit-AuNPs+GO and Cit-AuNPs+GNs composites by a simply mixing method. Figure 5A shows the UV-vis absorption spectra of enzyme mimics catalytic reaction systems upon reaction for 10 min. The absorption peak at 652 nm suggests that TMB was oxidized. Moreover, according to these curves, the absorbance of AuNPs/Cit-GNs is ca. 1.14, 1.35, 1.47, 1.76 and 2.92 times as large as those of Cit-AuNPs+GO, Cit-AuNPs+GNs, AuNPs/GNs, Cit-AuNPs and AuNPs/PVP-GNs, respectively. The inset of Figure 5A shows the time-dependent absorbance changes at 652 nm with the addition of different kinds of enzyme mimics (the amount of Au was controlled at 0.5 μg mL^{-1}). In comparison with the other five composites, the absorbance at 652 nm increased quickly with the time after the addition of AuNPs/Cit-GNs, indicating a higher catalytic activity of the composite, which is in accordance with the results of UV-vis absorption spectra. Previous studies demonstrated that the carboxylated carbon-based materials, such as GO[11] and C_{60},[12] possessed the intrinsic peroxidase-like activity because they can increase the Fermi level and the electrochemical potential from the lowest unoccupied molecular orbital (LUMO) of H_2O_2, which accelerates the electron transfer from these materials to H_2O_2. This can also be supported that in this test, Cit-AuNPs+GO showed a higher peroxidase-like catalytic ability than Cit-AuNPs+GNs. And moreover, comparing with the color changes of TMB-H_2O_2 solutions containing GNs and Cit-GNs, Cit-GNs express a light blue colored change, which suggested that citrate with many carboxyl groups is beneficial for the improvement of peroxidase-like activity. However, the blue color of the solution containing AuNPs/Cit-GNs is much deeper than that of Cit-GNs, showing that the AuNPs played an importance role in the catalytic reaction (Fig. S1). In the case of Cit-AuNPs+GO**,** as the AuNPs are not formed directly on the GO, the interaction between AuNPs and GO is not strong enough, which affect their further enzyme mimic performance. Figure 5B shows the absorbance at 652 nm against different weight ratios (R_{wt}) of citrate to GO in the preparation of AuNPs/Cit-GNs. It is clear that after the same period of time (10 min), the absorbance was increased gradually with increasing R_{wt} until it reached at 40. After that, the peak decreased with the increase of R_{wt} value. As TMB contains two amino groups, a negatively charged NPs surface may attract them more easily. Therefore, a suitable amount of citrate as the capping agent is beneficial for the enhancement of their peroxidase-like activity. This can be further supported by comparing the peroxidase-like activity with another substrate, ABTS. In contrast to TMB, ABTS is a negatively charged chromogenic substrate which has two sulfo groups per molecule (Scheme S1). Therefore, the same negatively charged capping agent-citrate on the surface of AuNPs is unfavorable for the attracting of ABTS, which resulted in the lower peroxidase-like catalytic ability of AuNPs/Cit-GNs comparing with that of non-surfactant AuNPs/GNs (Figure S2). In addition, it should be mentioned that the intrinsic reduction activity of citrate has a negative effect on the peroxidase-like activity.[15] Therefore, the R_{wt} of citrate to GO should be carefully controlled to duplicate the catalytic activity of the AuNPs/Cit-GNs. Based on these observations, the reason for the higher peroxidase-like activity of the AuNPs/Cit-GNs composite can be concluded as follows: (i) comparing with Cit-AuNPs, the introduced GNs can enlarge the surface area of the composite, which means more catalytic active sites will be generated on the surface of AuNPs/Cit-GNs; (ii) the suitable amount of negatively capping agent-citrate with many carboxyl groups on the surface of AuNPs is beneficial for the attracting amino groups of TMB electrostatically, which means that the affinity of AuNPs/Cit-GNs with TMB would be much stronger than that of AuNPs/GNs and AuNPs/PVP-GNs with TMB.

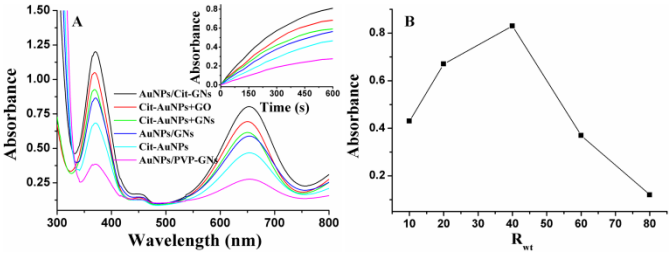


Figure 5 (A) UV-vis absorption spectra of various enzyme mimics catalytic reaction systems upon reaction for 10 min. The inset shows time-dependent absorbance changes at 652 nm of TMB reaction solutions catalyzed by these enzyme mimics. (B) The absorbance at 652 nm against different weight ratios (R_{wt}) of citrate to GO in the preparation of AuNPs/Cit-GNs.

For further analysis of the catalytic mechanism and comparison of different enzyme mimics, the apparent steady-state kinetic parameters were determined. A series of experiments were performed by changing the concentration of one substrate and keeping constant the concentration of the other. In a certain range of substrate concentrations, typical

Michaelis-Menten curves can be obtained as shown in Figure 6A and B for TMB and H_2O_2, respectively. The data were fitted to the Michaelis-Menten equation, in which the basic parameters can be obtained by using Lineweaver-Burk double reciprocal plots (Figure 6C and D). For the purpose of comparison, the kinetic data, including the Michaelis constant (K_m) and the maximal velocity (v_{max}) of the enzyme mimics and previously reported HRP[36] are listed in Table 1. The K_m value for AuNPs/Cit-GNs with TMB was 0.059 mM, which is much lower than that of AuNPs/GNs (0.38 mM), Cit-AuNPs (0.74 mM), AuNPs/PVP-GNs (2.63 mM) and HRP[36] (0.43 mM). As a low K_m represents a strong affinity of enzyme to substrates, this result indicated that AuNPs/Cit-GNs have a significantly higher affinity for TMB than the other enzyme mimics and even the natural enzyme HRP. On the other hand, the K_m value of the AuNPs/Cit-GNs with H_2O_2 as the substrate was 25.08 mM, which was 1.82 and 4.94 times lower than those of Cit-AuNPs and AuNPs/PVP-GNs, respectively. These results are in agreement with the fact that a lower H_2O_2 concentration is required for AuNPs/Cit-GNs than the other enzyme mimics when the maximum activity was obtained. Additionally, we measured their activity over a range of TMB and H_2O_2 concentrations. Figure 6C and D show the double reciprocal plots of initial velocity versus one substrate concentration, which were obtained for a range of concentrations of the second substrate. The slopes of the lines are parallel, which is characteristic of a ping-pong mechanism, as was observed for HRP.[36] This indicates that, like HRP, AuNPs/Cit-GNs binds and reacts with the first substrate, and then releases the first product before reacting with the second substrate.

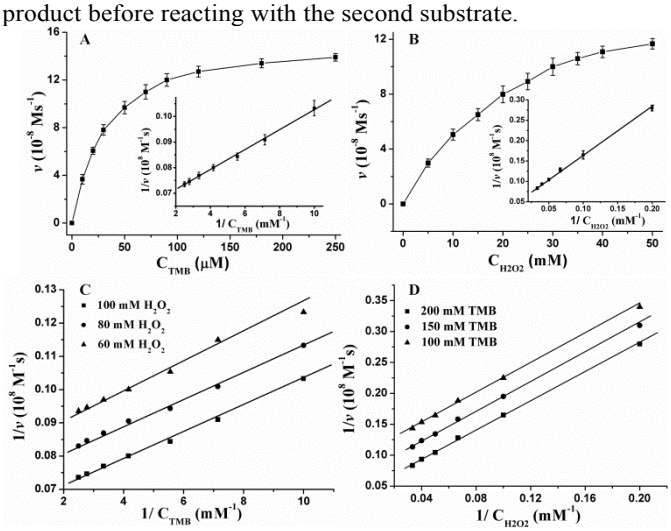


Figure 6 (A-B) Steady-state kinetic assay and catalytic mechanism of the AuNPs/Cit-GNs. (A) The concentration of H_2O_2 was 100 mM and the TMB concentration was varied. (B) The concentration of TMB was 200 μM and the H_2O_2 concentration was varied. The insets show the Lineweaver-Burk model for the AuNPs/Cit-GNs. (C-D) Double reciprocal plots of activity of AuNPs/Cit-GNs composite with the concentration of one substrate (H_2O_2 or TMB) fixed and the other varied. NaAc-HAc buffer: pH=3.8; the amount of Au: 0.5 μg mL^{-1}

Table 1 Comparison of the Kinetic Parameters (K_m and v_{max}) of various enzyme mimics.

Enzyme mimics	Km (mM)		v_{max}(10^{-8} M s^{-1})	
	TMB	H_2O_2	TMB	H_2O_2
AuNPs/Cit-GNs	0.059	25.08	14.93	21.46
AuNPs/GNs	0.38	26.42	18.30	15.41
Cit-AuNPs	0.74	45.83	12.15	10.69
AuNPs/PVP-GNs	2.63	104	13.04	11.98
HRP[36]	0.43	3.70	10.00	8.71

Conclusions

In summary, we have demonstrated that AuNPs/Cit-GNs possess intrinsic peroxidase-like activity and its catalysis is strongly dependent on pH, temperature and the concentration of TMB and H_2O_2. Kinetic analysis indicates that the catalysis is in accordance with typical Michaelis-Menten kinetics and follows a ping-pong mechanism. Moreover, due to the large surface area enhanced by GNs, and the negative capping agent-citrate on the surface of AuNPs, the AuNPs/Cit-GNs reveals higher catalytic activity to TMB than AuNPs/GNs, Cit-AuNPs and AuNPs/PVP-GNs, and even natural enzyme HRP. Additionally, as a mimic peroxidase, AuNPs/Cit-GNs exhibit several advantages over natural enzymes, such as easy to preparation and preservation, low cost and stability. This work might open up possibilities for constructing Cit-GNs based materials with novel physicochemical properties in biochemistry.

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† Footnotes should appear here. These might include comments relevant to but not central to the matter under discussion, limited experimental and spectral data, and crystallographic data.

Electronic Supplementary Information (ESI) available: [details of any supplementary information available should be included here]. See DOI: 10.1039/b000000x/

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Au nanoparticles on citrate-functionalized graphene nanosheets with high peroxidase-like performance

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In this manuscript, citrate-functionalized graphene nanosheets (Cit-GNs) were introduced as a support for Au nanoparticles (AuNPs). Take the advantages of GNs with large surface area and citrate ions with more carboxyl groups around the AuNPs, the AuNPs/Cit-GNs composite exhibits higher peroxidase-like catalytic ability than Cit-AuNPs, AuNPs/GNs, AuNPs/PVP-GNs, and even natural enzyme HRP.