

First, normalization. We have

$$1 = \langle \psi | \psi \rangle = A^2 \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x^2 e^{-2bx^2} dx = \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{32b^3}} A^2, \text{ or } A = \left(\frac{32b^3}{\pi} \right)^{1/4}$$

Now, we compute $\langle \psi | H | \psi \rangle$.

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \psi | H | \psi \rangle &= \sqrt{\frac{32b^3}{\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \left[\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} x e^{-bx^2} \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} x e^{-bx^2} + \frac{1}{2} m \omega^2 x^4 e^{-2bx^2} \right] dx \\ &= \sqrt{\frac{32b^3}{\pi}} \frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \left| \frac{\partial}{\partial x} x e^{-bx^2} \right|^2 dx + \sqrt{\frac{32b^3}{\pi}} \frac{m\omega^2}{2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x^4 e^{-2bx^2} dx \end{aligned}$$

① ②

$$\begin{aligned} \textcircled{1} &= \sqrt{\frac{8b^3 \hbar^4}{\pi m^2}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \left(e^{-bx^2} - 2bx^2 e^{-bx^2} \right)^2 dx \\ &= \sqrt{\frac{8b^3 \hbar^4}{\pi m^2}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \left(e^{-2bx^2} - 4bx^2 e^{-2bx^2} + 4b^2 x^4 e^{-2bx^2} \right) dx \\ &= \sqrt{\frac{8b^3 \hbar^4}{\pi m^2}} \left(\sqrt{\frac{\pi}{2b}} - \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{2b}} + \frac{3}{4} \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{2b}} \right) \\ &= \frac{3}{4} \sqrt{\frac{4b^2 \hbar^4}{m^2}} = \frac{3b \hbar^2}{2m} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \textcircled{2} &= \sqrt{\frac{8b^3 m^2 \omega^4}{\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x^4 e^{-2bx^2} dx \\ &= \sqrt{\frac{8b^3 m^2 \omega^4}{\pi}} \left(\frac{3}{16} \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{2b^5}} \right) \\ &= \frac{3}{8} \sqrt{\frac{m^2 \omega^4}{b^2}} = \frac{3m\omega^2}{8b} \end{aligned}$$

Thus, $\langle \psi | H | \psi \rangle = \frac{3b \hbar^2}{2m} + \frac{3m\omega^2}{8b}$. To minimize, we set the derivative to zero:

$$0 = \partial_b \langle \psi | H | \psi \rangle = \frac{3\hbar^2}{2m} - \frac{3m\omega^2}{8b^2}, \text{ or } b^2 = \frac{m^2 \omega^2}{4\hbar^2}, \text{ or } b = \frac{m\omega}{2\hbar}$$

$$\text{Then } \langle \psi | H | \psi \rangle_{\min} = \frac{3\hbar^2}{2m} \left(\frac{m\omega}{2\hbar} \right) + \frac{3m\omega^2}{8} \left(\frac{2\hbar}{m\omega} \right) = \frac{3}{4} \hbar \omega + \frac{3}{4} \hbar \omega = \frac{3}{2} \hbar \omega, \text{ or } E_1 \leq \frac{3}{2} \hbar \omega$$

Note that $\langle \psi | H | \psi \rangle$ gives an upper bound for the energy of $|\psi\rangle$, the first excited state, not just an upper bound for the energy of $|\psi_0\rangle$. This is because we know $|\psi_0\rangle$ is even, and our $|\psi\rangle$ is always odd, thus we know $\langle \psi | \psi_0 \rangle = 0$ for any b .