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Mechanical Advantage of Simple Machines

READ

We use simple machines to make tasks easier. While the output work of a simple machine can never be greater than the input work, a simple machine can multiply input forces OR multiply input distances (but never both at the same time). You can use this skill sheet to practice calculating mechanical advantage (MA) for two common simple machines: levers and ramps.

The general formula for the mechanical advantage (MA) of levers:

$$MA_{\text{lever}} = \frac{F_i \text{ (output force)}}{F_o \text{ (input force)}}$$

Or you can use the ratio of the input arm length to the output arm length:

$$MA_{\text{lever}} = \frac{L_i \text{ (length of input arm)}}{L_o \text{ (length of output arm)}}$$

Most of the time, levers are used to multiply force to lift heavy objects.

$$MA_{\text{ramp}} = \frac{\text{ramp length}}{\text{ramp height}}$$

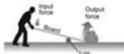
The general formula for the mechanical advantage (MA) of ramps:

A ramp makes it possible to move a heavy load to a new height using less force (but over a longer distance). The mechanical advantage of a ramp can be found using this formula:

EXAMPLES

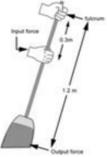
Example 1: A construction worker uses a board and log as a lever to lift a heavy rock. If the input arm is 3 meters long and the output arm is 0.75 meters long, what is the mechanical advantage of the lever?

$$MA = \frac{3 \text{ meters}}{0.75 \text{ meter}} = 4$$



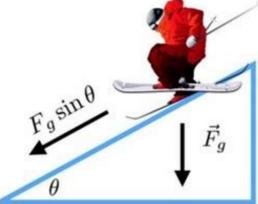
Example 2: Sometimes levers are used to multiply distance. For a broom, your upper hand is the fulcrum and your lower hand provides the input force. Notice the input arm is shorter than the output arm. The mechanical advantage of this broom is:

$$MA = \frac{0.3 \text{ meter}}{1.2 \text{ meters}} = 0.25$$



A mechanical advantage less than one doesn't mean a machine isn't useful. It just means that instead of multiplying force, the machine multiplies distance. A broom doesn't push the dust with as much force as you use to push the broom, but a small movement of your arm pushes the dust a large distance.

A COINCIDENCE FOR AN OPEN MIND



Under constant acceleration, an object travels the distance d in the time $t = \sqrt{2d/a}$. For the skier on the inclined plane, this time is given by $\sqrt{\frac{2d}{g \sin \theta}}$. Starting from rest at the top of the incline, the skier has speed $v = at = g \sin \theta \sqrt{\frac{2d}{g \sin \theta}} = \sqrt{2g \sin \theta d}$ at the bottom of the incline.

Consider the kinetic energy $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$. At the top of the incline, this quantity is equal to zero, and at the bottom of the incline it's equal to $mg \sin \theta d$.

Now, consider another quantity: $F \cdot s$, where F is the force of gravity along the incline, and s is the distance traveled down the incline. With $F = mg \sin \theta$, and $s = d$, we find $F \cdot s = mg \sin \theta d$.

This is curious. In descending the slope, the skier gained an amount of kinetic energy that is equal to the product of the force that acted on the particle, and the distance over which the particle traveled. One might be tempted to hypothesize that forces acting through a distance give objects kinetic energy.

Mathematically,

$$\vec{F} \cdot \vec{d} = \Delta KE = \frac{1}{2}mv_f^2 - \frac{1}{2}mv_i^2$$

Inclined Plane Worksheet

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Use the diagrams below to answer the questions. Assume the block accelerates down the ramp unless explained otherwise. SHOW ALL WORK!

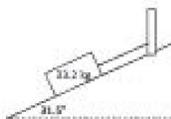
- Determine the acceleration of the block below if the coefficient of static friction is 0.343.



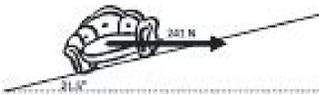
- If the acceleration of the block in the diagram below is 5.80 m/s^2 , what is the coefficient of kinetic friction?



- The block in the diagram below is AT REST. However, the tension in the cable is not the only thing holding the block back. Static friction is also applying a force. If the coefficient of static friction is 0.224 determine the tension in the rope.



- Paul is pushing the couch up the ramp into the moving truck at a CONSTANT VELOCITY. If he pushes with a force of 241 N directly to the right (NOT AT ANY ANGLE), what is the coefficient of kinetic friction? The mass of the couch is 35.3 kg.



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