

September 17, 2012

Physics 131

Prof. E. F. Redish

- **Theme Music: When Push Comes to Shove**
Greatful Dead
- **Cartoon: Rick deTorie**
One Big Happy



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9/17/12

1

Physics 131

Example: The Black Brant

- <http://www.physics.umd.edu/perg/abp/TProbs/Problems/Solutions/K/K28-S.htm>



9/12/12

3

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Reading questions

- Since the equation $a = F/m$ is not the definition of acceleration, then is $F = ma$ not the definition of force? If not, what is the definition of force?

9/17/12

Physics 131

8

Thought experiments

- In physics we often create idealized “thought experiments” to see what the fundamental principles are that we should be using – a building our analysis of complex situations around.
- Bringing in the full complexity or real-world experiments confuses rather than helps.
- Galileo – falling objects.

9/17/12

Physics 131

9

Technical term alert: What's a Force?

- The “ F ” in the last slide is an expression of the idea:
 - When two objects touch they do something to each other that tends to change the other's velocity.
- Although the technical term for this is “force” it is different from the common speech idea of force.
 - It is an interaction between two objects.
 - It only occurs via contact or by the non-touching examples of gravity, electricity, and magnetism.
- Until we are accustomed to this new term we will refer to “physical-force” (pForce).

9/17/12

13

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Even if we have a new name for it, what the &*\$#% is it?

- How can we “define” a pForce?
- What would a definition look like?
- Process:
 - Define some force that can set a quantitative measurable standard (spring)
 - Measure object's masses by seeing how much a standard force accelerates them.
 - Create models of new forces (as, perhaps, functions of position) by seeing how they accelerate objects.
 - Use our force models to predict motions.
 - If we quickly stop having to add new forces we have a stable structure.

9/17/12

Physics 131

14