

GRAVITY

KEY IDEAS

- Gravity is the name given to the force which pulls masses towards each other eg the Earth and the Moon
- Objects are pulled towards the centre of the Earth by the force of gravity

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- Why do you think objects fall downwards when you let them drop?
- Do objects fall at the same speed all the way down, or do they speed up?
- Do different objects fall at different speeds?

GRAVITY EXERTS A FORCE

- We are all familiar with the effects of gravity (for example, objects always fall toward the centre of the Earth when they are dropped).
- The explanation is complex and not fully understood by scientists yet.
- Gravity comes about because of the attraction between two masses.
- Gravity is related to the size of the masses and to the distance between them.
- On our planet, one of the effects is tht the Earth pulls all objects towards itself. (Strictly speaking, the Earth is pulled towards the object as well, but because the mass of the Earth is so great in comparison to any falling object, it does not move).
- Falling 'downward' is part of this effect of being pulled towards the centre of the Earth (obviously Earth's surface stops anything from being pulled any further).

OBJECTS FALL AT THE SAME SPEED

- All objects fall at the same speed, but this is only in vacuum!
- This means you can only see this happen if the objects are dropped, for example, on the moon. On Earth, air creates drag and the speed at which objects

fall depends on their size and shape.

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