? Tornadoes are spawned by severe thunderstorms, so being able to predict the path of thunderstorms is essential. If a thunderstorm is moving at 15 km/h in a direction 37° north of east, how far north does the thunderstorm move in 2.0 h? (i) 30 km; (ii) 24 km; (iii) 18 km; (iv) 12 km; (v) 9 km.

1 Units, Physical Quantities, and Vectors

Physics is one of the most fundamental of the sciences. Scientists of all disciplines use the ideas of physics, including chemists who study the structure of molecules, paleontologists who try to reconstruct how dinosaurs walked, and climatologists who study how human activities affect the atmosphere and oceans. Physics is also the foundation of all engineering and technology. No engineer could design a flat-screen TV, a prosthetic leg, or even a better mousetrap without first understanding the basic laws of physics.

The study of physics is also an adventure. You'll find it challenging, sometimes frustrating, occasionally painful, and often richly rewarding. If you've ever wondered why the sky is blue, how radio waves can travel through empty space, or how a satellite stays in orbit, you can find the answers by using fundamental physics. You'll come to see physics as a towering achievement of the human intellect in its quest to understand our world and ourselves.

In this opening chapter, we'll go over some important preliminaries that we'll need throughout our study. We'll discuss the nature of physical theory and the use of idealized models to represent physical systems. We'll introduce the systems of units used to describe physical quantities and discuss ways to describe the accuracy of a number. We'll look at examples of problems for which we can't (or don't want to) find a precise answer, but for which rough estimates can be useful and interesting. Finally, we'll study several aspects of vectors and vector algebra. We'll need vectors throughout our study of physics to help us describe and analyze physical quantities, such as velocity and force, that have direction as well as magnitude.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this chapter, you'll learn...

1.1 What a physical theory is.
1.2 The four steps you can use to solve any physics problem.
1.3 Three fundamental quantities of physics and the units physicists use to measure them.
1.4 How to work with units in your calculations.
1.5 How to keep track of significant figures in your calculations.
1.6 How to make rough, order-of-magnitude estimates.
1.7 The difference between scalars and vectors, and how to add and subtract vectors graphically.
1.8 What the components of a vector are and how to use them in calculations.
1.9 What unit vectors are and how to use them with components to describe vectors.
1.10 Two ways to multiply vectors: the scalar (dot) product and the vector (cross) product.

1.1 THE NATURE OF PHYSICS

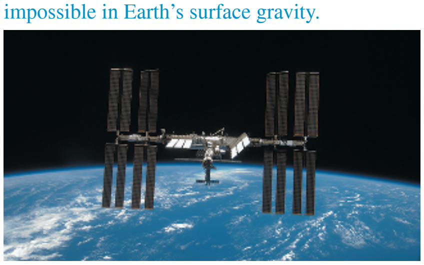
Physics is an *experimental* science. Physicists observe the phenomena of nature and try to find patterns that relate these phenomena. These patterns are called physical theories or, when they are very well established and widely used, physical laws or principles.

Figure **1.1** Two research laboratories.

(a) According to legend, Galileo investigated falling objects by dropping them from the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Italy, ...

... and he studied pendulum motion by observing the swinging chandelier in the adjacent cathedral.

(b) By doing experiments in apparent weightlessness on board the International Space Station, physicists have been able to make sensitive measurements that would be impossible in Earth's surface gravity.



CAUTION **The meaning of "theory"** A theory is *not* just a random thought or an unproven concept. Rather, a theory is an explanation of natural phenomena based on observation and accepted fundamental principles. An example is the well-established theory of biological evolution, which is the result of extensive research and observation by generations of biologists.

To develop a physical theory, a physicist has to ask appropriate questions, design experiments to try to answer the questions, and draw appropriate conclusions from the results. **Figure 1.1** shows two important facilities used for physics experiments.

Legend has it that Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) dropped light and heavy objects from the top of the Leaning Tower of Pisa (Fig. 1.1a) to find out whether their rates of fall were different. From examining the results of his experiments (which were actually much more sophisticated than in the legend), he deduced the theory that the acceleration of a freely falling object is independent of its weight.

The development of physical theories such as Galileo's often takes an indirect path, with blind alleys, wrong guesses, and the discarding of unsuccessful theories in favor of more promising ones. Physics is not simply a collection of facts and principles; it is also the *process* by which we arrive at general principles that describe how the physical universe behaves.

No theory is ever regarded as the ultimate truth. It's always possible that new observations will require that a theory be revised or discarded. Note that we can disprove a theory by finding behavior that is inconsistent with it, but we can never prove that a theory is always correct.

Getting back to Galileo, suppose we drop a feather and a cannonball. They certainly do *not* fall at the same rate. This does not mean that Galileo was wrong; it means that his theory was incomplete. If we drop the feather and the cannonball *in a vacuum* to eliminate the effects of the air, then they do fall at the same rate. Galileo's theory has a **range of validity:** It applies only to objects for which the force exerted by the air (due to air resistance and buoyancy) is much less than the weight. Objects like feathers or parachutes are clearly outside this range.

1.2 SOLVING PHYSICS PROBLEMS

At some point in their studies, almost all physics students find themselves thinking, "I understand the concepts, but I just can't solve the problems." But in physics, truly understanding a concept *means* being able to apply it to a variety of problems. Learning how to solve problems is absolutely essential; you don't *know* physics unless you can *do* physics.

How do you learn to solve physics problems? In every chapter of this book you'll find *Problem-Solving Strategies* that offer techniques for setting up and solving problems efficiently and accurately. Following each *Problem-Solving Strategy* are one or more worked *Examples* that show these techniques in action. (The *Problem-Solving Strategies* will also steer you away from some *incorrect* techniques that you may be tempted to use.) You'll also find additional examples that aren't associated with a particular *Problem-Solving Strategy*. In addition, at the end of each chapter you'll find a *Bridging Problem* that uses more than one of the key ideas from the chapter. Study these strategies and problems carefully, and work through each example for yourself on a piece of paper.

Different techniques are useful for solving different kinds of physics problems, which is why this book offers dozens of *Problem-Solving Strategies*. No matter what kind of problem you're dealing with, however, there are certain key steps that you'll always follow. (These same steps are equally useful for problems in math, engineering, chemistry, and many other fields.) In this book we've organized these steps into four stages of solving a problem.

All of the *Problem-Solving Strategies* and *Examples* in this book will follow these four steps. (In some cases we'll combine the first two or three steps.) We encourage you to follow these same steps when you solve problems yourself. You may find it useful to remember the acronym ***I SEE***—short for *Identify, Set up, Execute,* and *Evaluate.*

PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGY 1.1 Solving Physics Problems

IDENTIFY *the relevant concepts:*

- Use the physical conditions stated in the problem to help you decide which physics concepts are relevant.
- Identify the **target variables** of the problem—that is, the quantities whose values you're trying to find, such as the speed at which a projectile hits the ground, the intensity of a sound made by a siren, or the size of an image made by a lens.
- Identify the known quantities, as stated or implied in the problem. This step is essential whether the problem asks for an algebraic expression or a numerical answer.

SET UP *the problem*:

- Given the concepts, known quantities, and target variables that you found in the IDENTIFY step, choose the equations that you'll use to solve the problem and decide how you'll use them. Study the worked examples in this book for tips on how to select the proper equations. If this seems challenging, don't worry—you'll get better with practice!
- Make sure that the variables you have identified correlate exactly with those in the equations.
- If appropriate, draw a sketch of the situation described in the problem. (Graph paper and a ruler will help you make clear, useful sketches.)

EXECUTE *the solution*:

- Here's where you'll "do the math" with the equations that you selected in the SET UP step to solve for the target variables that you found in the IDENTIFY step. Study the worked examples to see what's involved in this step.

EVALUATE *your answer:*

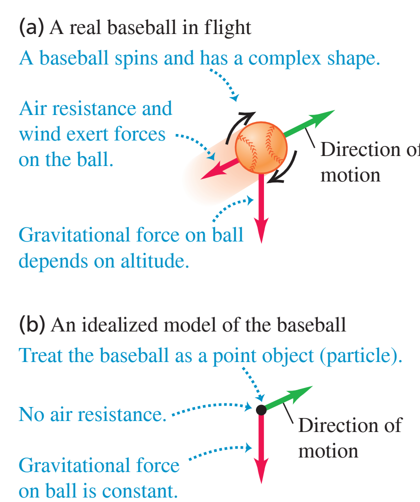
- Check your answer from the SOLVE step to see if it's reasonable. (If you're calculating how high a thrown baseball goes, an answer of 1.0 mm is unreasonably small and an answer of 100 km is unreasonably large.) If your answer includes an algebraic expression, confirm that it correctly represents what would happen if the variables in it had very large or very small values.
- For future reference, make note of any answer that represents a quantity of particular significance. Ask yourself how you might answer a more general or more difficult version of the problem you have just solved.

Idealized Models

In everyday conversation we use the word "model" to mean either a small-scale replica, such as a model railroad, or a person who displays articles of clothing (or the absence thereof). In physics a **model** is a simplified version of a physical system that would be too complicated to analyze in full detail.

For example, suppose we want to analyze the motion of a thrown baseball (**Fig. 1.2a**). How complicated is this problem? The ball is not a perfect sphere (it has raised seams), and it spins as it moves through the air. Air resistance and wind influence its motion, the ball's weight varies a little as its altitude changes, and so on. If we try to include all these effects, the analysis gets hopelessly complicated. Instead, we invent a simplified version of the problem. We ignore the size, shape, and rotation of the ball by representing it as a point object, or **particle.** We ignore air resistance by making the ball move in a vacuum, and we make the weight constant. Now we have a problem that is simple enough to deal with (Fig. 1.2b). We'll analyze this model in detail in Chapter 3.

Figure 1.2 To simplify the analysis of (a) a baseball in flight, we use (b) an idealized model.



We have to overlook quite a few minor effects to make an idealized model, but we must be careful not to neglect too much. If we ignore the effects of gravity completely, then our model predicts that when we throw the ball up, it will go in a straight line and disappear into space. A useful model simplifies a problem enough to make it manageable, yet keeps its essential features.

The validity of the predictions we make using a model is limited by the validity of the model. For example, Galileo's prediction about falling objects (see Section 1.1) corresponds to an idealized model that does not include the effects of air resistance. This model works fairly well for a dropped cannonball, but not so well for a feather.

Idealized models play a crucial role throughout this book. Watch for them in discussions of physical theories and their applications to specific problems.

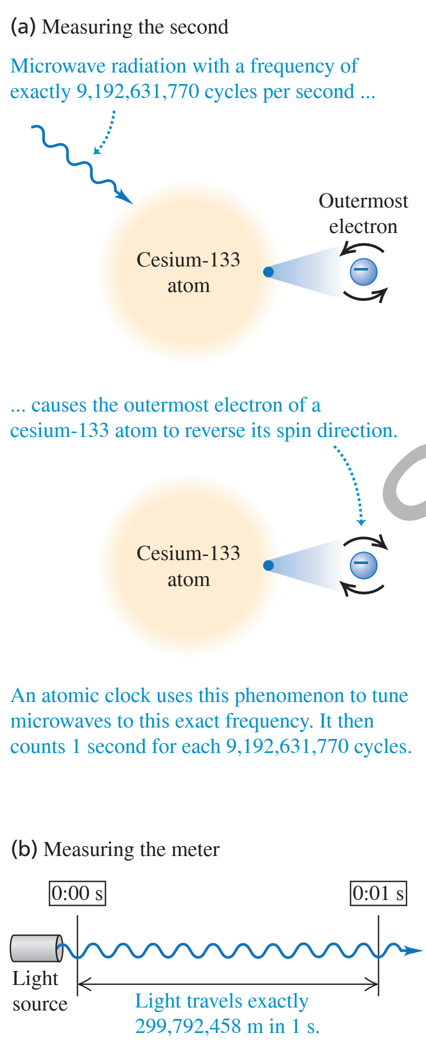
1.3 STANDARDS AND UNITS

As we learned in Section 1.1, physics is an experimental science. Experiments require measurements, and we generally use numbers to describe the results of measurements. Any number that is used to describe a physical phenomenon quantitatively is called a **physical quantity.** For example, two physical quantities that describe you are your weight and your height. Some physical quantities are so fundamental that we can define them only by describing how to measure them. Such a definition is called an **operational definition.** Two examples are measuring a distance by using a ruler and measuring a time interval by using a stopwatch. In other cases we define a physical quantity by describing how to calculate it from other quantities that we *can* measure. Thus we might define the average speed of a moving object as the distance traveled (measured with a ruler) divided by the time of travel (measured with a stopwatch).

When we measure a quantity, we always compare it with some reference standard. When we say that a basketball hoop is 3.05 meters above the ground, we mean that this distance is 3.05 times as long as a meter stick, which we define to be 1 meter long. Such a standard defines a **unit** of the quantity. The meter is a unit of distance, and the second is a unit of time. When we use a number to describe a physical quantity, we must always specify the unit that we are using; to describe a distance as simply "3.05" wouldn't mean anything.

To make accurate, reliable measurements, we need units of measurement that do not change and that can be duplicated by observers in various locations. The system of units used by scientists and engineers around the world is commonly called "the metric system," but since 1960 it has been known officially as the **International System,** or **SI** (the abbreviation for its French name, *Système International*). Appendix A gives a list of all SI units as well as definitions of the most fundamental units. The United States and a few other countries use the British System of Units. Appendix C gives a list of British units as well as their definitions.

Figure 1.3 The measurements used to determine (a) the duration of a second and (b) the length of a meter. These measurements are useful for setting standards because they give the same results no matter where they are made.



Time

From 1889 until 1967, the unit of time was defined as a certain fraction of the mean solar day, the average time between successive arrivals of the sun at its highest point in the sky. The present standard, adopted in 1967, is much more precise. It is based on an atomic clock, which uses the energy difference between the two lowest energy states of the cesium atom (^{133}Cs). When bombarded by microwaves of precisely the proper frequency, cesium atoms undergo a transition from one of these states to the other. One **second** (abbreviated s) is defined as the time required for 9,192,631,770 cycles of this microwave radiation (**Fig. 1.3a**).

Length

In 1960 an atomic standard for the meter was also established, using the wavelength of the orange-red light emitted by excited atoms of krypton (^{86}Kr). From this length standard, the speed of light in vacuum was measured to be 299,792,458 m/s. In November 1983, the length standard was changed again so that the speed of light in vacuum was *defined* to be precisely 299,792,458 m/s. Hence the new definition of the **meter** (abbreviated m) is the distance that light travels in vacuum in 1/299,792,458 second (Fig. 1.3b). This modern definition provides a much more precise standard of length than the one based on a wavelength of light.

Mass

Until recently the unit of mass, the **kilogram** (abbreviated kg), was defined to be the mass of a metal cylinder kept at the International Bureau of Weights and Measures in France (**Fig. 1.4**). This was a very inconvenient standard to use. Since 2018 the value of the kilogram has been based on a fundamental constant of nature called *Planck's constant* (symbol h), whose defined value $h = 6.62607015 \times 10^{-34}\ \text{kg} \cdot \text{m}^2/\text{s}$ is related to those of the kilogram, meter, and second. Given the values of the meter and the second, the masses of objects can be experimentally determined in terms of h. (We'll explain the meaning of h in Chapter 28.) The *gram* (which is not a fundamental unit) is 0.001 kilogram.

Other *derived units* can be formed from the fundamental units. For example, the units of speed are meters per second, or m/s; these are the units of length (m) divided by the units of time (s).

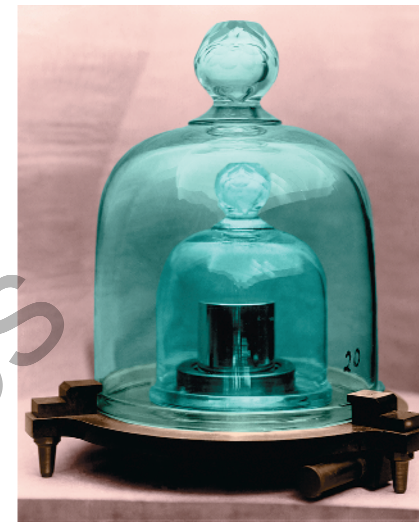


Figure 1.4 Until 2018 a metal cylinder was used to define the value of the kilogram. (The one shown here, a copy of the one in France, was maintained by the U. S. National Institute of Standards and Technology.) Today the kilogram is defined in terms of one of the fundamental constants of nature.

Unit Prefixes

Once we have defined the fundamental units, it is easy to introduce larger and smaller units for the same physical quantities. In the metric system these other units are related to the fundamental units (or, in the case of mass, to the gram) by multiples of 10 or $\frac{1}{10}$. Thus one kilometer (1 km) is 1000 meters, and one centimeter (1 cm) is $\frac{1}{100}$ meter. We usually express multiples of 10 or $\frac{1}{10}$ in exponential notation: $1000 = 10^3$, $\frac{1}{1000} = 10^{-3}$, and so on. With this notation, $1\text{ km} = 10^3\text{ m}$ and $1\text{ cm} = 10^{-2}\text{ m}$.

The names of the additional units are derived by adding a **prefix** to the name of the fundamental unit. For example, the prefix "kilo-," abbreviated k, always means a unit larger by a factor of 1000; thus

$$1\text{ kilometer} = 1\text{ km} = 10^3\text{ meters} = 10^3\text{ m}$$

$$1\text{ kilogram} = 1\text{ kg} = 10^3\text{ grams} = 10^3\text{ g}$$

$$1\text{ kilowatt} = 1\text{ kW} = 10^3\text{ watts} = 10^3\text{ W}$$

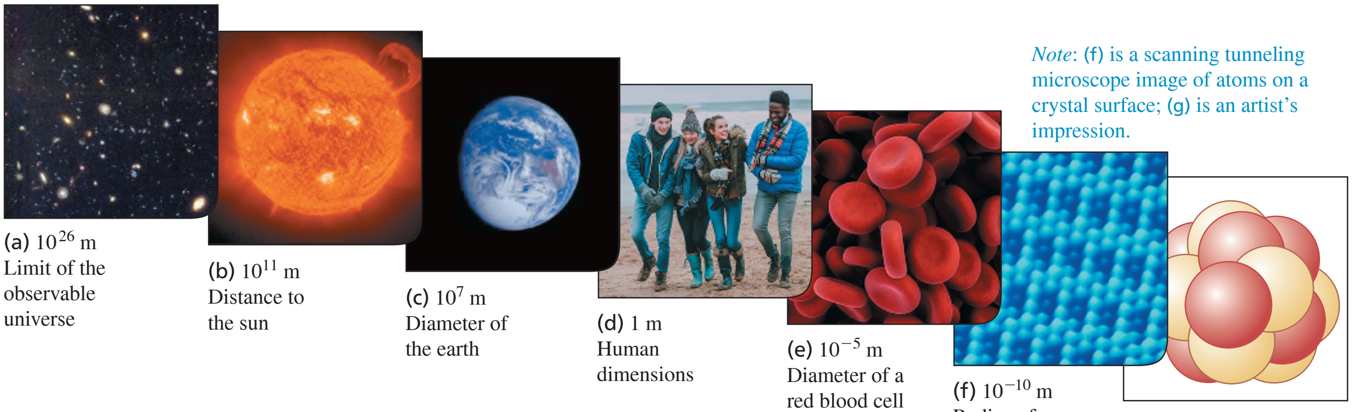
A table in Appendix A lists the standard SI units, with their meanings and abbreviations.

Table 1.1 gives some examples of the use of multiples of 10 and their prefixes with the units of length, mass, and time. **Figure 1.5** (next page) shows how these prefixes are used to describe both large and small distances.

TABLE 1.1 Some Units of Length, Mass, and Time

Length	Mass	Time
1 nanometer = 1 nm = 10^{-9} m (a few times the size of the largest atom)	1 microgram = 1 μg = 10^{-6} g = 10^{-9} kg (mass of a very small dust particle)	1 nanosecond = 1 ns = 10^{-9} s (time for light to travel 0.3 m)
1 micrometer = 1 μm = 10^{-6} m (size of some bacteria and other cells)	1 milligram = 1 mg = 10^{-3} g = 10^{-6} kg (mass of a grain of salt)	1 microsecond = 1 μs = 10^{-6} s (time for space station to move 8 mm)
1 millimeter = 1 mm = 10^{-3} m (diameter of the point of a ballpoint pen)	1 gram = 1 g = 10^{-3} kg (mass of a paper clip)	1 millisecond = 1 ms = 10^{-3} s (time for a plane flying at cruising speed to travel 25 cm)
1 centimeter = 1 cm = 10^{-2} m (diameter of your little finger)		
1 kilometer = 1 km = 10^3 m (distance in a 10 minute walk)		

Figure **1.5** Some typical lengths in the universe.



Note: (f) is a scanning tunneling microscope image of atoms on a crystal surface; (g) is an artist's impression.

(a) 10^{26} m Limit of the observable universe

(b) 10^{11} m Distance to the sun

(c) 10^{7} m Diameter of the earth

(d) 1 m Human dimensions

(e) 10^{-5} m Diameter of a red blood cell

(f) 10^{-10} m Radius of an atom

(g) 10^{-14} m Radius of an atomic nucleus

1.4 USING AND CONVERTING UNITS

We use equations to express relationships among physical quantities, represented by algebraic symbols. Each algebraic symbol always denotes both a number and a unit. For example, d might represent a distance of 10 m, t a time of 5 s, and v a speed of 2 m/s.

An equation must always be **dimensionally consistent.** You can't add apples and automobiles; two terms may be added or equated only if they have the same units. For example, if an object moving with constant speed v travels a distance d in a time t, these quantities are related by the equation

$$d = vt$$

If d is measured in meters, then the product vt must also be expressed in meters. Using the above numbers as an example, we may write

$$10\ \text{m} = \left(2\,\frac{\text{m}}{\cancel{\text{s}}}\right)(5\ \cancel{\text{s}})$$

Because the unit s in the denominator of m/s cancels, the product has units of meters, as it must. In calculations, units are treated just like algebraic symbols with respect to multiplication and division.

CAUTION **Always use units in calculations** Make it a habit to *always* write numbers with the correct units and carry the units through the calculation as in the example above. This provides a very useful check. If at some stage in a calculation you find that an equation or an expression has inconsistent units, you know you have made an error. In this book we'll *always* carry units through all calculations, and we strongly urge you to follow this practice when you solve problems.

PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGY 1.2 Unit Conversions

IDENTIFY *the relevant concepts:* In most cases, it's best to use the fundamental SI units (lengths in meters, masses in kilograms, and times in seconds) in every problem. If you need the answer to be in a different set of units (such as kilometers, grams, or hours), wait until the end of the problem to make the conversion.

SET UP *the problem* and **EXECUTE** *the solution:* Units are multiplied and divided just like ordinary algebraic symbols. This gives us an easy way to convert a quantity from one set of units to another: Express the same physical quantity in two different units and form an equality.

For example, when we say that 1 min = 60 s, we don't mean that the number 1 is equal to the number 60; rather, we mean that 1 min represents the same physical time interval as 60 s. For this reason, the ratio (1 min)/(60 s) equals 1, as does its reciprocal, (60 s)/(1 min). We may multiply a quantity by either of these factors (which we call *unit multipliers*) without changing that quantity's physical meaning. For example, to find the number of seconds in 3 min, we write

$$3\text{ min} = (3\,\cancel{\text{min}})\left(\frac{60\text{ s}}{1\,\cancel{\text{min}}}\right) = 180\text{ s}$$

EVALUATE *your answer:* If you do your unit conversions correctly, unwanted units will cancel, as in the example above. If, instead, you had multiplied 3 min by (1 min)/(60 s), your result would have been the nonsensical $\frac{1}{20}\text{ min}^2/\text{s}$. To be sure you convert units properly, include the units at *all* stages of the calculation.

Finally, check whether your answer is reasonable. For example, the result 3 min = 180 s is reasonable because the second is a smaller unit than the minute, so there are more seconds than minutes in the same time interval.

EXAMPLE 1.1 Converting speed units

The world land speed record of 1228.0 km/h was set on October 15, 1997, by Andy Green in the jet-engine car *Thrust SSC*. Express this speed in meters per second.

IDENTIFY, SET UP, and EXECUTE We need to convert the units of a speed from km/h to m/s. We must therefore use unit multipliers that relate (i) kilometers to meters and (ii) hours to seconds. We have 1 km = 1000 m, and 1 h = 3600 s. We set up the conversion as follows, which ensures that all the desired cancellations by division take place:

$$1228.0\text{ km/h} = \left(1228.0\,\frac{\cancel{\text{km}}}{\cancel{\text{h}}}\right)\left(\frac{1000\text{ m}}{1\,\cancel{\text{km}}}\right)\left(\frac{1\,\cancel{\text{h}}}{3600\text{ s}}\right) = 341.1\text{ m/s}$$

EVALUATE This example shows a useful rule: A speed expressed in m/s is the value expressed in km/h divided by 3.6 (hence, between one third and one quarter of the value in km/h). A speed expressed in km/h is the value expressed in m/s times 3.6. For example 20 m/s = 72 km/h and 90 km/h = 25 m/s.

KEYCONCEPT To convert units, multiply by an appropriate unit multiplier.

EXAMPLE 1.2 Converting volume units

One of the world's largest cut diamonds is the First Star of Africa (mounted in the British Royal Sceptre and kept in the Tower of London). Its volume is 30.2 cubic centimeters. What is its volume in cubic millimeters? In cubic meters?

IDENTIFY, SET UP, and EXECUTE Here we are to convert the units of a volume from cubic centimeters (cm^3) to both cubic millimeters (mm^3) and cubic meters (m^3). Since 1 cm = 10 mm we have

$$30.2\text{ cm}^3 = (30.2\text{ cm}^3)\left(\frac{10\text{ mm}}{1\text{ cm}}\right)^3 = (30.2)(10)^3\,\frac{\cancel{\text{cm}^3}\,\text{mm}^3}{\cancel{\text{cm}^3}} = 30{,}200\text{ mm}^3$$

Since 1 m = 100 cm, we also have

$$30.2\text{ cm}^3 = (30.2\text{ cm}^3)\left(\frac{1\text{ m}}{100\text{ cm}}\right)^3 = (30.2)\left(\frac{1}{100}\right)^3\frac{\cancel{\text{cm}^3}\,\text{m}^3}{\cancel{\text{cm}^3}} = 30.2\times10^{-6}\text{ m}^3 = 3.02\times10^{-5}\text{ m}^3$$

EVALUATE Following the pattern of these conversions, can you show that $1\text{ km}^3 = 10^9\text{ m}^3$ and that $1\,\mu\text{m}^3 = 10^{-18}\text{ m}^3$?

KEYCONCEPT If the units of a quantity are a product of simpler units, such as $\text{m}^3 = \text{m}\times\text{m}\times\text{m}$, use a product of unit multipliers to convert these units.

Figure 1.6 This spectacular mishap was the result of a very small percent error—traveling a few meters too far at the end of a journey of hundreds of thousands of meters.

TABLE 1.2 Using Significant Figures

Multiplication or division:
Result can have no more significant figures than the factor with the fewest significant figures:

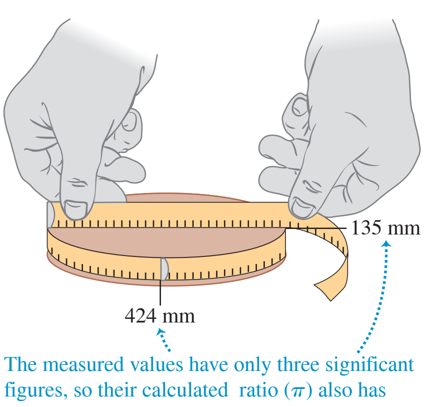
$$\frac{0.745 \times 2.2}{3.885} = 0.42$$

$$1.32578 \times 10^7 \times 4.11 \times 10^{-3} = 5.45 \times 10^4$$

Addition or subtraction:
Number of significant figures is determined by the term with the largest uncertainty (i.e., fewest digits to the right of the decimal point):

$$27.153 + 138.2 - 11.74 = 153.6$$

Figure 1.7 Determining the value of π from the circumference and diameter of a circle.



1.5 UNCERTAINTY AND SIGNIFICANT FIGURES

Measurements always have uncertainties. If you measure the thickness of the cover of a hardbound version of this book using an ordinary ruler, your measurement is reliable to only the nearest millimeter, and your result will be 3 mm. It would be *wrong* to state this result as 3.00 mm; given the limitations of the measuring device, you can't tell whether the actual thickness is 3.00 mm, 2.85 mm, or 3.11 mm. But if you use a micrometer caliper, a device that measures distances reliably to the nearest 0.01 mm, the result will be 2.91 mm. The distinction between the measurements with a ruler and with a caliper is in their **uncertainty**; the measurement with a caliper has a smaller uncertainty. The uncertainty is also called the **error** because it indicates the maximum difference there is likely to be between the measured value and the true value. The uncertainty or error of a measured value depends on the measurement technique used.

We often indicate the **accuracy** of a measured value—that is, how close it is likely to be to the true value—by writing the number, the symbol $\pm$, and a second number indicating the uncertainty of the measurement. If the diameter of a steel rod is given as 56.47 ± 0.02 mm, this means that the true value is likely to be within the range from 56.45 mm to 56.49 mm. In a commonly used shorthand notation, the number 1.6454(21) means 1.6454 ± 0.0021. The numbers in parentheses show the uncertainty in the final digits of the main number.

We can also express accuracy in terms of the maximum likely **fractional error** or **percent error** (also called *fractional uncertainty* and *percent uncertainty*). A resistor labeled "47 ohms $\pm$ 10%" probably has a true resistance that differs from 47 ohms by no more than 10% of 47 ohms—that is, by about 5 ohms. The resistance is probably between 42 and 52 ohms. For the diameter of the steel rod given above, the fractional error is $(0.02 \text{ mm})/(56.47 \text{ mm})$, or about 0.0004; the percent error is $(0.0004)(100\%)$, or about 0.04%. Even small percent errors can be very significant (**Fig. 1.6**).

In many cases the uncertainty of a number is not stated explicitly. Instead, the uncertainty is indicated by the number of meaningful digits, or **significant figures,** in the measured value. We gave the thickness of the cover of the book as 2.91 mm, which has three significant figures. By this we mean that the first two digits are known to be correct, while the third digit is uncertain. The last digit is in the hundredths place, so the uncertainty is about 0.01 mm. Two values with the *same* number of significant figures may have *different* uncertainties; a distance given as 137 km also has three significant figures, but the uncertainty is about 1 km. A distance given as 0.25 km has two significant figures (the zero to the left of the decimal point doesn't count); if given as 0.250 km, it has three significant figures.

When you use numbers that have uncertainties to compute other numbers, the computed numbers are also uncertain. When numbers are multiplied or divided, the result can have no more significant figures than the factor with the fewest significant figures has. For example, $3.1416 \times 2.34 \times 0.58 = 4.3$. When we add and subtract numbers, it's the location of the decimal point that matters, not the number of significant figures. For example, $123.62 + 8.9 = 132.5$. Although 123.62 has an uncertainty of about 0.01, 8.9 has an uncertainty of about 0.1. So their sum has an uncertainty of about 0.1 and should be written as 132.5, not 132.52. **Table 1.2** summarizes these rules for significant figures.

To apply these ideas, suppose you want to verify the value of π, the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter. The true value of this ratio to ten digits is 3.141592654. To test this, you draw a large circle and measure its circumference and diameter to the nearest millimeter, obtaining the values 424 mm and 135 mm (**Fig. 1.7**). You enter these into your calculator and obtain the quotient $(424 \text{ mm})/(135 \text{ mm}) = 3.140740741$. This may seem to disagree with the true value of π, but keep in mind that each of your measurements has three significant figures, so your measured value of π can have only three significant figures. It should be stated simply as 3.14. Within the limit of three significant figures, your value does agree with the true value.

In the examples and problems in this book we usually give numerical values with three significant figures, so your answers should usually have no more than three significant figures. (Many numbers in the real world have even less accuracy. The speedometer in a car, for example, usually gives only two significant figures.) Even if you do the arithmetic with a calculator that displays ten digits, a ten-digit answer would misrepresent the accuracy of the results. Always round your final answer to keep only the correct number of significant figures or, in doubtful cases, one more at most. In Example 1.1 it would have been wrong to state the answer as 341.01861 m/s. Note that when you reduce such an answer to the appropriate number of significant figures, you must *round,* not *truncate.* Your calculator will tell you that the ratio of 525 m to 311 m is 1.688102894; to three significant figures, this is 1.69, not 1.68.

Here's a special note about calculations that involve multiple steps: As you work, it's helpful to keep extra significant figures in your calculations. Once you have your final answer, round it to the correct number of significant figures. This will give you the most accurate results.

When we work with very large or very small numbers, we can show significant figures much more easily by using **scientific notation,** sometimes called **powers-of-10 notation.** The distance from the earth to the moon is about 384,000,000 m, but writing the number in this form doesn't indicate the number of significant figures. Instead, we move the decimal point eight places to the left (corresponding to dividing by 10^8) and multiply by 10^8; that is,

$$384{,}000{,}000\ \text{m} = 3.84 \times 10^8\ \text{m}$$

In this form, it is clear that we have three significant figures. The number 4.00×10^{-7} also has three significant figures, even though two of them are zeros. Note that in scientific notation the usual practice is to express the quantity as a number between 1 and 10 multiplied by the appropriate power of 10.

When an integer or a fraction occurs in an algebraic equation, we treat that number as having no uncertainty at all. For example, in the equation $v_x{}^2 = v_{0x}{}^2 + 2a_x(x - x_0)$, which is Eq. (2.13) in Chapter 2, the coefficient 2 is *exactly* 2. We can consider this coefficient as having an infinite number of significant figures (2.000000 . . .). The same is true of the exponent 2 in $v_x{}^2$ and $v_{0x}{}^2$.

Finally, let's note that **precision** is not the same as *accuracy.* A cheap digital watch that gives the time as 10:35:17 a.m. is very *precise* (the time is given to the second), but if the watch runs several minutes slow, then this value isn't very *accurate.* On the other hand, a grandfather clock might be very accurate (that is, display the correct time), but if the clock has no second hand, it isn't very precise. A high-quality measurement is both precise *and* accurate.

EXAMPLE 1.3 Significant figures in multiplication

The rest energy E of an object with rest mass m is given by Albert Einstein's famous equation $E = mc^2$, where c is the speed of light in vacuum. Find E for an electron for which (to three significant figures) $m = 9.11 \times 10^{-31}$ kg. The SI unit for E is the joule (J); $1\ \text{J} = 1\ \text{kg} \cdot \text{m}^2/\text{s}^2$.

IDENTIFY and SET UP Our target variable is the energy E. We are given the value of the mass m; from Section 1.3 (or Appendix G) the speed of light is $c = 2.99792458 \times 10^8$ m/s.

EXECUTE Substituting the values of m and c into Einstein's equation, we find

$$\begin{aligned} E &= (9.11 \times 10^{-31}\ \text{kg})(2.99792458 \times 10^8\ \text{m/s})^2 \\ &= (9.11)(2.99792458)^2(10^{-31})(10^8)^2\ \text{kg} \cdot \text{m}^2/\text{s}^2 \\ &= (81.87659678)(10^{[-31+(2\times 8)]})\ \text{kg} \cdot \text{m}^2/\text{s}^2 \\ &= 8.187659678 \times 10^{-14}\ \text{kg} \cdot \text{m}^2/\text{s}^2 \end{aligned}$$

Since the value of m was given to only three significant figures, we must round this to

$$E = 8.19 \times 10^{-14}\ \text{kg} \cdot \text{m}^2/\text{s}^2 = 8.19 \times 10^{-14}\ \text{J}$$

EVALUATE While the rest energy contained in an electron may seem ridiculously small, on the atomic scale it is tremendous. Compare our answer to 10^{-19} J, the energy gained or lost by a single atom during a typical chemical reaction. The rest energy of an electron is about 1,000,000 times larger! (We'll discuss the significance of rest energy in Chapter 37.)

KEYCONCEPT When you are multiplying (or dividing) quantities, the result can have no more significant figures than the quantity with the fewest significant figures.

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF SECTION 1.5 The density of a material is equal to its mass divided by its volume. What is the density (in kg/m^3) of a rock of mass 1.80 kg and volume $6.0 \times 10^{-4}\ \text{m}^3$? (i) $3 \times 10^3\ \text{kg/m}^3$; (ii) $3.0 \times 10^3\ \text{kg/m}^3$; (iii) $3.00 \times 10^3\ \text{kg/m}^3$; (iv) $3.000 \times 10^3\ \text{kg/m}^3$; (v) any of these—all of these answers are mathematically equivalent.

ANSWER

❙ **(ii)** Density $= (1.80\ \text{kg})/(6.0 \times 10^{-4}\ \text{m}^3) = 3.0 \times 10^3\ \text{kg/m}^3$. When we multiply or divide, the number with the fewest significant figures controls the number of significant figures in the result.

1.6 ESTIMATES AND ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE

We have stressed the importance of knowing the accuracy of numbers that represent physical quantities. But even a very crude estimate of a quantity often gives us useful information. Sometimes we know how to calculate a certain quantity, but we have to guess at the data we need for the calculation. Or the calculation might be too complicated to carry out exactly, so we make rough approximations. In either case our result is also a guess, but such a guess can be useful even if it is uncertain by a factor of two, ten, or more. Such calculations are called **order-of-magnitude estimates.** The great Italian-American nuclear physicist Enrico Fermi (1901–1954) called them "back-of-the-envelope calculations."

Exercises 1.15 through 1.20 at the end of this chapter are of the estimating, or order-of-magnitude, variety. Most require guesswork for the needed input data. Don't try to look up a lot of data; make the best guesses you can. Even when they are off by a factor of ten, the results can be useful and interesting.

EXAMPLE 1.4 An order-of-magnitude estimate

You are writing an adventure novel in which the hero escapes with a billion dollars' worth of gold in his suitcase. Could anyone carry that much gold? Would it fit in a suitcase?

IDENTIFY, SET UP, and EXECUTE Gold sells for about \$40 a gram (the price per gram has varied between \$34 and \$45 over the past five years or so), or about \$1000 for 25 grams, that is about \$1 million for 25 kilograms. A billion (1×10^9) dollars' worth of gold has a mass 10^3 times greater, about 25,000 kilograms or 25 tonnes! No human could lift it, let alone carry it. (25 tonnes is about the same as the mass of five asian elephants or two double-decker buses.)

What would the density of gold need to be in order for this amount to fit in a suitcase? The same amount of water would have the volume of 25 m^3 or 25,000 liters (the density of water is 1 $g/cm^3 = 1000$ kg/m^3 and 1 liter = 1 L = 10^{-3} m^3). This is more than 100 times the capacity of even the largest suitcase (120 to 160 L). Therefore, for 25,000 kilograms of gold to fit in a suitcase, gold would need to be at least 100 times denser than water. In other words, a cube of gold of side 10 cm would have a mass larger than 100 kg, which is certainly not the case. Gold is much denser than water, but not that dense. (The density of gold is actually 19.3 g/cm^3, which is roughly 20 times that of water; the densest naturally occurring element on earth is osmium which has the density of 22.6 g/cm^3.)

EVALUATE Clearly your novel needs rewriting. Maybe your hero could be satisfied with 1 million dollars' worth of gold? We have seen that the mass of gold in this case is about 25 kilograms, an amount which your hero should be able to carry and which would easily fit in a briefcase. If you want a more spectacular amount, try the calculation again with a suitcase full of five-carat (1-gram) diamonds, each worth \$500,000. Would this work?

KEYCONCEPT To decide whether the numerical value of a quantity is reasonable, assess the quantity in terms of other quantities that you can estimate, even if only roughly.

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF SECTION 1.6 Can you estimate the total number of teeth in the mouths of all the students on your campus? (*Hint:* How many teeth are in your mouth? Count them!)

ANSWER

The answer depends on how many students are enrolled at your campus.

APPLICATION Scalar Temperature, Vector Wind The comfort level on a wintry day depends on the temperature, a scalar quantity that can be positive or negative (say, +5°C or −20°C) but has no direction. It also depends on the wind velocity, a vector quantity with both magnitude and direction (for example, 15 km/h from the west).

1.7 VECTORS AND VECTOR ADDITION

Some physical quantities, such as time, temperature, mass, and density, can be described completely by a single number with a unit. But many other important quantities in physics have a *direction* associated with them and cannot be described by a single number. A simple example is the motion of an airplane: We must say not only how fast the plane is moving but also in what direction. The speed of the airplane combined with its direction of motion constitute a quantity called *velocity.* Another example is *force,* which in physics means a push or pull exerted on an object. Giving a complete description of a force means describing both how hard the force pushes or pulls on the object and the direction of the push or pull.

When a physical quantity is described by a single number, we call it a **scalar quantity.** In contrast, a **vector quantity** has both a **magnitude** (the "how much" or "how big" part) and a direction in space. Calculations that combine scalar quantities use the operations of ordinary arithmetic. For example, 6 kg + 3 kg = 9 kg, or 4×2 s = 8 s. However, combining vectors requires a different set of operations.

To understand more about vectors and how they combine, we start with the simplest vector quantity, **displacement.** Displacement is a change in the position of an object.

Displacement is a vector quantity because we must state not only how far the object moves but also in what direction. Walking 3 km north from your front door doesn't get you to the same place as walking 3 km southeast; these two displacements have the same magnitude but different directions.

We usually represent a vector quantity such as displacement by a single letter, such as $\vec{A}$ in **Fig. 1.8a**. In this book we always print vector symbols in ***boldface italic type with an arrow above them.*** We do this to remind you that vector quantities have different properties from scalar quantities; the arrow is a reminder that vectors have direction. When you handwrite a symbol for a vector, *always* write it with an arrow on top. If you don't distinguish between scalar and vector quantities in your notation, you probably won't make the distinction in your thinking either, and confusion will result.

We always *draw* a vector as a line with an arrowhead at its tip. The length of the line shows the vector's magnitude, and the direction of the arrowhead shows the vector's direction. Displacement is always a straight-line segment directed from the starting point to the ending point, even though the object's actual path may be curved (Fig. 1.8b). Note that displacement is not related directly to the total *distance* traveled. If the object were to continue past P_2 and then return to P_1, the displacement for the entire trip would be *zero* (Fig. 1.8c).

If two vectors have the same direction, they are **parallel.** If they have the same magnitude *and* the same direction, they are *equal,* no matter where they are located in space. The vector $\vec{A}'$ from point P_3 to point P_4 in **Fig. 1.9** has the same length and direction as the vector $\vec{A}$ from P_1 to P_2. These two displacements are equal, even though they start at different points. We write this as $\vec{A}' = \vec{A}$ in Fig. 1.9; the boldface equals sign emphasizes that equality of two vector quantities is not the same relationship as equality of two scalar quantities. Two vector quantities are equal only when they have the same magnitude *and* the same direction.

Vector $\vec{B}$ in Fig. 1.9, however, is not equal to $\vec{A}$ because its direction is *opposite* that of $\vec{A}$. We define the **negative of a vector** as a vector having the same magnitude as the original vector but the *opposite* direction. The negative of vector quantity $\vec{A}$ is denoted as $-\vec{A}$, and we use a boldface minus sign to emphasize the vector nature of the quantities. If $\vec{A}$ is 87 m south, then $-\vec{A}$ is 87 m north. Thus we can write the relationship between $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ in Fig. 1.9 as $\vec{A} = -\vec{B}$ or $\vec{B} = -\vec{A}$. When two vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ have opposite directions, whether their magnitudes are the same or not, we say that they are **antiparallel.**

We usually represent the *magnitude* of a vector quantity by the same letter used for the vector, but in *lightface italic type* with *no* arrow on top. For example, if displacement vector $\vec{A}$ is 87 m south, then $A = 87$ m. An alternative notation is the vector symbol with vertical bars on both sides:

$$(\text{Magnitude of } \vec{A}) = A = |\vec{A}| \tag{1.1}$$

The magnitude of a vector quantity is a scalar quantity (a number) and is *always positive.* Note that a vector can never be equal to a scalar because they are different kinds of quantities. The expression "$\vec{A} = 6$ m" is just as wrong as "2 oranges = 3 apples"!

When we draw diagrams with vectors, it's best to use a scale similar to those used for maps. For example, a displacement of 5 km might be represented in a diagram by a vector 1 cm long, and a displacement of 10 km by a vector 2 cm long.

Vector Addition and Subtraction

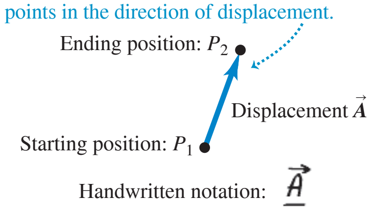
Suppose a particle undergoes a displacement $\vec{A}$ followed by a second displacement $\vec{B}$. The final result is the same as if the particle had started at the same initial point and undergone a single displacement $\vec{C}$ (**Fig. 1.10a,** next page). We call displacement $\vec{C}$ the **vector sum,** or **resultant,** of displacements $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$. We express this relationship symbolically as

$$\vec{C} = \vec{A} + \vec{B} \tag{1.2}$$

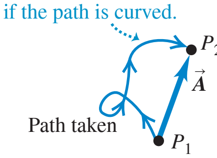
The boldface plus sign emphasizes that adding two vector quantities requires a geometrical process and is not the same operation as adding two scalar quantities such as $2 + 3 = 5$. In vector addition we usually place the *tail* of the *second* vector at the *head,* or tip, of the *first* vector (Fig. 1.10a).

Figure **1.8** Displacement as a vector quantity.

(a) We represent a displacement by an arrow that points in the direction of displacement.



(b) A displacement is always a straight arrow directed from the starting position to the ending position. It does not depend on the path taken, even if the path is curved.



(c) Total displacement for a round trip is 0, regardless of the path taken or distance traveled.

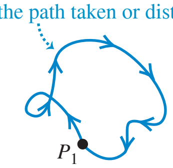


Figure **1.9** The meaning of vectors that have the same magnitude and the same or opposite direction.

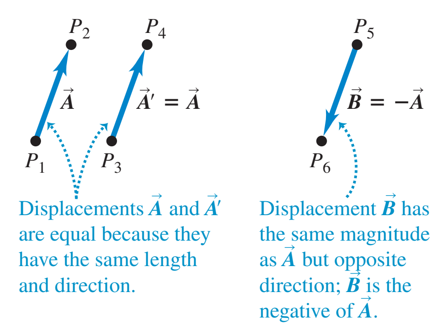
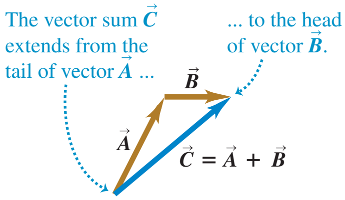
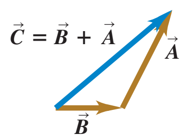


Figure **1.10** Three ways to add two vectors.

(a) We can add two vectors by placing them head to tail.



(b) Adding them in reverse order gives the same result: $\vec{A} + \vec{B} = \vec{B} + \vec{A}$. The order doesn't matter in vector addition.



(c) We can also add two vectors by placing them tail to tail and constructing a parallelogram.

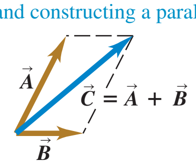
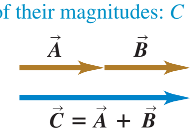
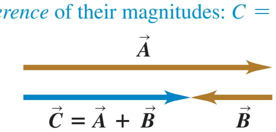


Figure **1.11** Adding vectors that are (a) parallel and (b) antiparallel.

(a) Only when vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ are parallel does the magnitude of their vector sum $\vec{C}$ equal the sum of their magnitudes: $C = A + B$.



(b) When $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ are antiparallel, the magnitude of their vector sum $\vec{C}$ equals the *difference* of their magnitudes: $C = |A - B|$.



If we make the displacements $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ in reverse order, with $\vec{B}$ first and $\vec{A}$ second, the result is the same (Fig. 1.10b). Thus

$$\vec{C} = \vec{B} + \vec{A} \quad \text{and} \quad \vec{A} + \vec{B} = \vec{B} + \vec{A} \tag{1.3}$$

This shows that the order of terms in a vector sum doesn't matter. In other words, vector addition obeys the *commutative* law.

Figure 1.10c shows another way to represent the vector sum: If we draw vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ with their tails at the same point, vector $\vec{C}$ is the diagonal of a parallelogram constructed with $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ as two adjacent sides.

CAUTION **Magnitudes in vector addition** It's a common error to conclude that if $\vec{C} = \vec{A} + \vec{B}$, then magnitude C equals magnitude A plus magnitude B. In general, this conclusion is *wrong;* for the vectors shown in Fig. 1.10, $C < A + B$. The magnitude of $\vec{A} + \vec{B}$ depends on the magnitudes of $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ *and* on the angle between $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$. Only in the special case in which $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ are *parallel* is the magnitude of $\vec{C} = \vec{A} + \vec{B}$ equal to the sum of the magnitudes of $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ (**Fig. 1.11a**). When the vectors are *antiparallel* (Fig. 1.11b), the magnitude of $\vec{C}$ equals the *difference* of the magnitudes of $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$. Be careful to distinguish between scalar and vector quantities, and you'll avoid making errors about the magnitude of a vector sum.

Figure 1.12a shows *three* vectors $\vec{A}$, $\vec{B}$, and $\vec{C}$. To find the vector sum of all three, in Fig. 1.12b we first add $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ to give a vector sum $\vec{D}$; we then add vectors $\vec{C}$ and $\vec{D}$ by the same process to obtain the vector sum $\vec{R}$:

$$\vec{R} = (\vec{A} + \vec{B}) + \vec{C} = \vec{D} + \vec{C}$$

Alternatively, we can first add $\vec{B}$ and $\vec{C}$ to obtain vector $\vec{E}$ (Fig. 1.12c), and then add $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{E}$ to obtain $\vec{R}$:

$$\vec{R} = \vec{A} + (\vec{B} + \vec{C}) = \vec{A} + \vec{E}$$

We don't even need to draw vectors $\vec{D}$ and $\vec{E}$; all we need to do is draw $\vec{A}$, $\vec{B}$, and $\vec{C}$ in succession, with the tail of each at the head of the one preceding it. The sum vector $\vec{R}$ extends from the tail of the first vector to the head of the last vector (Fig. 1.12d). The order makes no difference; Fig. 1.12e shows a different order, and you should try others. Vector addition obeys the *associative* law.

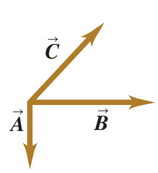
We can *subtract* vectors as well as add them. To see how, recall that vector $-\vec{A}$ has the same magnitude as $\vec{A}$ but the opposite direction. We define the difference $\vec{A} - \vec{B}$ of two vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ to be the vector sum of $\vec{A}$ and $-\vec{B}$:

$$\vec{A} - \vec{B} = \vec{A} + (-\vec{B}) \tag{1.4}$$

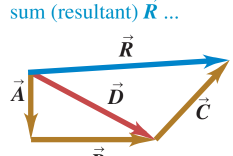
Figure 1.13 shows an example of vector subtraction.

Figure **1.12** Several constructions for finding the vector sum $\vec{A} + \vec{B} + \vec{C}$.

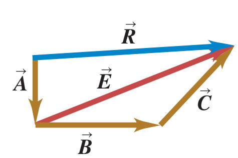
(a) To find the sum of these three vectors ...



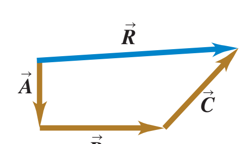
(b) ... add $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ to get $\vec{D}$ and then add $\vec{C}$ to $\vec{D}$ to get the final sum (resultant) $\vec{R}$ ...



(c) ... or add $\vec{B}$ and $\vec{C}$ to get $\vec{E}$ and then add $\vec{E}$ to $\vec{A}$ to get $\vec{R}$ ...



(d) ... or add $\vec{A}$, $\vec{B}$, and $\vec{C}$ to get $\vec{R}$ directly ...



(e) ... or add $\vec{A}$, $\vec{B}$, and $\vec{C}$ in any other order and still get $\vec{R}$.

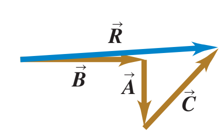
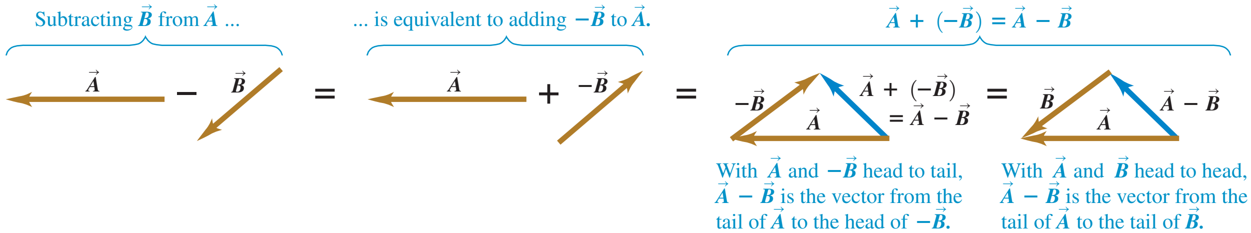


Figure **1.13** To construct the vector difference $\vec{A} - \vec{B}$, you can either place the tail of $-\vec{B}$ at the head of $\vec{A}$ or place the two vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ head to head.

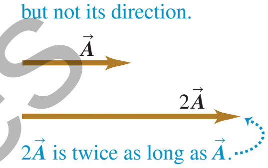


A vector quantity such as a displacement can be multiplied by a scalar quantity (an ordinary number). The displacement $2\vec{A}$ is a displacement (vector quantity) in the same direction as vector $\vec{A}$ but twice as long; this is the same as adding $\vec{A}$ to itself (**Fig. 1.14a**). In general, when we multiply a vector $\vec{A}$ by a scalar c, the result $c\vec{A}$ has magnitude $|c|A$ (the absolute value of c multiplied by the magnitude of vector $\vec{A}$). If c is positive, $c\vec{A}$ is in the same direction as $\vec{A}$; if c is negative, $c\vec{A}$ is in the direction opposite to $\vec{A}$. Thus $3\vec{A}$ is parallel to $\vec{A}$, while $-3\vec{A}$ is antiparallel to $\vec{A}$ (Fig. 1.14b).

A scalar used to multiply a vector can also be a physical quantity. For example, you may be familiar with the relationship $\vec{F} = m\vec{a}$; the net force $\vec{F}$ (a vector quantity) that acts on an object is equal to the product of the object's mass m (a scalar quantity) and its acceleration $\vec{a}$ (a vector quantity). The direction of $\vec{F}$ is the same as that of $\vec{a}$ because m is positive, and the magnitude of $\vec{F}$ is equal to the mass m multiplied by the magnitude of $\vec{a}$. The unit of force is the unit of mass multiplied by the unit of acceleration.

Figure **1.14** Multiplying a vector by a scalar.

(a) Multiplying a vector by a positive scalar changes the magnitude (length) of the vector but not its direction.



(b) Multiplying a vector by a negative scalar changes its magnitude and reverses its direction.

EXAMPLE 1.5 Adding two vectors at right angles

A cross-country skier skis 1.00 km north and then 2.00 km east on a horizontal snowfield. How far and in what direction is she from the starting point?

IDENTIFY and SET UP The problem involves combining two displacements at right angles to each other. This vector addition amounts to solving a right triangle, so we can use the Pythagorean theorem and trigonometry. The target variables are the skier's straight-line distance and direction from her starting point. **Figure 1.15** is a scale diagram of the two displacements and the resultant net displacement. We denote the direction from the starting point by the angle ϕ (the Greek letter phi). The displacement appears to be a bit more than 2 km. Measuring the angle with a protractor indicates that ϕ is about 63°.

EXECUTE The distance from the starting point to the ending point is equal to the length of the hypotenuse:

$$\sqrt{(1.00\text{ km})^2 + (2.00\text{ km})^2} = 2.24\text{ km}$$

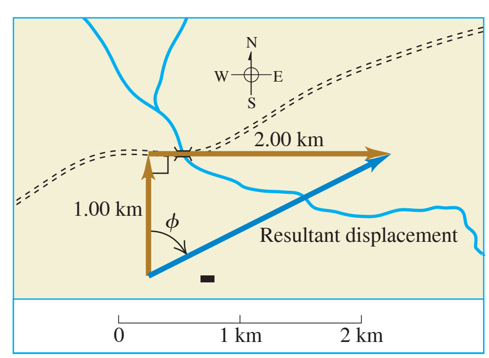
A little trigonometry (from Appendix D) allows us to find angle ϕ:

$$\tan\phi = \frac{\text{Opposite side}}{\text{Adjacent side}} = \frac{2.00\text{ km}}{1.00\text{ km}} = 2.00$$

$$\phi = \arctan 2.00 = 63.4°$$

We can describe the direction as 63.4° east of north or 90° − 63.4° = 26.6° north of east.

Figure **1.15** The vector diagram, drawn to scale, for a ski trip.



EVALUATE Our answers (2.24 km and $\phi = 63.4°$) are close to our predictions. In Section 1.8 we'll learn how to easily add two vectors *not* at right angles to each other.

KEYCONCEPT In every problem involving vector addition, draw the two vectors being added as well as the vector sum. The head-to-tail arrangement shown in Figs. 1.10a and 1.10b is easiest. This will help you to visualize the vectors and understand the direction of the vector sum. Drawing the vectors is equally important for problems involving vector subtraction (see Fig. 1.13).

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF SECTION 1.7 Two displacement vectors, $\vec{S}$ and $\vec{T}$, have magnitudes $S = 3$ m and $T = 4$ m. Which of the following could be the magnitude of the difference vector $\vec{S} - \vec{T}$? (There may be more than one correct answer.) (i) 9 m; (ii) 7 m; (iii) 5 m; (iv) 1 m; (v) 0 m; (vi) −1 m.

ANSWER

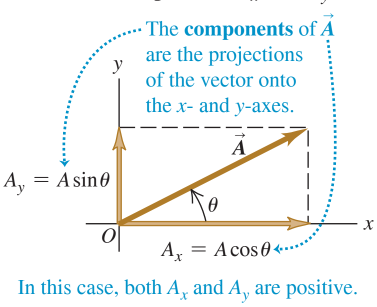
(ii), (iii), and (iv) Vector $-\vec{T}$ has the same magnitude as vector $\vec{T}$, so $\vec{S} - \vec{T} = \vec{S} + (-\vec{T})$ is the sum of one vector of magnitude 3 m and one of magnitude 4 m. This sum has magnitude 7 m if $\vec{S}$ and $-\vec{T}$ are parallel and magnitude 1 m if $\vec{S}$ and $-\vec{T}$ are antiparallel. The magnitude of $\vec{S} - \vec{T}$ is 5 m if $\vec{S}$ and $-\vec{T}$ are perpendicular, when vectors $\vec{S}$, $\vec{T}$, and $\vec{S} - \vec{T}$ form a 3–4–5 right triangle. Answer (i) is impossible because the magnitude of the sum of two vectors cannot be greater than the sum of the magnitudes; answer (v) is impossible because the sum of two vectors can be zero only if the two vectors are antiparallel and have the same magnitude; and answer (vi) is impossible because the magnitude of a vector cannot be negative.

1.8 COMPONENTS OF VECTORS

In Section 1.7 we added vectors by using a scale diagram and properties of right triangles. But calculations with right triangles work only when the two vectors are perpendicular. So we need a simple but general method for adding vectors. This is called the method of *components.*

To define what we mean by the components of a vector $\vec{A}$, we begin with a rectangular (Cartesian) coordinate system of axes (**Fig. 1.16**). If we think of $\vec{A}$ as a displacement vector, we can regard $\vec{A}$ as the sum of a displacement parallel to the x-axis and a displacement parallel to the y-axis. We use the numbers A_x and A_y to tell us how much displacement there is parallel to the x-axis and how much there is parallel to the y-axis, respectively. For example, if the $+x$-axis points east and the $+y$-axis points north, $\vec{A}$ in Fig. 1.16 could be the sum of a 2.00 m displacement to the east and a 1.00 m displacement to the north. Then $A_x = +2.00$ m and $A_y = +1.00$ m. We can use the same idea for any vectors, not just displacement vectors. The two numbers A_x and A_y are called the **components** of $\vec{A}$.

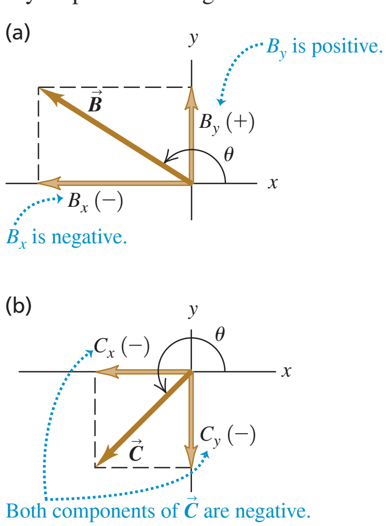
Figure **1.16** Representing a vector $\vec{A}$ in terms of its components A_x and A_y.



CAUTION Components are not vectors The components A_x and A_y of a vector $\vec{A}$ are numbers; they are *not* vectors themselves. This is why we print the symbols for components in lightface italic type with *no* arrow on top instead of in boldface italic with an arrow, which is reserved for vectors.

We can calculate the components of vector $\vec{A}$ if we know its magnitude A and its direction. We'll describe the direction of a vector by its angle relative to some reference direction. In Fig. 1.16 this reference direction is the positive x-axis, and the angle between vector $\vec{A}$ and the positive x-axis is θ (the Greek letter theta). Imagine that vector $\vec{A}$ originally lies along the $+x$-axis and that you then rotate it to its true direction, as indicated by the arrow in Fig. 1.16 on the arc for angle θ. If this rotation is from the $+x$-axis toward the $+y$-axis, as is the case in Fig. 1.16, then θ is *positive;* if the rotation is from the $+x$-axis toward the $-y$-axis, then θ is *negative*. Thus the $+y$-axis is at an angle of 90°, the $-x$-axis at 180°, and the $-y$-axis at 270° (or −90°). If θ is measured in this way, then from the definition of the trigonometric functions,

Figure **1.17** The components of a vector may be positive or negative numbers.



$$\frac{A_x}{A} = \cos\theta \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{A_y}{A} = \sin\theta \tag{1.5}$$
$$A_x = A\cos\theta \quad \text{and} \quad A_y = A\sin\theta$$
(θ measured from the $+x$-axis, rotating toward the $+y$-axis)

In Fig. 1.16 A_x and A_y are positive. This is consistent with Eqs. (1.5); θ is in the first quadrant (between 0° and 90°), and both the cosine and the sine of an angle in this quadrant are positive. But in **Fig. 1.17a** the component B_x is negative and the component B_y is positive. (If the $+x$-axis points east and the $+y$-axis points north, $\vec{B}$ could represent a displacement of 2.00 m west and 1.00 m north. Since west is in the $-x$-direction and north is in the $+y$-direction, $B_x = -2.00$ m is negative and $B_y = +1.00$ m is positive.) Again, this is consistent with Eqs. (1.5); now θ is in the second quadrant, so $\cos\theta$ is negative and $\sin\theta$ is positive. In Fig. 1.17b both C_x and C_y are negative (both $\cos\theta$ and $\sin\theta$ are negative in the third quadrant).

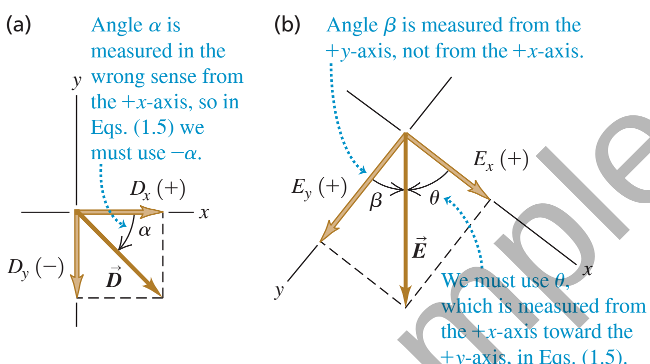
CAUTION **Relating a vector's magnitude and direction to its components** Equations (1.5) are correct *only* when the angle θ is measured from the positive x-axis. If the angle of the vector is given from a different reference direction or you use a different rotation direction, the relationships are different! Example 1.6 illustrates this point.

EXAMPLE 1.6 Finding components

(a) What are the x- and y-components of vector $\vec{D}$ in **Fig. 1.18a**? The magnitude of the vector is $D = 3.00$ m, and angle $\alpha = 45°$. (b) What are the x- and y-components of vector $\vec{E}$ in Fig. 1.18b? The magnitude of the vector is $E = 4.50$ m, and angle $\beta = 37.0°$.

IDENTIFY and SET UP We can use Eqs. (1.5) to find the components of these vectors, but we must be careful: Neither angle α nor β in Fig. 1.18 is measured from the $+x$-axis toward the $+y$-axis. We estimate from the figure that the lengths of both components in part (a) are roughly 2 m, and that those in part (b) are 3 m and 4 m. The figure indicates the signs of the components.

Figure **1.18** Calculating the x- and y-components of vectors.



EXECUTE (a) The angle α (the Greek letter alpha) between the positive x-axis and $\vec{D}$ is measured toward the *negative* y-axis. The angle we must use in Eqs. (1.5) is $\theta = -\alpha = -45°$. We then find

$$D_x = D\cos\theta = (3.00\text{ m})(\cos(-45°)) = +2.1\text{ m}$$
$$D_y = D\sin\theta = (3.00\text{ m})(\sin(-45°)) = -2.1\text{ m}$$

Had we carelessly substituted $+45°$ for θ in Eqs. (1.5), our result for D_y would have had the wrong sign.

(b) The x- and y-axes in Fig. 1.18b are at right angles, so it doesn't matter that they aren't horizontal and vertical, respectively. But we can't use the angle β (the Greek letter beta) in Eqs. (1.5), because β is measured from the $+y$-axis. Instead, we must use the angle $\theta = 90.0° - \beta = 90.0° - 37.0° = 53.0°$. Then we find

$$E_x = E\cos 53.0° = (4.50\text{ m})(\cos 53.0°) = +2.71\text{ m}$$
$$E_y = E\sin 53.0° = (4.50\text{ m})(\sin 53.0°) = +3.59\text{ m}$$

EVALUATE Our answers to both parts are close to our predictions. But why do the answers in part (a) correctly have only two significant figures?

KEYCONCEPT When you are finding the components of a vector, always use a diagram of the vector and the coordinate axes to guide your calculations.

Using Components to Do Vector Calculations

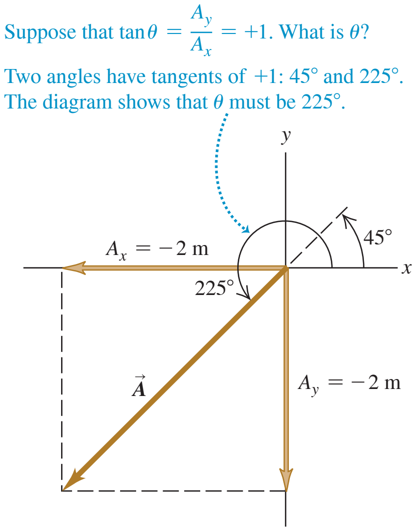
Using components makes it relatively easy to do various calculations involving vectors. Let's look at three important examples: finding a vector's magnitude and direction, multiplying a vector by a scalar, and calculating the vector sum of two or more vectors.

1. **Finding a vector's magnitude and direction from its components.** We can describe a vector completely by giving either its magnitude and direction or its x- and y-components. Equations (1.5) show how to find the components if we know the magnitude and direction. We can also reverse the process: We can find the magnitude and direction if we know the components. By applying the Pythagorean theorem to Fig. 1.16, we find that the magnitude of vector $\vec{A}$ is

$$A = \sqrt{A_x^2 + A_y^2} \tag{1.6}$$

(We always take the positive root.) Equation (1.6) is valid for any choice of x-axis and y-axis, as long as they are mutually perpendicular. The expression for the vector direction comes from the definition of the tangent of an angle. If θ is measured from

Figure **1.19** Drawing a sketch of a vector reveals the signs of its x- and y-components.



the positive x-axis, and a positive angle is measured toward the positive y-axis (as in Fig. 1.16), then

$$\tan\theta = \frac{A_y}{A_x} \quad \text{and} \quad \theta = \arctan\frac{A_y}{A_x} \tag{1.7}$$

We'll always use the notation arctan for the inverse tangent function (see Example 1.5 in Section 1.7). The notation $\tan^{-1}$ is also commonly used, and your calculator may have an INV or 2ND button to be used with the TAN button.

CAUTION **Finding the direction of a vector from its components** There's one complication in using Eqs. (1.7) to find θ: Any two angles that differ by 180° have the same tangent. For example, in **Fig. 1.19** the tangent of the angle θ is $\tan\theta = A_y/A_x = +1$. A calculator will tell you that $\theta = \tan^{-1}(+1) = 45°$. But the tangent of $180° + 45° = 225°$ is also equal to +1, so θ could also be 225° (which is actually the case in Fig. 1.19). *Always* draw a sketch like Fig. 1.19 to determine which of the two possibilities is correct.

2. **Multiplying a vector by a scalar.** If we multiply a vector $\vec{A}$ by a scalar c, each component of the product $\vec{D} = c\vec{A}$ is the product of c and the corresponding component of $\vec{A}$:

$$D_x = cA_x, \qquad D_y = cA_y \qquad (\text{components of } \vec{D} = c\vec{A}) \tag{1.8}$$

For example, Eqs. (1.8) say that each component of the vector $2\vec{A}$ is twice as great as the corresponding component of $\vec{A}$, so $2\vec{A}$ is in the same direction as $\vec{A}$ but has twice the magnitude. Each component of the vector $-3\vec{A}$ is three times as great as the corresponding component of $\vec{A}$ but has the opposite sign, so $-3\vec{A}$ is in the opposite direction from $\vec{A}$ and has three times the magnitude. Hence Eqs. (1.8) are consistent with our discussion in Section 1.7 of multiplying a vector by a scalar (see Fig. 1.14).

3. **Using components to calculate the vector sum (resultant) of two or more vectors.** **Figure 1.20** shows two vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ and their vector sum $\vec{R}$, along with the x- and y-components of all three vectors. The x-component R_x of the vector sum is simply the sum $(A_x + B_x)$ of the x-components of the vectors being added. The same is true for the y-components. In symbols,

Each **component of** $\vec{R} = \vec{A} + \vec{B}$ ...

$$R_x = A_x + B_x, \qquad R_y = A_y + B_y \tag{1.9}$$

... is the sum of the corresponding components of $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$.

Figure **1.20** Finding the vector sum (resultant) of $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ using components.

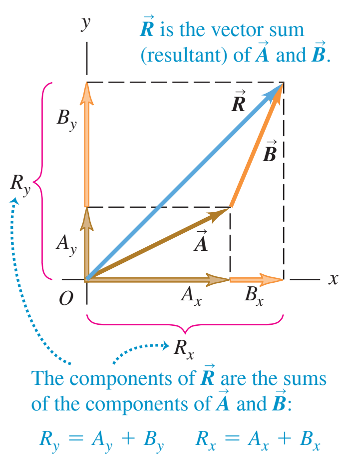


Figure 1.20 shows this result for the case in which the components A_x, A_y, B_x, and B_y are all positive. Draw additional diagrams to verify for yourself that Eqs. (1.9) are valid for *any* signs of the components of $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$.

If we know the components of any two vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$, perhaps by using Eqs. (1.5), we can compute the components of the vector sum $\vec{R}$. Then if we need the magnitude and direction of $\vec{R}$, we can obtain them from Eqs. (1.6) and (1.7) with the A's replaced by R's.

We can use the same procedure to find the sum of any number of vectors. If $\vec{R}$ is the vector sum of $\vec{A}, \vec{B}, \vec{C}, \vec{D}, \vec{E}, \ldots$, the components of $\vec{R}$ are

$$\begin{aligned} R_x &= A_x + B_x + C_x + D_x + E_x + \cdots \\ R_y &= A_y + B_y + C_y + D_y + E_y + \cdots \end{aligned} \tag{1.10}$$

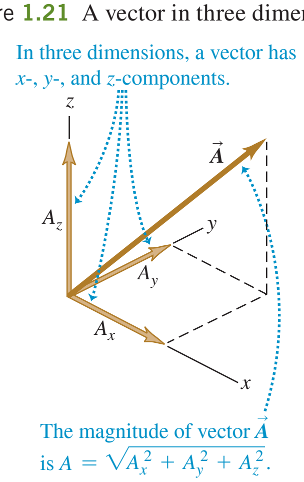
We have talked about vectors that lie in the xy-plane only, but the component method works just as well for vectors having any direction in space. We can introduce a z-axis perpendicular to the xy-plane; then in general a vector $\vec{A}$ has components A_x, A_y, and A_z in the three coordinate directions. Its magnitude A is

$$A = \sqrt{A_x^2 + A_y^2 + A_z^2} \tag{1.11}$$

Again, we always take the positive root **(Fig. 1.21)**. Also, Eqs. (1.10) for the vector sum $\vec{R}$ have a third component:

$$R_z = A_z + B_z + C_z + D_z + E_z + \cdots$$

Figure **1.21** A vector in three dimensions.



We've focused on adding *displacement* vectors, but the method is applicable to all vector quantities. When we study the concept of force in Chapter 4, we'll find that forces are vectors that obey the same rules of vector addition.

PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGY 1.3 Vector Addition

IDENTIFY *the relevant concepts:* Decide what the target variable is. It may be the magnitude of the vector sum, the direction, or both.

SET UP *the problem:* Sketch the vectors being added, along with suitable coordinate axes. Place the tail of the first vector at the origin of the coordinates, place the tail of the second vector at the head of the first vector, and so on. Draw the vector sum $\vec{R}$ from the tail of the first vector (at the origin) to the head of the last vector. Use your sketch to estimate the magnitude and direction of $\vec{R}$. Select the equations you'll need: Eqs. (1.5) to obtain the components of the vectors given, if necessary, Eqs. (1.10) to obtain the components of the vector sum, Eq. (1.11) to obtain its magnitude, and Eqs. (1.7) to obtain its direction.

EXECUTE *the solution* as follows:

1. Find the x- and y-components of each individual vector and record your results in a table, as in Example 1.7 below. If a vector is described by a magnitude A and an angle θ, measured from the $+x$-axis toward the $+y$-axis, then its components are given by Eqs. (1.5):

$$A_x = A\cos\theta \qquad A_y = A\sin\theta$$

If the angles of the vectors are given in some other way, perhaps using a different reference direction, convert them to angles measured from the $+x$-axis as in Example 1.6.

2. Add the individual x-components algebraically (including signs) to find R_x, the x-component of the vector sum. Do the same for the y-components to find R_y. See Example 1.7.
3. Calculate the magnitude R and direction θ of the vector sum by using Eqs. (1.6) and (1.7):

$$R = \sqrt{R_x^2 + R_y^2} \qquad \theta = \arctan\frac{R_y}{R_x}$$

EVALUATE *your answer:* Confirm that your results for the magnitude and direction of the vector sum agree with the estimates you made from your sketch. The value of θ that you find with a calculator may be off by 180°; your drawing will indicate the correct value. (See Example 1.7 below for an illustration of this.)

EXAMPLE 1.7 Using components to add vectors

WITH VARIATION PROBLEMS

Three players on a reality TV show are brought to the center of a large, flat field. Each is given a meter stick, a compass, a calculator, a shovel, and (in a different order for each contestant) the following three displacements:

$\vec{A}$: 72.4 m, 32.0° east of north
$\vec{B}$: 57.3 m, 36.0° south of west
$\vec{C}$: 17.8 m due south

The three displacements lead to the point in the field where the keys to a new Porsche are buried. Two players start measuring immediately, but the winner first *calculates* where to go. What does she calculate?

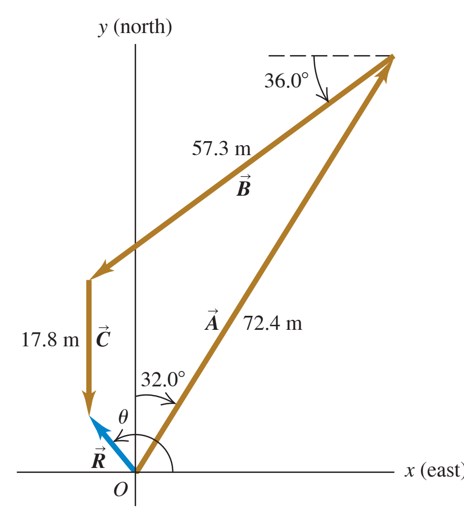
IDENTIFY and SET UP The goal is to find the sum (resultant) of the three displacements, so this is a problem in vector addition. See **Fig. 1.22**. We have chosen the $+x$-axis as east and the $+y$-axis as north. We estimate from the diagram that the vector sum $\vec{R}$ is about 10 m, 40° west of north (so θ is about 90° plus 40°, or about 130°).

EXECUTE The angles of the vectors, measured from the $+x$-axis toward the $+y$-axis, are $(90.0° - 32.0°) = 58.0°$, $(180.0° + 36.0°) = 216.0°$, and 270.0°, respectively. We may now use Eqs. (1.5) to find the components of $\vec{A}$:

$$A_x = A\cos\theta_A = (72.4\text{ m})(\cos 58.0°) = 38.37\text{ m}$$
$$A_y = A\sin\theta_A = (72.4\text{ m})(\sin 58.0°) = 61.40\text{ m}$$

We've kept an extra significant figure in the components; we'll round to the correct number of significant figures at the end of our calculation. The table at right shows the components of all the displacements, the addition of the components, and the other calculations from Eqs. (1.6) and (1.7).

Figure **1.22** Three successive displacements $\vec{A}$, $\vec{B}$, and $\vec{C}$ and the resultant (vector sum) displacement $\vec{R} = \vec{A} + \vec{B} + \vec{C}$.



Distance	Angle	x-component	y-component
$A = 72.4$ m	58.0°	38.37 m	61.40 m
$B = 57.3$ m	216.0°	−46.36 m	−33.68 m
$C = 17.8$ m	270.0°	0.00 m	−17.80 m
		$R_x = -7.99$ m	$R_y = 9.92$ m

$$R = \sqrt{(-7.99\text{ m})^2 + (9.92\text{ m})^2} = 12.7\text{ m}$$

$$\theta = \arctan\frac{9.92\text{ m}}{-7.99\text{ m}} = -51°$$

Continued

Comparing to angle θ in Fig. 1.22 shows that the calculated angle is clearly off by 180°. The correct value is $\theta = 180° + (-51°) = 129°$, or 39° west of north.

EVALUATE Our calculated answers for R and θ agree with our estimates. Notice how drawing the diagram in Fig. 1.22 made it easy to avoid a 180° error in the direction of the vector sum.

KEYCONCEPT When you are adding vectors, the x-component of the vector sum is equal to the sum of the x-components of the vectors being added, and likewise for the y-component. Always use a diagram to help determine the direction of the vector sum.

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF SECTION 1.8 Two vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ lie in the xy-plane. (a) Can $\vec{A}$ have the same magnitude as $\vec{B}$ but different components? (b) Can $\vec{A}$ have the same components as $\vec{B}$ but a different magnitude?

ANSWER

(a) **yes,** (b) **no** Vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ can have the same magnitude but different components if they point in different directions. If they have the same components, however, they are the same vector ($\vec{A} = \vec{B}$) and so must have the same magnitude.

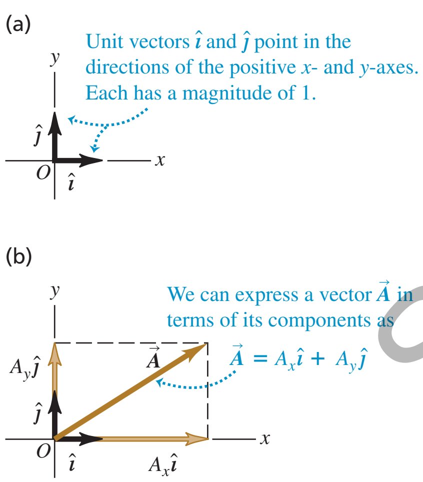
1.9 UNIT VECTORS

A **unit vector** is a vector that has a magnitude of 1, with no units. Its only purpose is to *point*—that is, to describe a direction in space. Unit vectors provide a convenient notation for many expressions involving components of vectors. We'll always include a caret, or "hat" (^), in the symbol for a unit vector to distinguish it from ordinary vectors whose magnitude may or may not be equal to 1.

In an xy-coordinate system we can define a unit vector $\hat{\imath}$ that points in the direction of the positive x-axis and a unit vector $\hat{\jmath}$ that points in the direction of the positive y-axis (**Fig. 1.23a**). Then we can write a vector $\vec{A}$ in terms of its components as

$$\vec{A} = A_x\hat{\imath} + A_y\hat{\jmath} \tag{1.12}$$

Figure **1.23** (a) The unit vectors $\hat{\imath}$ and $\hat{\jmath}$. (b) Expressing a vector $\vec{A}$ in terms of its components.



Equation (1.12) is a vector equation; each term, such as $A_x\hat{\imath}$, is a vector quantity (Fig. 1.23b).

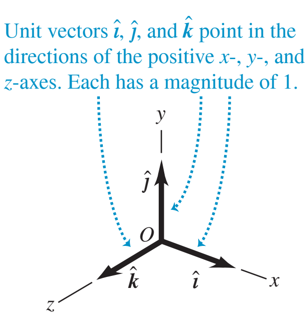
Using unit vectors, we can express the vector sum $\vec{R}$ of two vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
\vec{A} &= A_x\hat{\imath} + A_y\hat{\jmath}\\
\vec{B} &= B_x\hat{\imath} + B_y\hat{\jmath}\\
\vec{R} &= \vec{A} + \vec{B}\\
&= (A_x\hat{\imath} + A_y\hat{\jmath}) + (B_x\hat{\imath} + B_y\hat{\jmath})\\
&= (A_x + B_x)\hat{\imath} + (A_y + B_y)\hat{\jmath}\\
&= R_x\hat{\imath} + R_y\hat{\jmath}
\end{aligned} \tag{1.13}$$

Equation (1.13) restates the content of Eqs. (1.9) in the form of a single vector equation rather than two component equations.

If not all of the vectors lie in the xy-plane, then we need a third component. We introduce a third unit vector $\hat{k}$ that points in the direction of the positive z-axis (**Fig. 1.24**). Then Eqs. (1.12) and (1.13) become

Figure **1.24** The unit vectors $\hat{\imath}$, $\hat{\jmath}$, and $\hat{k}$.



Any vector can be expressed in terms of its x-, y-, and z-components ...

$$\begin{aligned}
\vec{A} &= A_x\hat{\imath} + A_y\hat{\jmath} + A_z\hat{k}\\
\vec{B} &= B_x\hat{\imath} + B_y\hat{\jmath} + B_z\hat{k}
\end{aligned} \tag{1.14}$$

... and unit vectors $\hat{\imath}$, $\hat{\jmath}$, and $\hat{k}$.

$$\begin{aligned}
\vec{R} &= (A_x + B_x)\hat{\imath} + (A_y + B_y)\hat{\jmath} + (A_z + B_z)\hat{k}\\
&= R_x\hat{\imath} + R_y\hat{\jmath} + R_z\hat{k}
\end{aligned} \tag{1.15}$$

EXAMPLE 1.8 Using unit vectors

Given the two displacements

$$\vec{D} = (6.00\,\hat{\imath} + 3.00\,\hat{\jmath} - 1.00\hat{k})\text{ m} \quad \text{and}$$
$$\vec{E} = (4.00\,\hat{\imath} - 5.00\,\hat{\jmath} + 8.00\hat{k})\text{ m}$$

find the magnitude of the displacement $2\vec{D} - \vec{E}$.

IDENTIFY and SET UP We are to multiply vector $\vec{D}$ by 2 (a scalar) and subtract vector $\vec{E}$ from the result, so as to obtain the vector $\vec{F} = 2\vec{D} - \vec{E}$. Equation (1.8) says that to multiply $\vec{D}$ by 2, we multiply each of its components by 2. We can use Eq. (1.15) to do the subtraction; recall from Section 1.7 that subtracting a vector is the same as adding the negative of that vector.

EXECUTE We have

$$\begin{aligned}\vec{F} &= 2(6.00\hat{\imath} + 3.00\,\hat{\jmath} - 1.00\hat{k})\text{ m} - (4.00\hat{\imath} - 5.00\,\hat{\jmath} + 8.00\hat{k})\text{ m}\\ &= [(12.00 - 4.00)\hat{\imath} + (6.00 + 5.00)\,\hat{\jmath} + (-2.00 - 8.00)\hat{k}]\text{ m}\\ &= (8.00\hat{\imath} + 11.00\,\hat{\jmath} - 10.00\hat{k})\text{ m}\end{aligned}$$

From Eq. (1.11) the magnitude of $\vec{F}$ is

$$\begin{aligned}F &= \sqrt{F_x^2 + F_y^2 + F_z^2}\\ &= \sqrt{(8.00\text{ m})^2 + (11.00\text{ m})^2 + (-10.00\text{ m})^2}\\ &= 16.9\text{ m}\end{aligned}$$

EVALUATE Our answer is of the same order of magnitude as the larger components that appear in the sum. We wouldn't expect our answer to be much larger than this, but it could be much smaller.

KEYCONCEPT By using unit vectors, you can write a single equation for vector addition that incorporates the *x*-, *y*-, and *z*-components.

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF SECTION 1.9 Arrange the following vectors in order of their magnitude, with the vector of largest magnitude first. (i) $\vec{A} = (3\hat{\imath} + 5\hat{\jmath} - 2\hat{k})$ m; (ii) $\vec{B} = (-3\hat{\imath} + 5\hat{\jmath} - 2\hat{k})$ m; (iii) $\vec{C} = (3\hat{\imath} - 5\hat{\jmath} - 2\hat{k})$ m; (iv) $\vec{D} = (3\hat{\imath} + 5\hat{\jmath} + 2\hat{k})$ m.

ANSWER

I All have the same magnitude. Vectors $\vec{A}$, $\vec{B}$, $\vec{C}$, and $\vec{D}$ point in different directions but have the same magnitude:

$$A = B = C = D = \sqrt{(\pm 3\text{ m})^2 + (\pm 5\text{ m})^2 + (\pm 2\text{ m})^2} = \sqrt{9\text{ m}^2 + 25\text{ m}^2 + 4\text{ m}^2} = \sqrt{38\text{ m}^2} = 6.2\text{ m}$$

1.10 PRODUCTS OF VECTORS

We saw how vector addition develops naturally from the problem of combining displacements. It will prove useful for calculations with many other vector quantities. We can also express many physical relationships by using *products* of vectors. Vectors are not ordinary numbers, so we can't directly apply ordinary multiplication to vectors. We'll define two different kinds of products of vectors. The first, called the *scalar product,* yields a result that is a scalar quantity. The second, the *vector product,* yields another vector.

Scalar Product

We denote the **scalar product** of two vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ by $\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B}$. Because of this notation, the scalar product is also called the **dot product.** Although $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ are vectors, the quantity $\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B}$ is a scalar.

To define the scalar product $\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B}$ we draw the two vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ with their tails at the same point (**Fig. 1.25a**). The angle ϕ (the Greek letter phi) between their directions ranges from 0° to 180°. Figure 1.25b shows the projection of vector $\vec{B}$ onto the direction of $\vec{A}$; this projection is the component of $\vec{B}$ in the direction of $\vec{A}$ and is equal to $B\cos\phi$. (We can take components along *any* direction that's convenient, not just the *x*- and *y*-axes.) We define $\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B}$ to be the magnitude of $\vec{A}$ multiplied by the component of $\vec{B}$ in the direction of $\vec{A}$, or

Scalar (dot) product of vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$; Magnitudes of $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$

$$\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B} = AB\cos\phi = |\vec{A}||\vec{B}|\cos\phi \qquad (1.16)$$

Angle between $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ when placed tail to tail

Figure 1.25 Calculating the scalar product of two vectors, $\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B} = AB\cos\phi$.

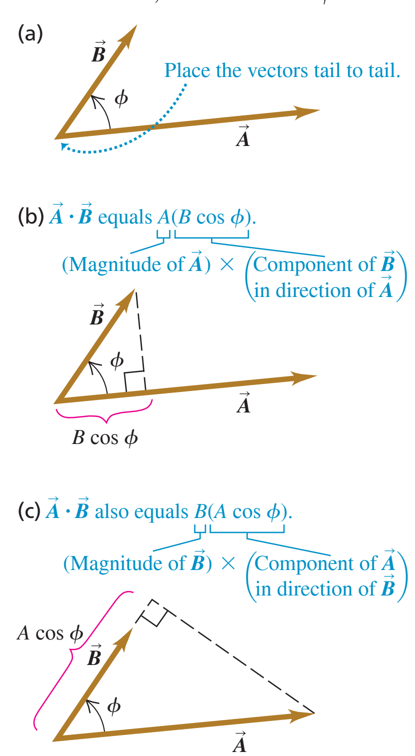
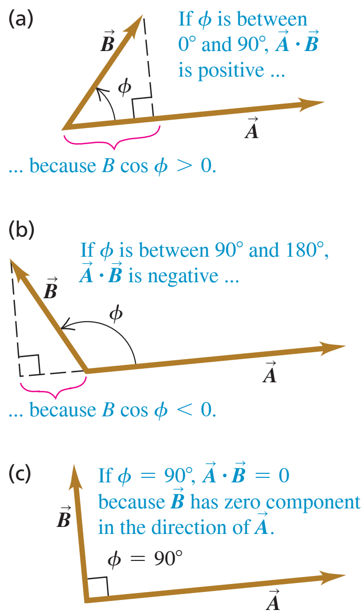


Figure 1.26 The scalar product $\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B} = AB\cos\phi$ can be positive, negative, or zero, depending on the angle between $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$.



Alternatively, we can define $\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B}$ to be the magnitude of $\vec{B}$ multiplied by the component of $\vec{A}$ in the direction of $\vec{B}$, as in Fig. 1.25c. Hence $\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B} = B(A\cos\phi) = AB\cos\phi$, which is the same as Eq. (1.16).

The scalar product is a scalar quantity, not a vector, and it may be positive, negative, or zero. When ϕ is between 0° and 90°, $\cos\phi > 0$ and the scalar product is positive (**Fig. 1.26a**). When ϕ is between 90° and 180° so $\cos\phi < 0$, the component of $\vec{B}$ in the direction of $\vec{A}$ is negative, and $\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B}$ is negative (Fig. 1.26b). Finally, when $\phi = 90°$, $\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B} = 0$ (Fig. 1.26c). *The scalar product of two perpendicular vectors is always zero.*

For any two vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$, $AB\cos\phi = BA\cos\phi$. This means that $\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B} = \vec{B}\cdot\vec{A}$. The scalar product obeys the commutative law of multiplication; the order of the two vectors does not matter.

We'll use the scalar product in Chapter 6 to describe work done by a force. In later chapters we'll use the scalar product for a variety of purposes, from calculating electric potential to determining the effects that varying magnetic fields have on electric circuits.

Using Components to Calculate the Scalar Product

We can calculate the scalar product $\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B}$ directly if we know the x-, y-, and z-components of $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$. To see how this is done, let's first work out the scalar products of the unit vectors $\hat{\imath}$, $\hat{\jmath}$, and $\hat{k}$. All unit vectors have magnitude 1 and are perpendicular to each other. Using Eq. (1.16), we find

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{\imath}\cdot\hat{\imath} &= \hat{\jmath}\cdot\hat{\jmath} = \hat{k}\cdot\hat{k} = (1)(1)\cos 0° = 1\\ \hat{\imath}\cdot\hat{\jmath} &= \hat{\imath}\cdot\hat{k} = \hat{\jmath}\cdot\hat{k} = (1)(1)\cos 90° = 0\end{aligned} \tag{1.17}$$

Now we express $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ in terms of their components, expand the product, and use these products of unit vectors:

$$\begin{aligned}\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B} &= (A_x\hat{\imath} + A_y\hat{\jmath} + A_z\hat{k})\cdot(B_x\hat{\imath} + B_y\hat{\jmath} + B_z\hat{k})\\ &= A_x\hat{\imath}\cdot B_x\hat{\imath} + A_x\hat{\imath}\cdot B_y\hat{\jmath} + A_x\hat{\imath}\cdot B_z\hat{k}\\ &\quad + A_y\hat{\jmath}\cdot B_x\hat{\imath} + A_y\hat{\jmath}\cdot B_y\hat{\jmath} + A_y\hat{\jmath}\cdot B_z\hat{k}\\ &\quad + A_z\hat{k}\cdot B_x\hat{\imath} + A_z\hat{k}\cdot B_y\hat{\jmath} + A_z\hat{k}\cdot B_z\hat{k}\\ &= A_xB_x\hat{\imath}\cdot\hat{\imath} + A_xB_y\hat{\imath}\cdot\hat{\jmath} + A_xB_z\hat{\imath}\cdot\hat{k}\\ &\quad + A_yB_x\hat{\jmath}\cdot\hat{\imath} + A_yB_y\hat{\jmath}\cdot\hat{\jmath} + A_yB_z\hat{\jmath}\cdot\hat{k}\\ &\quad + A_zB_x\hat{k}\cdot\hat{\imath} + A_zB_y\hat{k}\cdot\hat{\jmath} + A_zB_z\hat{k}\cdot\hat{k}\end{aligned} \tag{1.18}$$

From Eqs. (1.17) you can see that six of these nine terms are zero. The three that survive give

Scalar (dot) product of vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ — Components of $\vec{A}$ — Components of $\vec{B}$

$$\vec{A}\cdot\vec{B} = A_xB_x + A_yB_y + A_zB_z \tag{1.19}$$

Thus *the scalar product of two vectors is the sum of the products of their respective components.*

The scalar product gives a straightforward way to find the angle ϕ between any two vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ whose components are known. In this case we can use Eq. (1.19) to find the scalar product of $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$. Example 1.10 shows how to do this.