Contact and Non-Contact Forces

Grade 3

Name _____ Date _____

Remember: A **force** is a push or pull. **Contact** forces need touching (kicking, pulling). **Non-contact** forces work from a distance (gravity, magnetism).

Ask: Are the two things touching when the force happens? Yes → contact. No → non-contact.

Touching and Not Touching



A **force** is a push or a pull. Forces can make things start moving, stop, speed up, slow down or change direction.

Most forces happen when two things **touch**. These are called **contact forces**. When you kick a ball, your foot touches the ball and pushes it. When you pull a wagon, your hand is in contact with the handle. Friction is a contact force too: it happens when two surfaces rub together.

Some forces can act **without touching**. These are called **non-contact forces**. A magnet can pull a paper clip toward it before they touch. **Gravity** pulls a dropped apple down to the ground without anything touching it.

Static electricity is another non-contact force. If you rub a balloon on your hair, it can lift tiny bits of paper without touching them.

1. Check your understanding

Circle the best answer.

1. What is a force?

(a) A push or a pull (b) A kind of light (c) A loud sound

2. Kicking a ball is an example of...

(a) a non-contact force (b) a contact force (c) no force

3. Which is a non-contact force?

(a) Pushing a door (b) Rowing a boat (c) Gravity

4. How can a magnet move a paper clip?

(a) It can pull it from a distance. (b) It must touch it first. (c) It can't.

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2. Contact or non-contact?

Circle the kind of force.

1	throwing a ball	contact force	non-contact force
2	a magnet pulling a nail	contact force	non-contact force
3	pushing a shopping cart	contact force	non-contact force
4	a leaf falling to the ground	contact force	non-contact force
5	a balloon lifting paper bits after rubbing it	contact force	non-contact force
6	pulling on a rope	contact force	non-contact force

3. Think like a scientist

Answer in a complete sentence.

1. **Why is gravity a non-contact force?**

Answer Key

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1. Check your understanding

1. What is a force?

(a) **A push or a pull** (b) A kind of light (c) A loud sound

2. Kicking a ball is an example of...

(a) a non-contact force (b) **a contact force** (c) no force

3. Which is a non-contact force?

(a) Pushing a door (b) Rowing a boat (c) **Gravity**

4. How can a magnet move a paper clip?

(a) **It can pull it from a distance.** (b) It must touch it first. (c) It can't.

2. Contact or non-contact?

		contact force	non-contact force
1	throwing a ball	●	○
2	a magnet pulling a nail	○	●
3	pushing a shopping cart	●	○
4	a leaf falling to the ground	○	●
5	a balloon lifting paper bits after rubbing it	○	●
6	pulling on a rope	●	○

3. Think like a scientist

Sample answer.

1. **Why is gravity a non-contact force?**
   Gravity pulls things toward the Earth without touching them, like a ball falling through the air.