Push and Pull: What Is a Force?

Grade 3

Name _____ Date _____

Remember: Read the passage **twice**: once to enjoy it, and once to look for details. Then answer the questions. Look back at the text to **prove** your answers.

Tip: Underline the sentence in the passage that helps you answer each question.

Push and Pull: What Is a Force?



Have you ever kicked a soccer ball or pulled open a door? Then you have used a force. A force is a push or a pull. Forces are all around us, every minute of the day.

Forces can make things start moving. When you push a toy car, it rolls across the floor. When a horse pulls a cart, the cart begins to move. The harder the push or pull, the faster something usually moves.

Forces can also make things stop. When a goalie catches a ball, her hands push against it and stop it. When you squeeze the brakes on your bike, the brakes rub on the wheels and slow them down.

Forces can change the direction of moving things too. In baseball, the pitcher throws the ball toward the batter. When the batter hits it, the bat pushes the ball the other way.

One force we cannot see is gravity. Gravity is a pull. It pulls everything toward the centre of the Earth. That is why a ball comes back down when you throw it up, and why you don't float away when you jump!

The next time you open a drawer, ride a swing or kick a ball, think about the pushes and pulls that make it happen.

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1. Check your understanding

Circle the best answer.

1. What is a force?

(a) A push or a pull
(b) A kind of machine
(c) A type of ball

2. What can a force do?

(a) Only start things moving
(b) Start, stop and change the direction of things
(c) Only stop things

3. Which force pulls things toward the Earth?

(a) magnetism
(b) wind
(c) gravity

4. How do bike brakes slow the wheels?

(a) They rub on the wheels.
(b) They push the bike forward.
(c) They make the bike lighter.

2. Write your answer

Answer in complete sentences. Use details from the text.

1. **What is the main idea of this passage?**

2. **Give one example from the text of a force changing the direction of something.**

3. **Why does a ball come back down when you throw it up?**

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 machine
- (c) A type of ball

2. What can a force do?

- (a) Only start things moving
- (b) **Start, stop and change the direction of things**
- (c) Only stop things

3. Which force pulls things toward the Earth?

- (a) magnetism
- (b) wind
- (c) **gravity**

4. How do bike brakes slow the wheels?

- (a) **They rub on the wheels.**
- (b) They push the bike forward.
- (c) They make the bike lighter.

2. Write your answer

Sample answers. Students' wording will vary.

1. **What is the main idea of this passage?**
   Forces are pushes and pulls that start, stop and change the direction of things.
2. **Give one example from the text of a force changing the direction of something.**
   When a batter hits a baseball, the bat pushes the ball back the other way.
3. **Why does a ball come back down when you throw it up?**
   Gravity pulls it back down toward the Earth.