

AP Physics 1 Notes

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Forces and Newton's Laws

- **Inertia** is a property of matter, and is the resistance to a change in motion (acceleration), or a tendency to maintain a state of motion. Acceleration is any change in speed or direction.
- **Force** is any push or pull on an object (contact or non-contact).
- **Net Force** is the combination of, or the sum of, all simultaneous forces.
- **Dynamics** considers the forces that affect the motion of moving objects and systems.
- **Magnetism** is the magnetic force between two wires carrying electric current.

Newton's first law, the law of inertia, states that an object at rest will remain at rest, and an object in motion will remain in motion at a constant velocity, unless acted upon by an unbalanced force. The inertia of an object is measured by its mass.

Newton's second law can first be considered as a proportion between acceleration and net force:

$$\mathbf{a} \propto \mathbf{F}_{\text{net}},$$

and the proportion between acceleration and mass:

$$\mathbf{a} \propto \frac{1}{m}.$$

Combining the proportionalities gives the equation form of Newton's second law:

$$\mathbf{a} = \frac{\mathbf{F}_{\text{net}}}{m},$$

or

$$\mathbf{F}_{\text{net}} = m\mathbf{a}.$$

Newton's third law, sometimes called the law of action/reaction, states that whenever one body exerts a force on a second body, the first body experiences a force that is equal in magnitude opposite in direction to the force that it exerts. Rephrased, all contact forces are interactions.