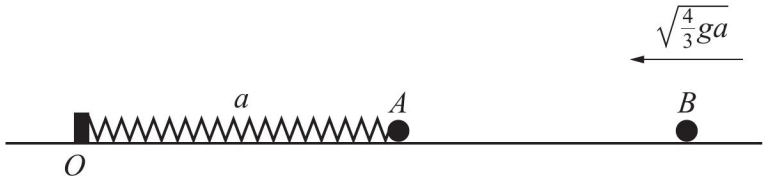

One end of a light spring of natural length a and modulus of elasticity $4mg$ is attached to a fixed point O. The other end of the spring is attached to a particle A of mass km, where k is a constant. Initially the spring lies at rest on a smooth horizontal surface and has length a. A second particle B, of mass m, is moving towards A with speed $\sqrt{\frac{4}{3}ga}$ along the line of the spring from the opposite direction to O (see diagram).

The particles A and B collide and coalesce. At a point C in the subsequent motion, the length of the spring is $\frac{3}{4}a$ and the speed of the combined particle is half of its initial speed.

(a) Find the value of k. [6]

At the point C the horizontal surface becomes rough, with coefficient of friction μ between the combined particle and the surface. The deceleration of the combined particle at C is $\frac{9}{20}g$.

(b) Find the value of μ. [4]