

Universal Gravity

Scott N. Walck

September 30, 2020

Four theories of gravity

1. Gravity accelerates objects downward at 9.8 m/s^2
2. Gravity is a force near Earth's surface, $F_G = mg$
3. Gravity is a force between any two objects, $F_G = G \frac{m_1 m_2}{r^2}$
4. Gravity is the curvature of spacetime (Einstein, 1915)

List of forces so far

Force	symbol	direction	magnitude
somebody pushing	F_P		
gravity (weight)	F_G	downward	$F_G = mg$
universal gravity	F_G	toward other object	$F_G = G \frac{m_1 m_2}{r^2}$
normal force	F_N	\perp to surface	
tension	F_T	along rope	
air resistance		opposite the velocity	
kinetic friction	F_{fr}	opposite the velocity	$F_{fr} = \mu_k F_N$
static friction	F_{fr}	\parallel to surface	$F_{fr} \leq \mu_s F_N$

How is G related to g ?

$$g = \frac{GM_E}{R_E^2}$$

Exercise: Calculate the acceleration of gravity on the Moon, g_{Moon} .

Satellite motion

Bring together 3 ideas:

- ▶ Newton's second law, $F = ma$
- ▶ Universal gravity, $F_G = G \frac{m_1 m_2}{r^2}$
- ▶ Uniform circular motion, $a = \frac{v^2}{r}$

For a satellite of mass m attracted by another object with mass M ,

$$G \frac{Mm}{r^2} = m \frac{v^2}{r}$$

- ▶ On the left, r is the distance between the centers of the two objects.
- ▶ On the right, r is the radius of circular motion.
- ▶ If the satellite is small, these two r s are the same.

Small satellite

$$G \frac{Mm}{r^2} = m \frac{v^2}{r}$$

Relation between satellite speed and radius:

$$GM = v^2 r$$

Using $v = 2\pi r/T$, get a relation between radius and period:

$$GMT^2 = 4\pi^2 r^3$$

Exercises

1. Calculate the period of a satellite in low Earth orbit.
2. Calculate the period of the Moon.