

Problems for the 33rd IYPT 2020

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1. Invent Yourself

Design an instrument for measuring current using its heating effect. What are the accuracy, precision and limits of the method?

2. Inconspicuous Bottle

Put a lit candle behind a bottle. If you blow on the bottle from the opposite side, the candle may go out, as if the bottle was not there at all. Explain the phenomenon.

3. Swinging Sound Tube

A Sound Tube is a toy, consisting of a corrugated plastic tube, that you can spin around to produce sounds. Study the characteristics of the sounds produced by such toys, and how they are affected by the relevant parameters.

4. Singing Ferrite

Insert a ferrite rod into a coil fed from a signal generator. At some frequencies the rod begins to produce a sound. Investigate the phenomenon.

5. Sweet Mirage

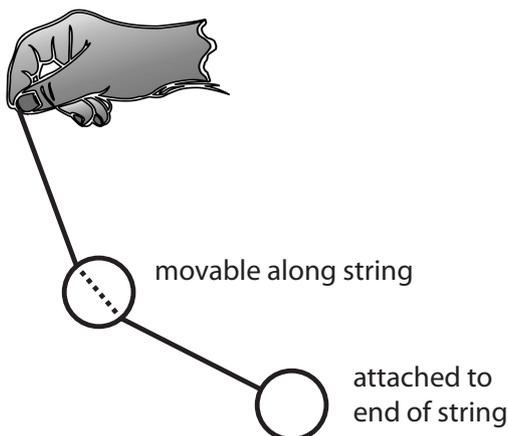
Fata Morgana is the name given to a particular form of mirage. A similar effect can be produced by shining a laser through a fluid with a refractive index gradient. Investigate the phenomenon.

6. Saxon Bowl

A bowl with a hole in its base will sink when placed in water. The Saxons used this device for timing purposes. Investigate the parameters that determine the time of sinking.

7. Balls on a String

Put a string through a ball with a hole in it such that the ball can move freely along the string. Attach another ball to one end of the string. When you move the free end periodically, you can observe complex movements of the two balls. Investigate the phenomenon.



8. Soap Membrane Filter

A heavy particle may fall through a horizontal soap film without rupturing it. However, a light particle may not penetrate the film and may remain on its surface. Investigate the properties of such a membrane filter.

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9. Magnetic Levitation

Under certain circumstances, the “flea” of a magnetic stirrer can rise up and levitate stably in a viscous fluid during stirring. Investigate the origins of the dynamic stabilization of the “flea” and how it depends on the relevant parameters.

10. Conducting Lines

A line drawn with a pencil on paper can be electrically conducting. Investigate the characteristics of the conducting line.

11. Drifting Speckles

Shine a laser beam onto a dark surface. A granular pattern can be seen inside the spot. When the pattern is observed by a camera or the eye, that is moving slowly, the pattern seems to drift relative to the surface. Explain the phenomenon and investigate how the drift depends on relevant parameters.

12. Polygon Vortex

A stationary cylindrical vessel containing a rotating plate near the bottom surface is partially filled with liquid. Under certain conditions, the shape of the liquid surface becomes polygon-like. Explain this phenomenon and investigate the dependence on the relevant parameters.

13. Friction Oscillator

A massive object is placed onto two identical parallel horizontal cylinders. The two cylinders each rotate with the same angular velocity, but in opposite directions. Investigate how the motion of the object on the cylinders depends on the relevant parameters.

14. Falling Tower

Identical discs are stacked one on top of another to form a freestanding tower. The bottom disc can be removed by applying a sudden horizontal force such that the rest of the tower will drop down onto the surface and the tower remains standing. Investigate the phenomenon and determine the conditions that allow the tower to remain standing.

15. Pepper Pot

If you take a salt or pepper pot and just shake it, the contents will pour out relatively slowly. However, if an object is rubbed along the bottom of the pot, then the rate of pouring can increase dramatically. Explain this phenomenon and investigate how the rate depends on the relevant parameters.

16. Nitinol Engine

Place a nitinol wire loop around two pulleys with their axes located at some distance from each other. If one of the pulleys is immersed into hot water, the wire tends to straighten, causing a rotation of the pulleys. Investigate the properties of such an engine.

17. Playing Card

A standard playing card can travel a very long distance provided that spin is imparted as it is thrown. Investigate the parameters that affect the distance and the trajectory.