



Ned's Science Sled

At the bottom of a hill stood poor Ned, a man of science through and through. Beside him sat a high-tech sled and a long list of experiments to do.

Ned's task was to push his sled up the hill, working against gravity with all his might, while keeping track of variables to check and getting all the details just right.

The empty sled didn't have much mass, so Ned found he could push it when he tried. He got halfway up the hill before he ran out of gas, and his upward momentum suddenly died.

Ned huffed and he puffed, but the sled wouldn't budge, due to gravity's relentless downward pull. Ned's exhausted push had dwindled to a nudge, though the sled was quite light—it wasn't even full.

When a force meets an equal force, and they are in perfect opposition, everything is in balance and does not move. (It's a law of physics, not a superstition.)

Ned's assistant, Sherene, had waited on the hill, she glanced at her clipboard and ticked a box. Sherene shot Ned a smile and a wink, then began to load up the sled with rocks!

With each rock the mass of the sled increased. Gravity and Ned's push were no longer in balance. Ned's shoes began to slip, his brow grew creased, super strength was not one of his many talents!

Down the hill slid the sled, moving faster and faster, gravity giving it a life of its own. Of this situation, Ned was no longer the master, but thanks to Ned our knowledge of physics has grown!

Sir Isaac Newton and Gravity



Isaac Newton (1642–1727) was a mathematician, astronomer, and physicist who discovered the force of gravity. One story says that he came up with the idea of gravity when an apple fell out of a tree and hit him on the head. This story is most likely made up, but it's true that anything that falls on Earth does so because of our planet's gravity.