

Falling Down

ID: 11543

 Time Required
 45 minutes

Activity Overview

Two mountain climbers climbed the side of a mountain and rested at the top. There, they ate, drank, and contemplated some deep questions, such as, “If we throw two rocks that are the same shape, but different weights, off the side of this mountain, would they fall at the same speed?”

In this adventure, students will drop an object and determine the average speed the object reaches. The students will make observations about whether or not changing the mass and keeping the same shape have an effect on the average speed of the object.

Topic: Kinematics

- Graph distance as a function of time
- Interpret and analyze graphs
- Understand how a change in mass affects the average speed of a falling object
- Represent motion and the changes in motion graphically
- Calculate average speed

Teacher Preparation and Notes

- Demo the activity using the overhead calculator so the entire class can see the process. If you have only one CBL2, have each group individually perform this activity. If you have enough CBL2 units, have students work in small groups.
- You will need the following materials to complete this activity.
 - Calculator-Based Ranger (CBL2)
 - CBL/CBR Application
 - Five large basket-style coffee filters
- **To download the student worksheet and TI-Navigator file, go to education.ti.com/exchange and enter “11543” in the quick search box.**

Associated Materials

- [SciAct05_FallingDown_worksheet_T173.doc](#)
- [SciAct05_CBRonFloor.act](#)

Suggested Related Activities

To download any activity listed, go to education.ti.com/exchange and enter the number in the quick search box.

- [Can You Walk 3 Miles Per Hour? \(TI-73 Explorer\) — 8465](#)
- [Bouncing Ball \(TI-84 Plus Family\) — 3879](#)
- [Swing Thing \(TI-84 Plus Family\) — 3882](#)

Setup

1. Connect the CBR2 to the calculator using the I/O unit-to-unit cable.
2. Set up the activity as shown in the picture. One student should hold the CBR2 at eye level or higher, pointing the CBR2 downward.
3. A second student should hold the coffee filters, concave side up, about 0.5 meters below the CBR2. These will be released shortly after the data collection begins.
4. A third student should operate the calculator.



5. To launch the CBL/CBR App, press the **[APPS]** key, select **CBL/CBR** and then press **[ENTER]** to view the CBL/CBR screen.



6. Press **[ENTER]** to access the application, then select **3:RANGER**. The Ranger start up screen will launch. Press **[ENTER]** to access the application.



7. From the **MAIN MENU** select **2:SET DEFAULTS**.
8. Use the arrow keys to move the selector arrow (▶) to any setting. Press **[ENTER]** to select or change any setting. Adjust **REALTIME** to **NO**, **TIME(S)** to **3**, and **SMOOTHING** to **HEAVY**. With the selector arrow (▶) at **START NOW**, press **[ENTER]**.



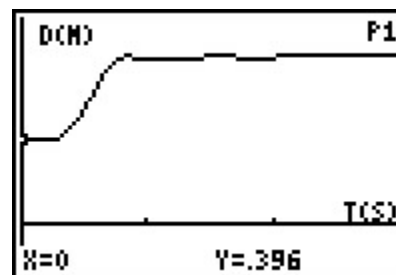
Data Collection

Time will be plotted on the horizontal axis. The distance from the CBR 2 to the coffee filters (in meters) will be plotted on the vertical axis.

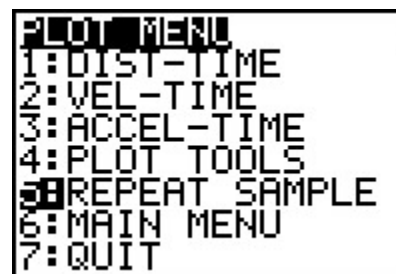
NOTE: You may wish to have students predict the shape of the graph first.

Trial 1

1. Hold one coffee filter 0.5 meter below the CBR 2.
2. When everyone is ready, the student operating the calculator should press **ENTER** to begin data collection.
3. The student holding the coffee filter should release the filter only after the CBR 2 can be heard collecting data. There is more than enough time allotted for data collection, so there is no need to rush.
4. For best results, place your hands together and hold the coffee filter in both hands. Quickly move your hands outward to drop the filter. Be sure to separate your hands wide enough so that they do not interfere with data collection.
5. The student holding the CBR 2 should continue to hold it steady at the same height until the CBR 2 can no longer be heard collecting data.
6. The resulting plot should begin with a horizontal segment, then have a segment rising from left to right, and then have another horizontal segment.



7. If you are satisfied with your plot, sketch it on the axes on your worksheet. If not, press **ENTER**, choose **5: REPEAT SAMPLE**, and then repeat the data collection.

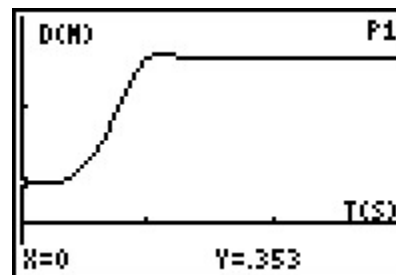


8. Use **◀** and **▶** to move along the Distance-Time plot. Keep in mind that the x-coordinate represents the time in seconds since the beginning of data collection and the y-coordinate represents the distance in meters from the CBR 2 to the coffee filter. Answer the questions about Trial 1 on your worksheet.

Trial 2

1. Repeat the steps from Trial 1 with one change. Use 5 coffee filters that are carefully stacked or nested inside of each other.
2. Press **ENTER** and choose **5: REPEAT SAMPLE** from the **PLOT MENU**.
3. Follow the directions in steps 2 through 5 from Trial 1 to collect your data. Try to hold the CBR 2 at the same height as in Trial 1.

- Your plot should consist of a horizontal segment, followed by a section that is rising from left to right, and finally another horizontal segment. Do not worry if the middle section of your plot is curved upward. This is due to the acceleration of the coffee filters during freefall.



- If you are satisfied with your plot, sketch it on the axes on your worksheet. If not, press **ENTER**, choose **5: REPEAT SAMPLE**, and then try again.
- Use **◀** and **▶** to move along the Distance-Time plot. Keep in mind that the x-coordinate represents the time in seconds since the beginning of data collection and the y-coordinate represents the distance in meters from the CBR 2 to the coffee filters. Answer the questions about Trial 2 on your worksheet.

Extension Activity

- Suppose the CBR 2 had been placed on the floor. How would the value of the average speed be affected by the filters falling toward, rather than away from, the CBR 2?
- Look up the term “terminal velocity” or “terminal speed” and relate this to the curvature of the plot of the 5 coffee filters falling.

Discussion Notes

Explain to students that the average speed is the total distance traveled divided by the total time elapsed, and that the speed of an object along the path traveled can vary. The students should know that the velocity of an object is the rate of change of its position and must be described by specifying both the direction and the speed of the object.

Through questioning, draw out that 5 coffee filters were used in Trial 2 in order to change the mass of the falling object without altering the frontal surface area of the object. As a result, the air resistance of the object remained the same.

TI-Navigator™ Extension Activity

- Load the **SciAct05_CBRonFloor.act** activity settings file. Students will be able to mark up to 10 points each. Depending on the number of students participating, you may wish to have each student contribute less than that.
- Tell students to work as a cooperative group to mark points to illustrate what the plot of the coffee filters falling would have looked like if the CBR 2 had been placed on the floor and the filters released above it.

NOTE: In actuality, the CBR 2 cannot collect data that is closer than 0.5 meter. Tell students to ignore that fact while they form their plot.

- Clear the existing data and have students redraw it under a different condition (heavier, lighter, starting higher or lower).

Worksheet Answers

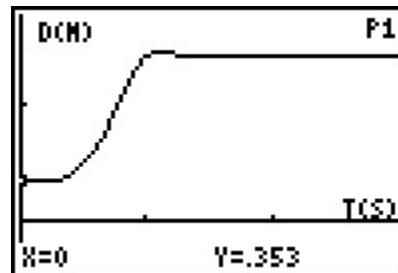
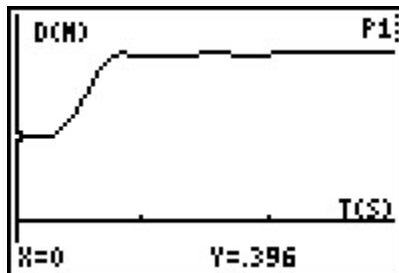
NOTE: The data in these tables is simulated. Actual data will be slightly different.

Trial 1

List L1	List L2
0	0.40
0.16	0.40
0.38	0.40
0.54	0.40
0.70	0.40
0.92	0.48
1.08	0.66
1.34	0.80
1.50	1.05
1.59	1.22
1.75	1.32
2.01	1.46
2.42	1.46
2.71	1.46
2.96	1.46

Trial 2

List L1	List L2
0	0.35
0.16	0.35
0.38	0.35
0.54	0.46
0.70	0.55
0.94	1.11
1.07	1.57
1.36	1.76
1.52	1.85
1.61	1.82
1.77	1.83
2.07	1.83
2.42	1.83
2.71	1.83
2.96	1.83



- The first flat section is a plot of the distance the coffee filter is being held away from the CBR 2 before release. The second flat section is a plot of the distance from the CBR 2 to the coffee filter when it is lying on the floor.
- The section that connects the two flat portions is a Distance-Time plot of the coffee filter falling.

Trial 1 Trial 2

- 0.39 0.46
- 1.46 1.83
- 1.07 1.37
- 0.92 1.07
- 2.01 2.42
- 1.09 1.35
- 0.98 1.01

11. The stack of 5 coffee filters fell with the highest average speed.
12. The extra mass caused the speed to increase.
13. Yes. The time required to reach the ground will always be the distance traveled divided by the average speed. Since the distance will be the same for both objects, dividing by a larger number, in this case the average speed, will yield a smaller time value.

Extension

1. Since speed tells how fast an object is moving without reference to positive or negative values, it would remain the same. The velocity would be different if students wish to investigate this term.
2. The speed increased for a short period of time before reaching terminal speed. This caused the curve in the plot.

Appendix – Downloading and Installing Apps

To Download an App to Your Computer:

- Go to TI’s Web site, education.ti.com. Click on “DOWNLOADS” at the top of the Web page.
- From the **OS & Apps** section, click the link “**Download OS & Apps**”.
- Click on TI-73 Explorer™ on the left side of the Web page.
- Select the APP you want to download by clicking on the name of the APP. Click the DOWNLOAD down-arrow button, and follow the prompts on your computer.

To Install an App on Your Calculator:

1. You will need a TI Connectivity cable and TI Connect™ Software. If you have TI Connect, skip to step 2. Otherwise:
 - Go to TI’s website at education.ti.com.
 - Click on “**DOWNLOADS**” in the upper right corner of the Web page.
 - From the Computer Software drop-down list, select TI Connect™ Software.
 - From the Download TI Connect drop-down list, select either TI Connect for Windows or Macintosh and follow the prompts to save the software to your computer.
 - To install, double click on the installer icon and follow the onscreen directions.
 - Launch TI Connect. The application will open to the TI Connect Desktop screen.
2. Connect your calculator to your computer using a TI Connectivity cable. Browse for the location of the App file(s) that you saved.
 - **For TI Connect for Windows® Users:** Drag and drop the App file(s) onto the TI Connect icon or open TI Device Explorer™ window.
 - **For TI Connect for Macintosh® Users:** Launch TI Connect for Macintosh. On the menu bar, select “**Connection**” and then select your calculator. Select the port to which the TI Connectivity cable is connected and click “**Connect**”. (The TI Device Explorer window will open.) Drag and drop the App file(s) into the TI Device Explorer window.
 - **For TI Connect for Mac OS X Users:** Launch TI Device Explorer from within TI Connect. A device window will open listing the connected calculator. Drag and drop the App file(s) on the name of the calculator upon which you would like the App file(s) installed.

NOTE The TI-73 Explorer™ has 8 “App spaces.” These are chunks of memory into which you can load Apps. Some Apps take up only 1 space and other Apps take up to 4. You can delete an App you no longer need or want to make room for another App. Simply press **[2nd] [MEM]**, select Delete, select Apps, move the cursor to the App name to be deleted, and press **[ENTER]**.