

5.2.1 Potential energy, kinetic energy and energy transfers

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 35 marks

KEY WORDS kinetic energy 动能 • gravitational potential energy 重力势能 • energy 能量
 • thermal energy 热能 • momentum 动量

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **gravitational potential energy** 重力势能 and **kinetic energy** 动能 that sheet 5.2 only starts: both derivations, why only the height matters, the change in kinetic energy when a force acts, comparing kinetic energies, finding a speed from energy, and energy transfers when air resistance acts. This sheet covers syllabus 5.2, learning outcomes 1 to 4.

You must be able to:

- derive, using $W = Fs$, the formula $\Delta E_P = mg\Delta h$ for gravitational potential energy changes in a uniform gravitational field
- recall and use the formula $\Delta E_P = mg\Delta h$ for gravitational potential energy changes in a uniform gravitational field, whatever path the object takes
- derive, using the equations of motion, the formula for kinetic energy $E_K = \frac{1}{2}mv^2$, and the change in kinetic energy when a force acts
- recall and use $E_K = \frac{1}{2}mv^2$, including ratios of kinetic energies and energy changes with and without air resistance

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows a **method** that a question later on this sheet needs.

■ Deriving the change in gravitational potential energy

To lift an object of mass m at a steady speed, an upward force equal to its weight, $F = mg$, must act on it. As the object rises through a height Δh , this force does work

$$W = Fs = mg\Delta h$$

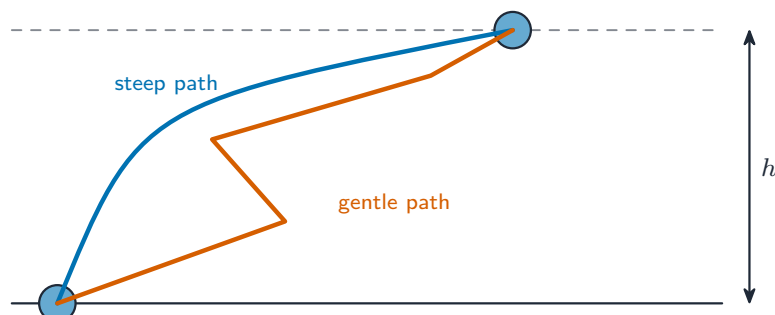
and this work is stored as gravitational potential energy: $\Delta E_P = mg\Delta h$.

- The derivation needs a **uniform** gravitational field, where g is the same at every height. This is true near the Earth's surface, but not for a rocket that rises

hundreds of kilometres.

- Only the vertical height matters, not the path taken.

same $\Delta E_P = mgh$ — only the height h matters



A bag of mass 12 kg is raised through 1.5 m.

1. Lifted straight up: $\Delta E_P = 12 \times 9.81 \times 1.5 = 177 \text{ J}$.
2. Pushed without friction up a ramp 4.0 m long that rises 1.5 m: the force needed is the component of the weight along the ramp, $12 \times 9.81 \times \frac{1.5}{4.0} = 44.1 \text{ N}$.
3. The work done on the ramp is $44.1 \times 4.0 = 177 \text{ J}$: a smaller force over a longer distance gives the same energy.

■ Deriving the kinetic energy

A resultant force F acts on a mass m over a displacement s , and its speed increases from u to v . Using $F = ma$ and the equation of motion $v^2 = u^2 + 2as$:

$$Fs = ma \times \frac{v^2 - u^2}{2a} = \frac{1}{2}mv^2 - \frac{1}{2}mu^2$$

- Starting from rest ($u = 0$), all the work done becomes kinetic energy: $E_K = \frac{1}{2}mv^2$.
- The work done by the resultant force equals the **change** in kinetic energy.

A car of mass 900 kg speeds up from 12 m s^{-1} to 20 m s^{-1} over a distance of 80 m.

1. $\Delta E_K = \frac{1}{2} \times 900 \times (20^2 - 12^2) = 1.152 \times 10^5 \text{ J}$.
 2. The resultant force is $F = \frac{\Delta E_K}{s} = \frac{1.152 \times 10^5}{80} = 1440 \text{ N}$.
 3. Check with the equations of motion: $a = \frac{20^2 - 12^2}{2 \times 80} = 1.6 \text{ m s}^{-2}$, and $F = 900 \times 1.6 = 1440 \text{ N}$.
- Take care: $\frac{1}{2}m(v^2 - u^2)$ is **not** the same as $\frac{1}{2}m(v - u)^2$.

■ Comparing kinetic energies

- $E_K \propto v^2$: tripling the speed multiplies the kinetic energy by 9.
- At the same speed, $E_K \propto m$.
- Using momentum $p = mv$ (topic 3): $E_K = \frac{1}{2}mv^2 = \frac{p^2}{2m}$.

A car of mass 1000 kg moves at 20 m s⁻¹. A truck of mass 4000 kg has the same momentum.

1. The car has $p = 1000 \times 20 = 2.0 \times 10^4$ kg m s⁻¹ and $E_K = \frac{1}{2} \times 1000 \times 20^2 = 2.0 \times 10^5$ J.
2. The truck moves at $v = 2.0 \times 10^4 / 4000 = 5.0$ m s⁻¹, so $E_K = \frac{1}{2} \times 4000 \times 5.0^2 = 5.0 \times 10^4$ J.
3. The same momentum with four times the mass gives one quarter of the kinetic energy, as $E_K = p^2/2m$ predicts.

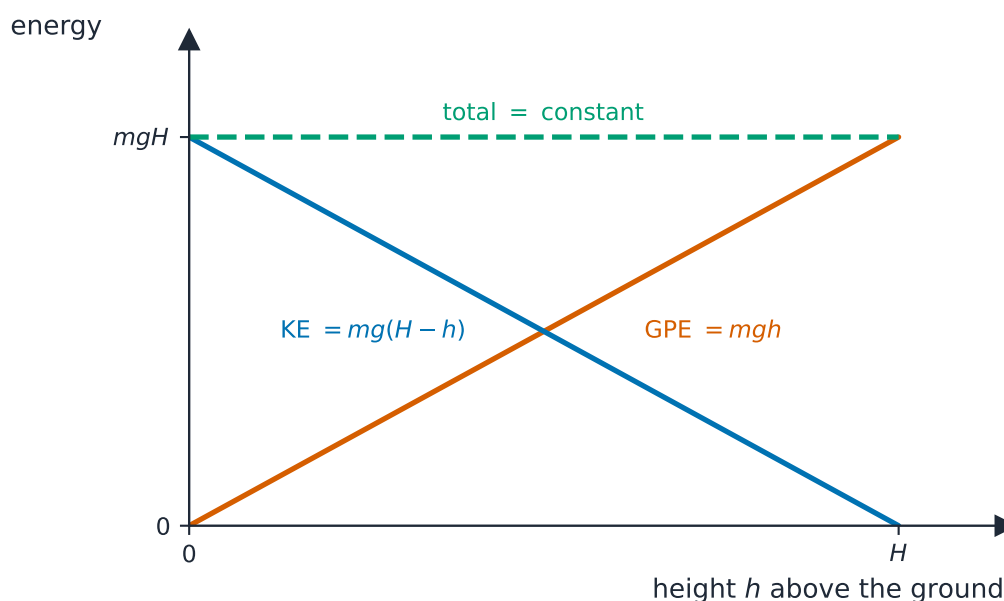
■ Finding a speed from energy

A stone is thrown horizontally at 8.0 m s⁻¹ from the top of a cliff 20 m high. Air resistance is negligible.

1. Energy is conserved: $\frac{1}{2}mv^2 = \frac{1}{2}mu^2 + mg\Delta h$. The mass cancels.
 2. $v = \sqrt{u^2 + 2g\Delta h} = \sqrt{8.0^2 + 2 \times 9.81 \times 20} = 21.4$ m s⁻¹.
- Energy gives the **speed** at the bottom whatever the direction of the throw. For the direction of the velocity, or the time taken, use the equations of motion instead.

■ Energy against height, and air resistance

When a ball falls with no air resistance, it loses gravitational potential energy and gains the same amount of kinetic energy, so the total stays constant:



A ball of mass 0.20 kg is dropped from a height of 5.0 m and reaches the ground with 8.0 J of kinetic energy.

1. Its gravitational potential energy at the start is $0.20 \times 9.81 \times 5.0 = 9.81$ J.
 2. With no air resistance it would land with 9.81 J of kinetic energy, so $9.81 - 8.0 = 1.8$ J was transferred to thermal energy.
 3. The average air resistance was $\frac{1.81}{5.0} = 0.36$ N.
- With air resistance the total energy of the ball is not constant: the lower the ball, the less total energy it has left.

2 Practice

Now use the methods above.

2.1 A cable car of total mass 1200 kg climbs through a vertical height of 18 m. Calculate the gain in its gravitational potential energy. [2]

2.2 A tennis ball of mass 0.058 kg is served at 45 m s^{-1} . Calculate its kinetic energy. [2]

2.3 A car of mass 1100 kg speeds up from 20 m s^{-1} to 30 m s^{-1} .

(a) State the factor by which its kinetic energy increases. [1]

(b) Calculate the increase in its kinetic energy. [2]

2.4 Water moves very slowly over the top of a waterfall and falls through 32 m. Ignoring air resistance, calculate its speed at the bottom. [2]

2.5 State the condition for the formula $\Delta E_P = mg\Delta h$ to be used. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Two objects X and Y have the same momentum. The mass of X is twice the mass of Y. What is the ratio $\frac{\text{kinetic energy of X}}{\text{kinetic energy of Y}}$? [1]

A	B
C	D

- A $\frac{1}{4}$
- B $\frac{1}{2}$
- C 2
- D 4

3.2 A ball dropped from rest from a height h reaches a speed v . Air resistance is negligible. From what height must the ball be dropped to reach a speed $2v$? [1]

A	B
C	D

- A $\sqrt{2}h$
- B $2h$
- C $4h$
- D $8h$

3.3 A footballer kicks a ball of mass 0.45 kg from rest. The ball leaves the foot at 26 m s^{-1} .

(a) Use the equations of motion to show that the kinetic energy of an object of mass m , accelerated from rest to a speed v , is $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$. [3]

(b) The foot pushes on the ball over a distance of 0.20 m. Calculate the average force on the ball. [2]

(c) At the highest point of its path the ball moves horizontally at 15 m s^{-1} . Ignoring air resistance, calculate the height of this point above the point where the ball was kicked. [3]

3.4 A pole vaulter of mass 70 kg sprints along the runway at 9.0 m s^{-1} , then uses the pole to change her kinetic energy into gravitational potential energy.

(a) Calculate her kinetic energy just before she plants the pole. [2]

(b) Assuming that all of this energy becomes gravitational potential energy, calculate how far her centre of gravity could rise. [2]

(c) Her centre of gravity starts 1.0 m above the ground, and she only just clears a bar at 4.8 m. Suggest two reasons why she does not reach the height predicted by (b). [2]

(d) After clearing the bar, she falls from rest at 4.8 m onto a landing mat whose top surface is 0.80 m above the ground. Treating her as a point mass, calculate her speed as she reaches the mat. [2]

3.5 A hiker of mass 60 kg walks 3.2 km along a mountain path, from a height of 1200 m to a height of 1650 m.

(a) Starting from the work done by a force, derive the formula for the change in gravitational potential energy near the Earth's surface. [2]

(b) Explain why this formula cannot be used for a rocket that rises 2000 km above the Earth. [1]

(c) Calculate the gain in gravitational potential energy of the hiker. [2]

(d) The hiker's muscles transfer food energy into useful work with an efficiency of 25%. Calculate the food energy used to gain this potential energy. [2]