

2.10 Circular Motion

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 14 marks

KEY WORDS centripetal force 向心力 • centripetal acceleration 向心加速度 • friction 摩擦力
• force 力 • net force 合力

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **circular motion**.

You must be able to:

- use the **centripetal acceleration** 向心加速度: $a_c = \frac{v^2}{r}$
- use the **centripetal force** 向心力: $F_c = \frac{mv^2}{r}$, directed toward the centre
- identify which real force provides the centripetal force (gravity, tension, friction, normal)
- explain that speed can be constant while velocity changes direction

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a question type used later — follow the steps and you can do the Practice and Exam-style questions yourself.

■ Centripetal acceleration and force

An object moving in a circle of radius r at speed v accelerates toward the centre:

$$a_c = \frac{v^2}{r}, \quad F_c = ma_c = \frac{mv^2}{r}.$$

For $m = 2 \text{ kg}$, $v = 4 \text{ m s}^{-1}$, $r = 8 \text{ m}$: $F_c = \frac{2(4)^2}{8} = 4 \text{ N}$.

■ A real force supplies it

Centripetal force is not a new force — it is provided by tension (a ball on a string), gravity (a satellite), friction (a car turning), or the normal force.

■ Constant speed, changing velocity

In uniform circular motion the speed is constant, but the direction keeps changing, so the velocity changes — there is an acceleration toward the centre.

2 Practice

Now apply the methods above.

2.1 State the direction of the centripetal acceleration. [1]

2.2 A 3 kg ball moves in a circle of radius 2 m at 4 m s^{-1} . Find the centripetal force. [2]

2.3 Name the force that keeps a car turning on a flat road. [1]

2.4 An object has $v = 6 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ and $r = 3 \text{ m}$. Find its centripetal acceleration. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 For uniform circular motion, the net force points [1]

A	B
C	D

A along the velocity

B toward the centre

C away from the centre

D upward

3.2 Doubling the speed of an object in a fixed circle changes the centripetal force by a factor of [1]

A	B
C	D

A 2

B 4

C 1/2

D 1

3.3 A 0.5 kg ball on a string moves in a horizontal circle of radius 1 m at 3 m s^{-1} .

(a) Find the centripetal force. [2]

(b) State what provides this force. [1]

3.4 A car of mass 1000 kg rounds a curve of radius 50 m at 10 m s^{-1} .

(a) Find the centripetal acceleration. [2]

(b) Find the friction force needed to keep it on the curve. [1]