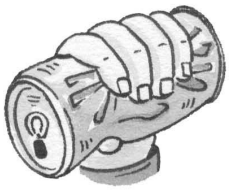
Pushing and pulling

Background knowledge

Forces can make things move. A *force* is a push or pull on something. *Magnetism* is a force that can push (repel) or pull (attract) things. The force of *gravity* pulls objects toward Earth. When the wind blows, you can feel a breeze as air pushes against you. When you drop a ball, the force of gravity pulls it toward Earth.

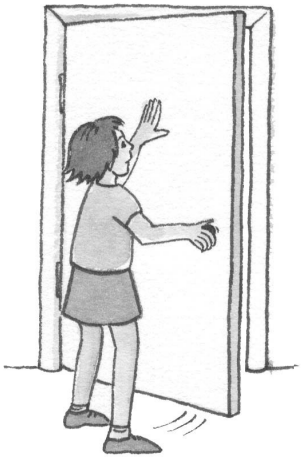
Science activity

The pictures show a number of forces in action. Decide whether the force is a push or pull. Write your answer beside each picture.



This force is a .....

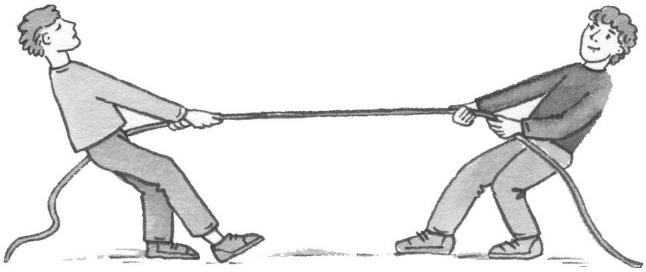
This force is a .....



This force is a .....

This force is a .....

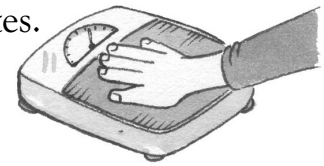
This force is a .....



This force is a .....

Science investigation

Using a bathroom scale, design and conduct an experiment to see who is the strongest among your family, friends, or classmates. Does a person's size make a difference? Can you push harder with your hand or finger? Does a leg push harder than an arm?



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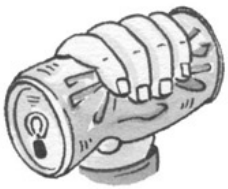


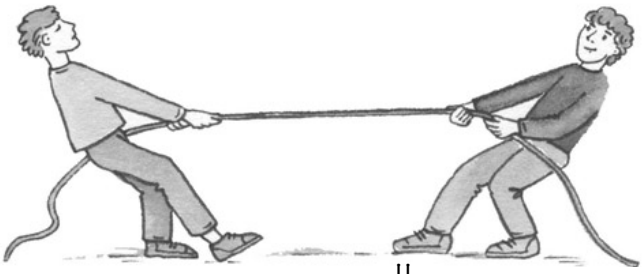
This force is a push.

This force is a pull.

This force is a push.

This force is a pull.

This force is a push.



This force is a pull.

Science investigation

It is relatively easy for children to understand that pushes and pulls are forces. it's harder to grasp that stretching, bending, turning, and squashing are also examples of forces in action, usually produced by the combined effects of two or more forces.

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