

Simple Machines

How do simple machines help us?

We use machines every day. Machines help make our lives easier. Some machines, such as lawn mowers



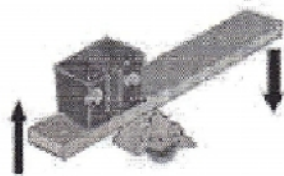
and vacuum cleaners, have many parts. Other machines have few



parts. They are called simple machines. Levers, inclined planes, wheels and axles, and pulleys are four kinds of simple machines.

This bottle opener is a kind of lever. It helps you remove the cap from a bottle. Some levers can help you move a heavy

object, such as a rock. Push down on one end of



a lever. The other end moves up and pushes against whatever you

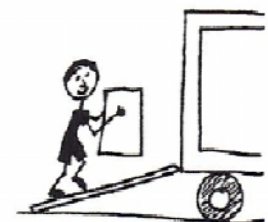


Man lifting a stone with a lever

are trying to move. Have you ever ridden a see-

saw? A seesaw is a kind of lever. One side goes up, while the other side goes down.

Inclined planes are all around you. A plane is just a flat surface, like a wooden board. An inclined plane is a flat surface that is slanted.



Ramps are inclined planes. It is easier to push a big load up a ramp than to lift it. A wedge is another kind of inclined plane. A wedge can help you cut wood. When a wedge is hit with a big



hammer, its thin part splits the wood.

Wheels help things go. An axle, or rod, connects a pair of wheels. The axle helps the wheels turn. Wheels are on bicycles and cars. It would be very hard to move a bike or car without wheels.



A pulley helps you lift heavy objects. A pulley's rope passes over a small wheel. Pull down on one end of the rope. You can lift a very heavy load tied to the other end. A pulley can help you raise and lower the flag on a flagpole.



You can even lift the sail on a boat using a pulley.

These children are using two kinds of simple machines. A wheelbarrow is a kind of lever, and it has wheels.

Have you used any simple machines today?

