



Flipping Physics Lecture Notes:

The Force of Gravitational Attraction between the Earth and the Moon

<https://www.flippingphysics.com/earth-moon-gravity.html>

Example: According to NASA, the mass of the Earth is 5.97×10^{24} kg, the mass of the Moon is 7.3×10^{22} kg, and the mean distance between the Earth and the Moon is 3.84×10^8 m. ♣ What is the force of gravitational attraction between the Earth and the Moon?

Knowns: $m_{Earth} = 5.97 \times 10^{24}$ kg; $m_{Moon} = 7.3 \times 10^{22}$ kg; $R_{E-M} = 3.84 \times 10^8$ m; $F_g = ?$

$$F_g = \frac{Gm_1m_2}{r^2} = \frac{Gm_E m_M}{R_{E-M}^2} = \frac{(6.67 \times 10^{-11})(5.97 \times 10^{24})(7.3 \times 10^{22})}{(3.84 \times 10^8)^2}$$

$$\Rightarrow F_g = 1.97134 \times 10^{20} \approx \boxed{2.0 \times 10^{20} \text{ N}}$$

There are a number of things wrong with the following calculations:

$$\sum F_{moon} = F_{EM} = m_m a_m \Rightarrow a_m = \frac{F_{EM}}{m_m} = \frac{1.97134 \times 10^{20}}{7.3 \times 10^{22}} = 0.0027005 \frac{m}{s^2} \approx 0.0027 \frac{m}{s^2}$$

$$\Delta x = v_i \Delta t + \frac{1}{2} a \Delta t^2 \Rightarrow 3.84 \times 10^8 = (0) \Delta t + \frac{1}{2} (0.0027005) \Delta t^2$$

$$\Rightarrow \Delta t = \sqrt{\frac{(2)(3.84 \times 10^8)}{0.0027005}} = 533288 \text{ sec} \left(\frac{1 \text{ hr}}{3600 \text{ sec}} \right) \left(\frac{1 \text{ day}}{24 \text{ hr}} \right) = 6.17231 \approx 6.2 \text{ days}$$

It is important you understand what is wrong with them though...

I'd watch the video because I detail what is wrong with the above calculations there.

Also, if you want to learn more about Universal Gravitation, please visit:

<http://www.flippingphysics.com/algebra.html#ug>

♣ <https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/factsheet/>