

**CONCEPTUAL PHYSICAL SCIENCE****Experiment****Fluid Mechanics****Buoyancy and Flotation Simulation**

# Pool Cubes: Buoyancy

**Purpose**

To investigate the nature of the buoyant force and to see the role it plays in determining whether or not an object floats

**Apparatus**

computer

PhET sim "Buoyancy" (available at <http://phet.colorado.edu>)

**Discussion**

When objects are immersed in a fluid, the fluid exerts a force on them. This is the buoyant force.

**Procedure****INITIAL SETUP**

Turn the computer on, and let it complete its start-up cycle. Locate and open the PhET sim "Buoyancy," and note that it opens in its "Intro" tab. Do not change the settings in the on-screen Blocks, Fluids, or Show Forces panels.

**PART A: WOOD**

**Step 1:** Measure (in the sim) and record the weight ( $W$ ) of the <sup>4.00</sup> 3.00-kg wood block.

39.2 N

**Step 2:**

- Place the wood block in the water and notice that it floats.
- When the wood block rests on the ground, the downward gravitational force is balanced by an upward normal ("contact") force. When the wood block is floating, the gravitational force is still there, but the normal ("contact") force is not. The force exerted by the fluid is the buoyant force ( $B$ ). When the block is floating, which force on it is greater: the gravitational force or the buoyant force? Defend your answer.

Buoyant force, because if the gravitational force was greater it would be pushed below the water.

- Record the value of the buoyant force acting on the wood block.

39.2 N

**Step 3:**

- What volume of water does the wood block displace when it floats in the water?

4L

# Pool Cubes Buoyancy Answers

**Janet Buckley, Lauren Corcoran**



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