

Combined Science - Physics

P4: Waves

Lesson sequence

- 1. Waves
- 2. Wave speed
- 3. Core practical investigating waves (CP13)
- 4. Refraction

1. Waves		
*Waves	Transfer energy without	
	transferring matter.	
*Oscillate	When particles vibrate backwards	
	and forwards or up and down.	
*Transverse	Waves in which particles oscillate	
waves	at right angles to the direction of	
	energy movement. E.g. water	
	waves and light waves.	
*Longitudinal	Waves in which particles oscillate	
waves	parallel to the direction of energy	
	movement. E.g. sound waves.	
*Medium	The material that waves travel	
	through. Light waves are the only	
	waves that have no medium.	
*Seismic	Waves of vibrating rock caused by	
waves	earthquakes.	
*Frequency	The number of waves that pass a	
	point every second.	
*Hertz	The unit of frequency. 1 Hz = 1	
	wave per second.	
*Period	The length of time it takes for a	
	single wave to pass.	
*Wavelength	The distance in m from the top of	
	one wave to the top of the next.	
*Amplitude	The maximum distance a particle	
	vibrates away from its resting	
	point,	
*Velocity	The speed of a wave in m/s.	







2. Wave speed		
*Speed, distance and time	$wave speed (m/s) = \frac{distance (m)}{time (s)}$	
*Speed, frequency and wavelength	wave speed $\left(\frac{m}{s}\right)$ = frequency (Hz) × wavelength (m)	
**Measuring wave speed	Time how long they take to travel a certain distance.	

***Changing	Waves travel at a different speed in
speed	a different medium. Light is slower
	in water than air.

3. Core practical – investigating waves (CP13)			
*CP13 -	To measure the speed of waves in a		
Aim	liquid and a solid.		
*CP13 –	1.	Count the number of waves in 10	
Water		s and use this to find the	
waves 1		frequency.	
	2.	Measure the wavelength with a	
		ruler	
	3.	Wave speed = frequency x	
		wavelength	
*CP13 –	1.	Time how long a wave takes to	
Water		pass two points, 0.3 m apart.	
waves 2	2.	Wave speed = dist / time	
*CP13 -	1.	Hit suspended metal bar with	
Waves		hammer and measure the	
in a		frequency using an app.	
solid	2.	Measure the metal bar – double	
		the length gives the wavelength	

4. Refraction		
Refraction	Bending of waves when they	
	enter a new medium at an angle.	
Interface	The boundary between two	
	media (mediums) such as air and	
	water.	
Normal	An imaginary line drawn at 90°	
	to where light hits an interface	
	(boundary).	
Travelling	Light bends towards the normal	
from air to		
glass or water		
Travelling	Light bends away from the	
from glass or	normal.	
air to water		
Explaining	Light waves slow down as they	
refraction	go from air to water. The	
	'bottom' of the wave hits the	
	water and slows down first,	
	causing refraction.	

