Distance/Displacement Mini Lesson

Physics Essentials

Scalars vs. Vectors

Scalars: Magnitude Only (Number + Unit)

Examples: 5 m/s, 2 m, 800 L

Vectors: Magnitude and Direction (Number + Unit + Direction)

Examples: 5 m/s south, -2 m, 800 L up

Scalar or Vector?
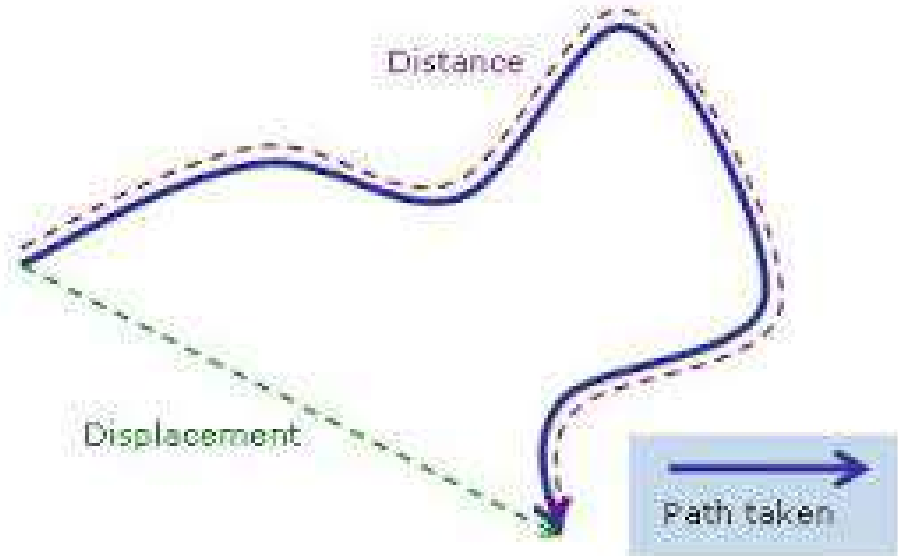
3 m/s

7 m north

- 8 meters

90 L

80 m/s south

Distance vs. Displacement

Distance: total length of the path from one point to another

Displacement: Length and direction of a straight line between starting and ending points (shortest distance from Start to Finish)

Distance =

Displacement =

Distance and Displacement from…
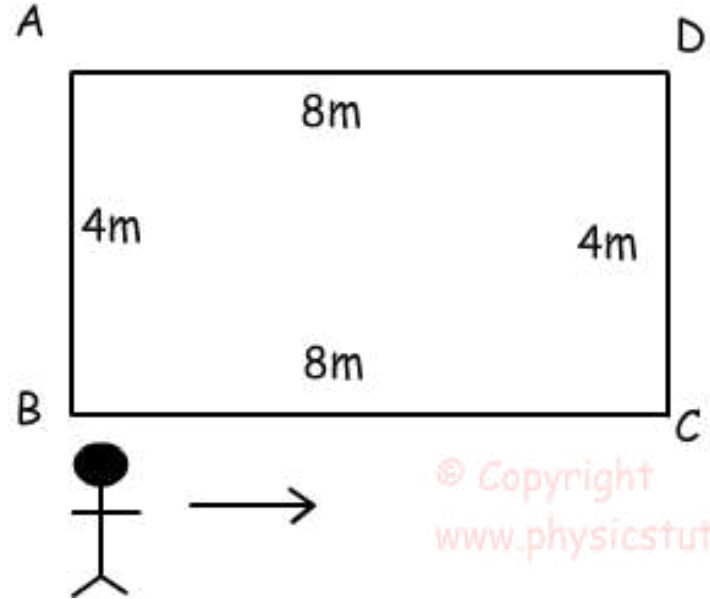
A to D
Dis=_____ Disp=_____

D to D
Dis=_____ Disp=_____

A to B
Dis=_____ Disp=_____

A to A
Dis=_____ Disp=_____

A   D

8m

4m   4m

8m

B   C

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