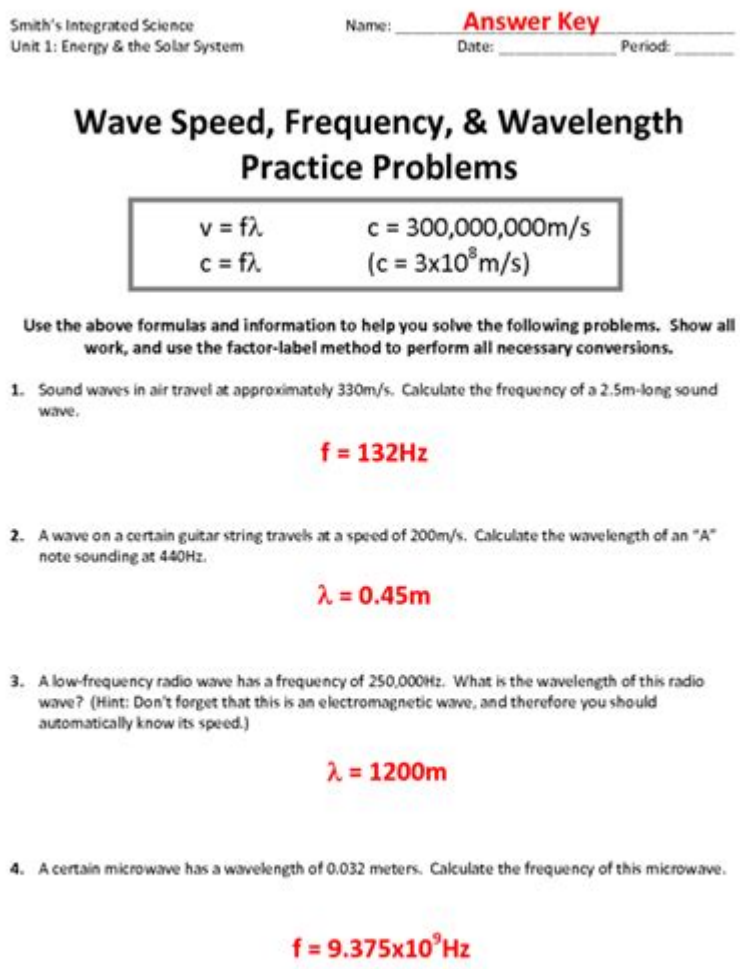
Wave Speed Problems To Solve Answer Key



Smith's Integrated Science
Unit 1: Energy & the Solar System

Name: Answer Key
Date: _____ Period: _____

Wave Speed, Frequency, & Wavelength Practice Problems

$v = f\lambda$	$c = 300{,}000{,}000 m/s$
$c = f\lambda$	$(c = 3x10^8 m/s)$

Use the above formulas and information to help you solve the following problems. Show all work, and use the factor-label method to perform all necessary conversions.

1. Sound waves in air travel at approximately 330m/s. Calculate the frequency of a 2.5m-long sound wave.

   f = 132Hz

2. A wave on a certain guitar string travels at a speed of 200m/s. Calculate the wavelength of an "A" note sounding at 440Hz.

   λ = 0.45m

3. A low-frequency radio wave has a frequency of 250,000Hz. What is the wavelength of this radio wave? (Hint: Don't forget that this is an electromagnetic wave, and therefore you should automatically know its speed.)

   λ = 1200m

4. A certain microwave has a wavelength of 0.032 meters. Calculate the frequency of this microwave.

   $f = 9.375x10^9 Hz$

Wave speed problems to solve answer key are essential for students and educators alike as they navigate the complexities of wave motion in physics. Understanding wave speed is crucial not only for academic purposes but also for practical applications in various fields, including engineering, oceanography, and telecommunications. This article will delve into the fundamentals of wave speed, provide a variety of problems to solve, and offer an answer key to facilitate learning and comprehension.

Understanding Wave Speed

Wave speed refers to the speed at which a wave propagates through a medium. It is a fundamental concept in physics, particularly in the study of waves, sound, and light. The wave speed can be calculated using the formula:

$$
v = f \cdot \lambda
$$

Where:
- v = wave speed (meters per second, m/s)
- f = frequency of the wave (hertz, Hz)
- λ = wavelength (meters, m)

Additionally, wave speed can vary depending on the type of wave and the medium through which it travels. For example, sound waves travel faster in water than in air, and light waves travel fastest in a vacuum.

Types of Waves

1. Mechanical Waves: These require a medium to travel through. Examples include sound waves and water waves.
2. Electromagnetic Waves: These do not require a medium and can travel through a vacuum. Examples include light waves, radio waves, and X-rays.
3. Surface Waves: These travel along the surface of a medium, such as ocean waves.

Common Wave Speed Problems

To enhance understanding, let's explore several types of wave speed problems. Each problem will vary in complexity and will include an answer key at the end of this article.

Problem Set

1. Basic Calculation of Wave Speed
- A wave has a frequency of 500 Hz and a wavelength of 2 meters. Calculate the wave speed.

2. Finding Frequency
- A wave travels at a speed of 340 m/s and has a wavelength of 1.7 meters. What is the frequency of the wave?

3. Determining Wavelength
- If a sound wave travels at a speed of 343 m/s and has a frequency of 20 Hz, what is its wavelength?

4. Comparative Wave Speeds
- Two waves travel through the same medium. Wave A has a frequency of 300 Hz and a wavelength of 1.5 meters. Wave B has a frequency of 600 Hz. What is the wavelength of Wave B?

5. Effect of Medium on Wave Speed
- A sound wave travels through air at a speed of 343 m/s. If the same sound wave travels through water at a speed of 1482 m/s, how much faster is the wave traveling in water compared to air?

6. Graphing Wave Speed
- A graph shows the relationship between frequency and wavelength for a specific wave. If the wave speed is constant at 400 m/s, plot the wavelength against frequency for frequencies ranging from 100 Hz to 1000 Hz.

7. Frequency and Wavelength Relationship
- A radio wave has a frequency of 97.5 MHz (megahertz). Calculate its wavelength.

Answer Key for Wave Speed Problems

Now that we have presented a variety of wave speed problems, it’s time to provide the answer key to facilitate self-assessment and learning.

Answers

1. Basic Calculation of Wave Speed
- Given: $f = 500$ Hz, $\lambda = 2$ m
- Calculation:
$$
v = f \cdot \lambda = 500 \, \text{Hz} \cdot 2 \, \text{m} = 1000 \, \text{m/s}
$$
- Answer: Wave speed = 1000 m/s

2. Finding Frequency
- Given: $v = 340$ m/s, $\lambda = 1.7$ m
- Calculation:
$$
f = \frac{v}{\lambda} = \frac{340 \, \text{m/s}}{1.7 \, \text{m}} = 200 \, \text{Hz}
$$
- Answer: Frequency = 200 Hz

3. Determining Wavelength
- Given: $v = 343$ m/s, $f = 20$ Hz
- Calculation:
$$
\lambda = \frac{v}{f} = \frac{343 \, \text{m/s}}{20 \, \text{Hz}} = 17.15 \, \text{m}
$$
- Answer: Wavelength = 17.15 m

4. Comparative Wave Speeds
- Given: Wave A: $f_A = 300$ Hz, $\lambda_A = 1.5$ m; Wave B: $f_B = 600$ Hz
- Calculation for Wave B:
$$
v_A = f_A \cdot \lambda_A = 300 \, \text{Hz} \cdot 1.5 \, \text{m} = 450 \, \text{m/s}
$$
$$
\lambda_B = \frac{v_B}{f_B} = \frac{450 \, \text{m/s}}{600 \, \text{Hz}} = 0.75 \, \text{m}
$$

\]
- Answer: Wavelength of Wave B = 0.75 m

5. Effect of Medium on Wave Speed
- Given: Speed in air = 343 m/s, Speed in water = 1482 m/s
- Calculation:
\[
1482 \, \text{m/s} - 343 \, \text{m/s} = 1139 \, \text{m/s}
\]
- Answer: The wave is traveling 1139 m/s faster in water.

6. Graphing Wave Speed
- Given: \(v = 400 \) m/s
- Calculation: Use the formula \(\lambda = \frac{v}{f} \) to find wavelengths for frequencies of 100 Hz, 200 Hz, 300 Hz, ..., 1000 Hz and plot the points.

7. Frequency and Wavelength Relationship
- Given: \(f = 97.5 \) MHz = \(97.5 \times 10^6 \) Hz
- Calculation:
\[
\lambda = \frac{v}{f} = \frac{3 \times 10^8 \, \text{m/s}}{97.5 \times 10^6 \, \text{Hz}} \approx 3.08 \, \text{m}
\]
- Answer: Wavelength ≈ 3.08 m

Conclusion

Understanding wave speed problems to solve answer key is vital for mastering the concept of wave motion in physics. By practicing these problems, students can gain confidence in their ability to calculate wave speed, frequency, and wavelength. Furthermore, grasping these concepts has broader implications in fields like telecommunications, acoustics, and even environmental science. Continued practice with varied problems will solidify this knowledge and prepare students for more advanced studies in physics and related disciplines.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the formula to calculate wave speed?

The formula to calculate wave speed (v) is v = f λ, where f is the frequency and λ (lambda) is the wavelength.

If a wave has a frequency of 10 Hz and a wavelength of 2 meters, what is its speed?

The speed of the wave is 20 m/s, calculated using the formula v = f λ (10 Hz 2 m = 20 m/s).

How can you find the wavelength of a wave if you know its speed and frequency?

You can find the wavelength using the formula $\lambda = v / f$, where v is the wave speed and f is the frequency.

What happens to the wave speed if the frequency increases while the wavelength remains constant?

If the frequency increases while the wavelength remains constant, the wave speed will also increase.

Can wave speed vary in different mediums? If so, how?

Yes, wave speed can vary in different mediums. For example, sound travels faster in water than in air due to the density and elasticity of the medium.

What is the wave speed of light in a vacuum?

The wave speed of light in a vacuum is approximately 299,792 kilometers per second (or about 300,000 km/s).

What is a common mistake when solving wave speed problems?

A common mistake is confusing the units of measurement; it's important to ensure frequency is in Hertz (Hz) and wavelength is in meters (m) when calculating wave speed.

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