

Philosophy of Space, Time and Spacetime: Study Questions for Newton Part I

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1. Where and why in the Definitions does Newton distinguish between bodies that appear to be at rest or in motion and bodies that truly are so?
2. Think carefully about the statement of the Three Laws of Motion: what kinds of spatial and temporal structures does Newton need to presuppose in order to make those statements meaningful and cogent? (Example: in Law 1, he describes a possible state of a body as “moving uniformly straightforward”—he thus, at a minimum, requires a concept of space that supports the idea of a straight line, and he requires a consonance between spatial and temporal measures that will allow him to say when a body traverses equal spatial distances in equal temporal intervals.)
3. How does Corollary 6 fit with the statement of Law 2? What does it tell us about the possibility of assigning a definite state of motion to a body?

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