Vectors and Sail Boats

Sailboats are able to sail against the wind at an angle because of the resultant of a combination of several forces.

Lift: is a force created when a fluid (water or air) passes over and under an object that creates an area of high and low pressure.



*Sailboats travel the fastest up wind because of the addition of all of the forces that are involved. The keel (under the boat) also produces lift from the water that passes over it which prevents the boat from tipping over.

When a sailboat travels straight down wind the only force responsible for the velocity is the wind.

When a sailboat is at a specific angle (called "beam reach") against the wind there are 4 different forces interacting to create the velocity of the boat.



F_w: force of the wind.

F_s: force due to the lift created by the sail.

F_k: force due to the lift created by the keel

 F_d : force due to the friction created by the water and the bottom of the boat.

R = Resultant