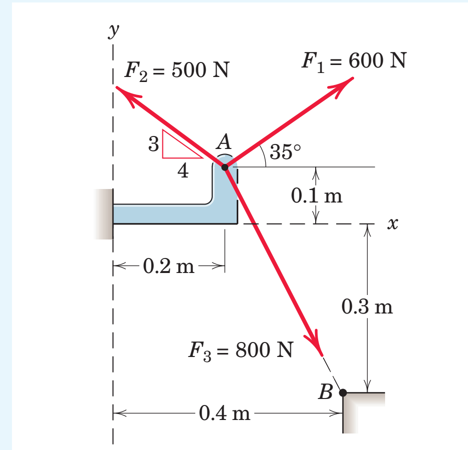
SAMPLE PROBLEM 2/1

The forces $\mathbf{F}_1$, $\mathbf{F}_2$, and $\mathbf{F}_3$, all of which act on point A of the bracket, are specified in three different ways. Determine the x and y scalar components of each of the three forces.



Solution. The scalar components of $\mathbf{F}_1$, from Fig. a, are

$$F_{1_x} = 600 \cos 35° = 491 \text{ N} \qquad \textit{Ans.}$$

$$F_{1_y} = 600 \sin 35° = 344 \text{ N} \qquad \textit{Ans.}$$

The scalar components of $\mathbf{F}_2$, from Fig. b, are

$$F_{2_x} = -500(\tfrac{4}{5}) = -400 \text{ N} \qquad \textit{Ans.}$$

$$F_{2_y} = 500(\tfrac{3}{5}) = 300 \text{ N} \qquad \textit{Ans.}$$

Note that the angle which orients $\mathbf{F}_2$ to the x-axis is never calculated. The cosine and sine of the angle are available by inspection of the 3-4-5 triangle. Also note that the x scalar component of $\mathbf{F}_2$ is negative by inspection.

The scalar components of $\mathbf{F}_3$ can be obtained by first computing the angle α of Fig. c.

$$\alpha = \tan^{-1}\left[\frac{0.2}{0.4}\right] = 26.6°$$

1 Then,

$$F_{3_x} = F_3 \sin \alpha = 800 \sin 26.6° = 358 \text{ N} \qquad \textit{Ans.}$$

$$F_{3_y} = -F_3 \cos \alpha = -800 \cos 26.6° = -716 \text{ N} \qquad \textit{Ans.}$$

Alternatively, the scalar components of $\mathbf{F}_3$ can be obtained by writing $\mathbf{F}_3$ as a magnitude times a unit vector $\mathbf{n}_{AB}$ in the direction of the line segment AB. Thus,

2

$$\mathbf{F}_3 = F_3\mathbf{n}_{AB} = F_3 \frac{\overrightarrow{AB}}{\overline{AB}} = 800\left[\frac{0.2\mathbf{i} - 0.4\mathbf{j}}{\sqrt{(0.2)^2 + (-0.4)^2}}\right]$$

$$= 800\,[0.447\mathbf{i} - 0.894\mathbf{j}]$$

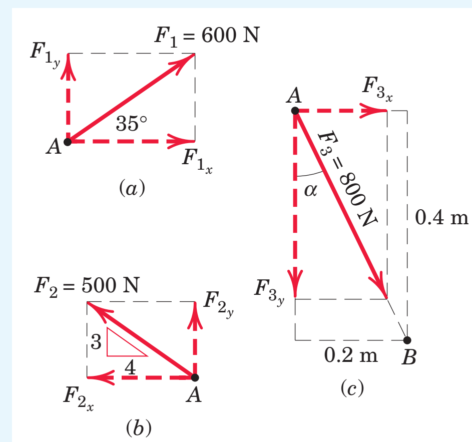
$$= 358\mathbf{i} - 716\mathbf{j} \text{ N}$$

The required scalar components are then

$$F_{3_x} = 358 \text{ N} \qquad \textit{Ans.}$$

$$F_{3_y} = -716 \text{ N} \qquad \textit{Ans.}$$

which agree with our previous results.



Helpful Hints

1 You should carefully examine the geometry of each component determination problem and not rely on the blind use of such formulas as $F_x = F \cos \theta$ and $F_y = F \sin \theta$.

2 A unit vector can be formed by dividing *any* vector, such as the geometric position vector $\overrightarrow{AB}$, by its length or magnitude. Here we use the overarrow to denote the vector which runs from A to B and the overbar to determine the distance between A and B.