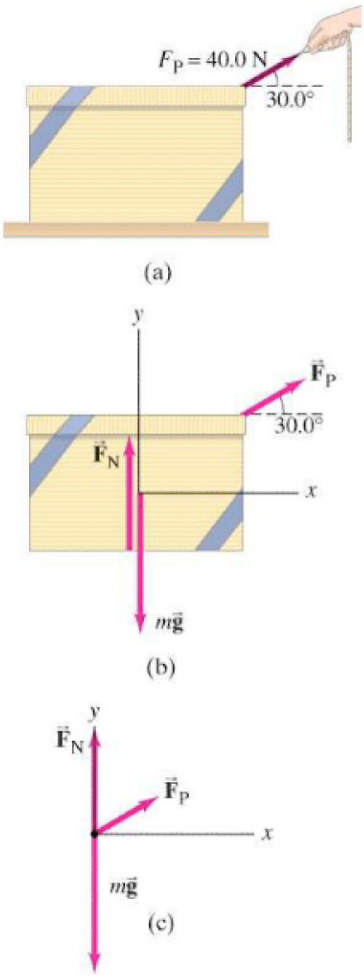

FIGURE 4–21 (a) Pulling the box, Example 4–11; (b) is the free-body diagram for the box, and (c) is the free-body diagram considering all the forces to act at a point (translational motion only, which is what we have here).

EXAMPLE 4–11 Pulling the mystery box. Suppose a friend asks to examine the 10.0-kg box you were given (Example 4–6, Fig. 4–15), hoping to guess what is inside; and you respond, "Sure, pull the box over to you." She then pulls the box by the attached cord, as shown in Fig. 4–21a, along the smooth surface of the table. The magnitude of the force exerted by the person is $F_P = 40.0\,\text{N}$, and it is exerted at a 30.0° angle as shown. Calculate (*a*) the acceleration of the box, and (*b*) the magnitude of the upward force F_N exerted by the table on the box. Assume that friction can be neglected.

APPROACH We follow the Problem Solving Box on the previous page.

SOLUTION

1. **Draw a sketch**: The situation is shown in Fig. 4–21a; it shows the box and the force applied by the person, F_P.
2. **Free-body diagram**: Figure 4–21b shows the free-body diagram of the box. To draw it correctly, we show *all* the forces acting on the box and *only* the forces acting on the box. They are: the force of gravity $m\vec{g}$; the normal force exerted by the table $\vec{F}_N$; and the force exerted by the person $\vec{F}_P$. We are interested only in translational motion, so we can show the three forces acting at a point, Fig. 4–21c.
3. **Choose axes and resolve vectors**: We expect the motion to be horizontal, so we choose the x axis horizontal and the y axis vertical. The pull of 40.0 N has components

$$F_{Px} = (40.0\,\text{N})(\cos 30.0°) = (40.0\,\text{N})(0.866) = 34.6\,\text{N},$$
$$F_{Py} = (40.0\,\text{N})(\sin 30.0°) = (40.0\,\text{N})(0.500) = 20.0\,\text{N}.$$

In the horizontal (x) direction, $\vec{F}_N$ and $m\vec{g}$ have zero components. Thus the horizontal component of the net force is F_{Px}.

4. (*a*) **Apply Newton's second law** to determine the x component of the acceleration:

$$F_{Px} = ma_x.$$

5. (*a*) **Solve**:

$$a_x = \frac{F_{Px}}{m} = \frac{(34.6\,\text{N})}{(10.0\,\text{kg})} = 3.46\,\text{m/s}^2.$$

The acceleration of the box is $3.46\,\text{m/s}^2$ to the right.

(*b*) Next we want to find F_N.

4. (*b*) **Apply Newton's second law** to the vertical (y) direction, with upward as positive:

$$\Sigma F_y = ma_y$$
$$F_N - mg + F_{Py} = ma_y.$$

5. (*b*) **Solve**: We have $mg = (10.0\,\text{kg})(9.80\,\text{m/s}^2) = 98.0\,\text{N}$ and, from point 3 above, $F_{Py} = 20.0\,\text{N}$. Furthermore, since $F_{Py} < mg$, the box does not move vertically, so $a_y = 0$. Thus

$$F_N - 98.0\,\text{N} + 20.0\,\text{N} = 0,$$

so

$$F_N = 78.0\,\text{N}.$$

NOTE F_N is less than mg: the table does not push against the full weight of the box because part of the pull exerted by the person is in the upward direction.

Tension in a Flexible Cord

PROBLEM SOLVING
Cords can pull but can't push; tension exists throughout a cord

When a flexible cord pulls on an object, the cord is said to be under **tension**, and the force it exerts on the object is the tension F_T. If the cord has negligible mass, the force exerted at one end is transmitted undiminished to each adjacent piece of cord along the entire length to the other end. Why? Because $\Sigma\vec{F} = m\vec{a} = 0$ for the cord if the cord's mass m is zero (or negligible) no matter what $\vec{a}$ is. Hence the forces pulling on the cord at its two ends must add up to zero (F_T and $-F_T$). Note that flexible cords and strings can only pull. They can't push because they bend.