Pulleys are machines that we use to lift heavy objects. They are made from a number of wheels and a long piece of rope or cable. The cable is wound around each of the wheels in turn, and the whole system is attached to a weight.

By pulling the cable, the weight can be raised easily. The more wheels in a pulley system, the easier the lifting becomes. When three pulleys are used, the weight is shared between three stretches of cable and the force you need is only a third of what you would need to lift the weight by yourself. If four were used, the force you would need would be reduced to a quarter.