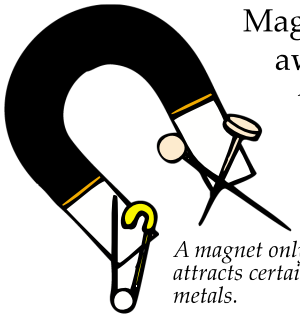
Introduction

Magnetism is a special type of force. Magnetism is a special property of matter. In this unit, you will learn how magnets are created. You will also discover how to make a **compass** and describe how it works. Magnetism is a force that affects many areas of everyday living.

What Is a Magnet?

A **magnet** is a substance that **attracts** or pulls on other substances. Iron, cobalt, and nickel are **magnetic** metals because they are attracted to a magnet. Anything that is not attracted to a magnet is **nonmagnetic**. Tin, copper, paper, and wood are nonmagnetic.



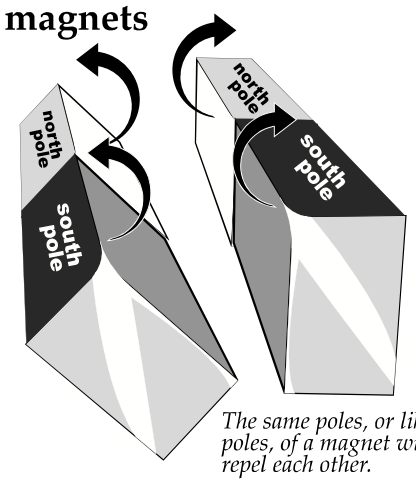
A magnet only attracts certain metals.

Magnetic force can also **repel**. Two magnets can push away from each other when their ends are put together. The ends of a magnet where the force is strongest are called **poles**. The poles of a magnet are found by determining which ends have the strongest force. Pass a bar magnet over a box of pins. Most of the pins will stick to the ends of the magnet.

One pole, or end of a magnet, is called the **north pole**. The other end is called the **south pole**. All magnets have a north and south pole.

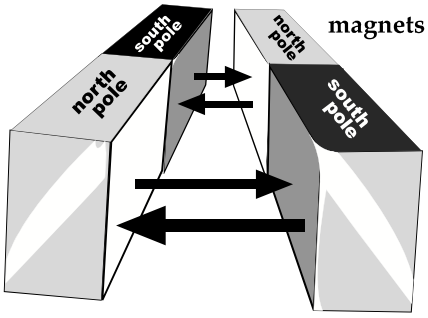
Pick up two magnets. Put the north pole of one next to the north pole of the other. What happens? They repel each other. Try placing a south pole next to a south pole. Again, the magnets will repel each other.

Now put a north pole next to a south pole. Do they repel each other? No, they



The same poles, or like poles, of a magnet will repel each other.

attract each other. This is called the **law of magnetic poles**. The same poles, or **like poles**, of a magnet will repel each other. The opposite poles, or **unlike poles**, of a magnet will attract each other.



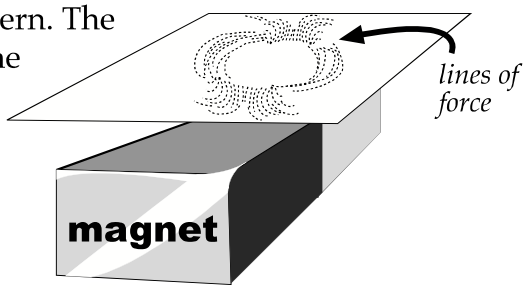
The opposite poles, or unlike poles, of magnets will attract each other.

Explaining Magnetism

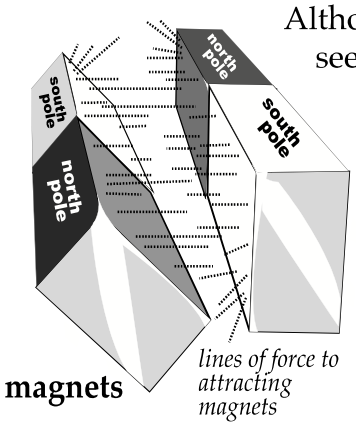
You know that atoms make up matter. Some atoms are like little magnets. In cobalt, iron, and nickel, the atoms may line up in a special way. When most of the atoms face the same way, the material will be magnetic. In nonmagnetic material, the poles cancel each other out. This is because they are not lined up in the same direction.

Magnetic Field

You already know that the force of a magnet is strongest at the poles. The rest of the magnet also has some force. Put a piece of paper over a bar magnet. Place some iron filings on top of the paper. Shake the paper slightly. The iron filings will make a pattern. The lines you see are called **lines of force**. The whole pattern is the **magnetic field**. A magnetic field is a space around a magnet where a force is noticeable.



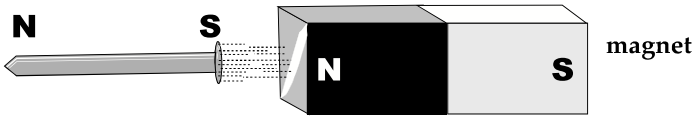
When you get too far away from a magnet, the force will not be noticeable Although magnetism seems like a strong force, we see that it quickly gets weak with distance.



What would the lines of force look like in attracting magnets? What would happen to the lines of force if two like magnets were placed together? Remember, opposite forces attract and like forces repel.

Making a Magnet

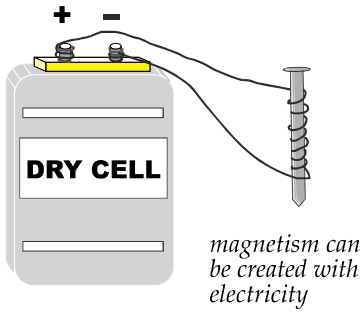
Magnetism can be **induced**, or created, in some materials. There are three ways to make a magnet. Place an iron nail against the north pole of a magnet. The force in the magnet will begin to pull at the atoms in the nail. They will line up in straight lines. This will make the nail temporarily magnetic. The end of the nail closest to the magnet's north pole will become the south pole. The other tip of the nail will be the north pole.



You can also **magnetize** some materials by rubbing them with a magnet. Run a magnet along the side of a needle. Keep rubbing in the same direction. The atoms in the needle will begin to line up. This will make the needle into a magnet. The longer you rub, the stronger the magnetism will become. Both induced magnets will lose their magnetic force after awhile.

Magnetism can also be created with electricity. Connect a wire to the (+) side of a dry cell or battery. Coil the wire around a nail. Attach it to the (-) side of the dry cell.

This will create an **electromagnet**. The nail will act like a magnet. This kind of magnet has many advantages over ordinary magnets. Electromagnets can be turned on and off. Their strength can be controlled. This kind of magnet is used in doorbells, electric motors, and telephones.



magnetism can be created with electricity

dry cell (battery)

The Electromagnetic Effect

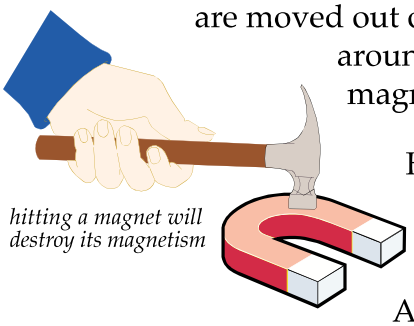
You saw that in the first two examples, a magnet was used to create a new magnet. In this last example, we did not use a magnet. Instead, we used electricity. Electricity is electrons that are flowing in a particular direction. Because these particles are charged, when they flow past the nail it causes a magnetic field to be created. It is this field that makes the nail act as a magnet. When you unplugged the wires, the electrons stopped. This also shut off the magnet.

This effect was first described by Michael Faraday. He called it the **electromagnetic effect**. This means that, as we've seen, electricity can create magnets. Magnets, however, can also be used to create electricity, the flow of electrons. Electrons move from areas of negative charge to areas of positive charge. By moving magnets past a length of metal, electrons are made to move. This is how electricity is generated. Electricity and magnetism are closely related and are usually found together. In many ways, they cannot be separated and are just two versions of the same force.

Demagnetizing a Magnet

When the physical appearance of a magnet is changed, the property of magnetism may or may not change. If a magnet is cut in half, it will not destroy the magnet. There will just be two smaller magnets. Each one will have a north and a south pole.

However, magnetism can be destroyed. A magnet can be **demagnetized** by removing properties from a magnet. Remember that the atoms in a magnet are lined up in a row. Magnetism will be destroyed if the atoms are moved out of line. Heating will cause atoms to move around. If a magnet is held over a flame, its magnetism will be lost.



hitting a magnet will destroy its magnetism

Hitting a magnet with a hammer will also destroy its magnetism. The force of the hammer will move the atoms out of line.

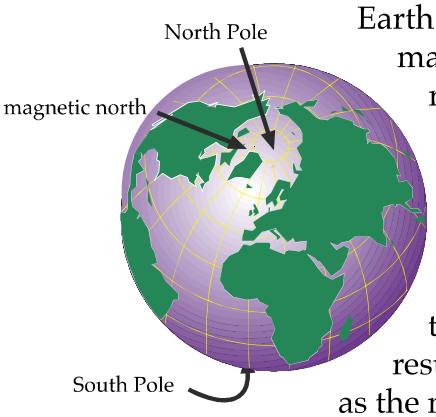
A magnet that is dropped over and over again will also lose its magnetism. Each time the magnet is dropped, more atoms will move out of line.

Earth as a Magnet

What makes one pole of a magnet point north? It must be attracted to something. Earth can be thought of as a large magnet. Look at a globe of Earth. The very top is called the **North Pole**. The opposite side is called the **South Pole**. These spots are not the magnetic poles. **Magnetic north** is located almost 800 miles from the North Pole. **Magnetic south** is located near the South Pole.

Why is magnetic north important? Scientists discovered the magnetic force of Earth could be used to determine direction. Sailors began using

compasses to find their way. A compass has a magnetized needle that points to magnetic north. Any direction can be located if you know which way is north. For advanced navigation, it is important to know that there is a slight shift in north as you approach the North Pole. This shift is called **magnetic variation**.



Earth acts as a huge magnet. It also has a magnetic field. Earth's magnetic field is responsible for the phenomenon called the **northern lights**. Remember that magnets are closely related to electricity. Because of this, they have effects on charged particles. When charged particles come into Earth's atmosphere near the poles, they interact with the magnetic pole. The result is a release of energy. We see this energy as the northern lights or bright-colored areas in the sky.

Summary

Magnetism is a force that attracts or repels substances. Magnets have north and south poles. Poles that are the same repel each other. Unlike poles attract. Lines of force surround a magnet. Magnets can be created when atoms line up. The electromagnetic force can be used to create magnets or electricity. Applying heat, hitting, or dropping a magnet will destroy its magnetism. Earth acts as a magnet. A compass helps locate direction by pointing to the magnetic north.