Activities

Magnetic Attractions

Grades: PreK–K, 1–2

Overview
Kids learn about magnetism by predicting which objects will be attracted to a magnet and then testing to see the results.

Materials
- small bar magnets
- Magnetic Attractions Activity Page (attached)
- assorted objects such as paper clips, coins, straws, washers, crayons, pieces of aluminum foil

Directions
1. Give each student a copy of the Magnetic Attractions Activity Page. Have students write Yes or No to indicate their predictions about whether or not each item on the list will stick to a magnet.
2. Once students have recorded their predictions, invite them to test the objects and record their results. After testing the six objects on the list, students can find four more objects to test. They should write the name of each object in the space provided, record their predictions, and then test each object.
3. When all groups are finished, gather students together. List the first six objects on chart paper and ask students to answer Yes or No to this question: Does (the object) stick to a magnet? If discrepancies occur, take time to retest.

4. After you have recorded the results for the first six objects, have students help you list additional objects they tested. Record Yes or No for these items, as well.

5. Using information collected from this experiment, what can students say about the kinds of objects that will stick to a magnet? (Do all metal objects stick to a magnet? Shiny objects?) Many children will predict that anything made of metal will stick to the magnet, but this is not the case. Objects made of iron, nickel, or cobalt (or alloys of these metals) are attracted to magnets. Objects made of aluminum and lead are not. Discuss students' ideas and compile and display a list of the characteristics of things that stick to magnets.

Note: This is one of those activities that is a lot more manageable if the materials are easily accessible. If possible, use small trays that can hold enough magnets and test materials for each person in a small group of two or three students.

- Subjects:
  Science, Magnetism, Observation
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Object Will it stick to the magnet? Did it stick?
1. paper clip
2. coin
3. straw

Object Will it stick to the magnet? Did it stick?
4. washer
5. crayon
6. aluminum foil

Think of four more objects to test. Write the names of the objects here. Write your prediction first.

Then test with the magnet.
Object Will it stick to the magnet? Did it stick?
7.
8.
9.
10.

Subjects:
Early Science, Science Experiments and Projects, Magnetism