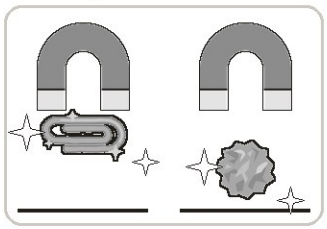
Does a magnet pick up everything shiny? Helping your child try it to find out

Parent page · ages 4–5 · goes with the video "Understand the concept"

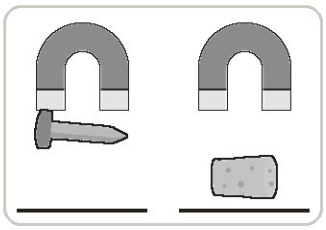
A logical idea

Does your child say "a magnet picks up everything shiny"? What stands out about an object is often whether it shines, and in the first tries, it works: the paper clip is shiny and the magnet picks it up. It's not random guessing: they're looking for a rule using what they can see.

The key idea



paper clip: shiny, picked up
ball of foil: shiny, not picked up



old nail: not shiny, picked up
cork: not shiny, not picked up

What a magnet picks up depends on what the object is made of, not on how shiny it is: all four cases exist (shiny and picked up, shiny and not picked up, dull and picked up, dull and not picked up). Looking isn't enough: you try it, with a gesture that's always the same, the magnet touches the object, then lifts. Careful, "magnets pick up metal" isn't a rule either: foil is metal and doesn't stick; some stainless steel spoons stick, some don't. With your child, there's no need for the word "metal."

Questions instead of corrections

- "What do you think: will the magnet pick it up?"
- "How could we find out?"
- "What did you see?"

Describe what you see ("the paper clip came up, the ball of foil stayed"), without judging or correcting.

Safety

An adult stays right there for every try. Use a large horseshoe or bar magnet in good condition, too big to go in a mouth and not a very strong one, away from screens and cards. Never use small magnets (tiny fridge or toy magnets), powerful magnets, or magnetic balls: if swallowed, they are very dangerous. The adult puts the big nail down and takes it off the magnet; it never goes into the child's hands. Nothing goes in the mouth; small objects (paper clip, ball of foil, cork) stay out of reach of younger children. Scissors and tape are for the adult. If your child still puts things in their mouth, skip the small objects.

Page 2, to do together (no reading needed)

- Show the two pictures: the object comes up with the magnet (picked up) or stays down (not picked up). Then say: "Nouk thinks a magnet picks up everything shiny. What do you think?"
- Before each try, your child circles or points to one picture under the question mark. After the try, they circle one under the eye, without erasing their first choice. They can also point, and you circle for them.
- 1. The sort: a paper clip, a ball of foil, a cork, a wooden spoon, and a big dull nail that you put down and take off the magnet yourself. Start with two or three objects, and cover the other rows with a sheet of paper.
- 2. Fishing: two small fish cut from thin cardboard, one with a paper clip on its nose, the other with a ball of foil about the size of a walnut taped on. They touch each fish's nose with the magnet, then lift.
- 3. The challenge: a paper clip, a ball of foil, and a cork; the magnet picks up only one. 4. Your child draws what surprised them.

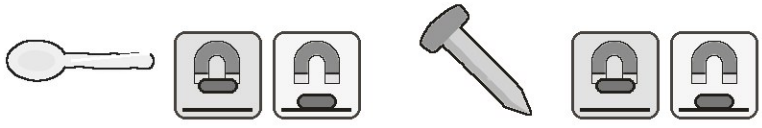
Before you play, test every object with your magnet yourself, and keep the ones that clearly come up or stay down. Keep this page out of view until after the activity.

For you, after your child has checked (objects you tested first)

- Picked up: the plain paper clip (not plastic-coated), the big dull nail.
- Stay: the ball of foil, the cork, the wooden spoon.
- Fishing: the paper clip fish comes up; the foil one stays, even though both noses are shiny.
- Stainless steel spoon: some stick, some don't (you tested it first).

A good sign: they suggest trying it, or say you can't tell by looking. If they still say "it's shiny, so it sticks," do the sort again with other objects: it often takes several tries.

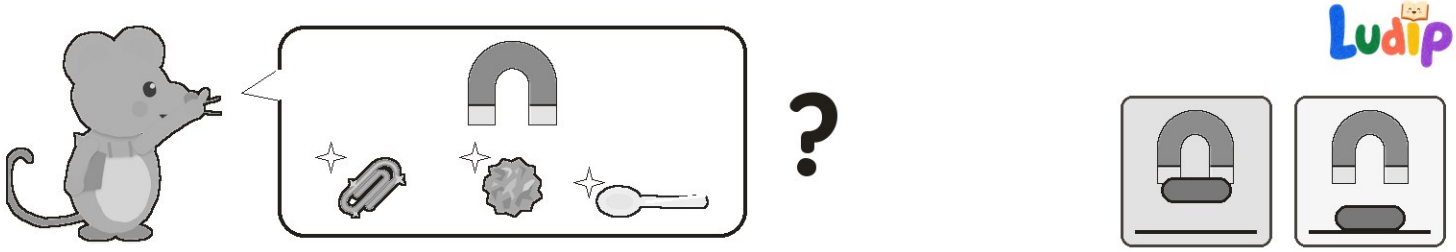
A few days later, without making a big deal of it (adult cuts out)



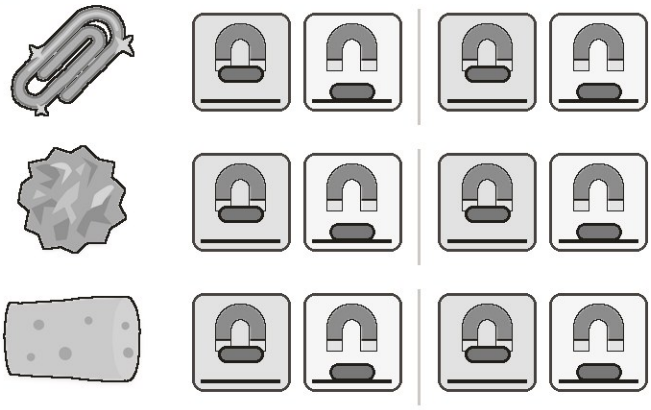
a shiny spoon

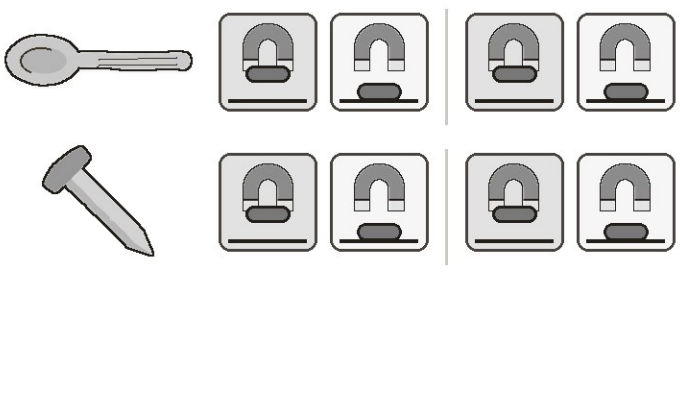
an old nail

For each object, circle the picture of what you think will happen: the magnet picks it up, or the object stays down. Why? Then test together with a large magnet, with an adult watching right there the whole time; the adult puts the nail down and takes it off the magnet. Nothing in the mouth.

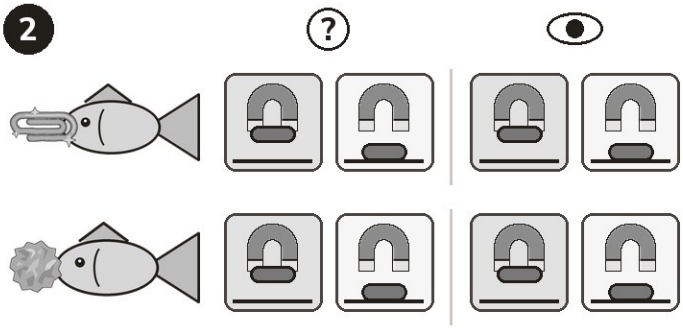


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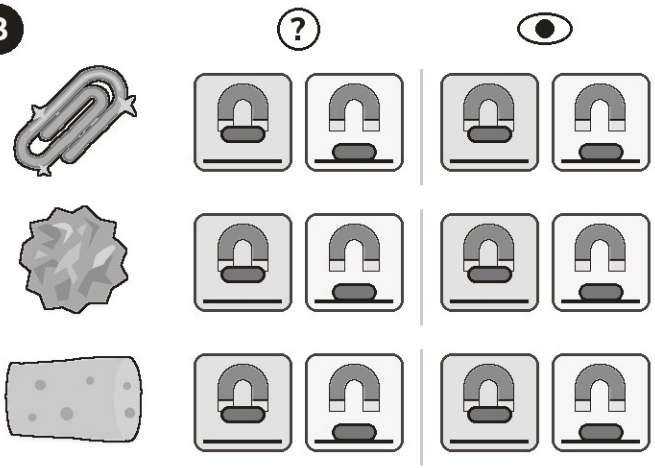




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