SOLARIMPULSE

MAGNETS Opposites attract

Electricity produced by Solar Impulse's solar cells is used to drive electromagnets on the motors. The attraction or repulsion of these electromagnets with fixed magnets sets the axis of the motor blades in motion.

This worksheet will introduce you to the concept of magnetism and you'll build your own electromagnet. It's up to you to make the most efficient one you can!



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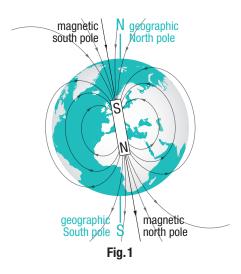


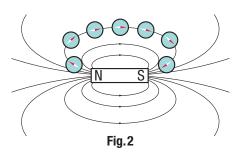


TERRESTRIAL MAGNETISM

Until 1820, magnetism was not well understood. Its only practical use was in the compass.

Actually, the Earth behaves like a huge magnet. Its magnetic South Pole is located not far from its geographical North Pole (Fig 1). We know that two magnets with opposing poles (north and south) are attracted to one another. If they have the same poles, they repel one another. To study the force exerted by a magnet on another object, scientists imagine the presence of a magnetic field around the magnet. This field is shown by lines coming out of the north pole and circling down to the south pole (Fig 2). The direction of the lines is given by the orientation the needle of a compass would take at that location. Thus when there is no magnet nearby, a compass will line up in accordance with the Earth's magnetic field, indicating to the user the direction of the terrestrial magnetic south pole.





lls ne perdent pas le nord!

We have long wondered how some animals, particularly migratory birds, manage to travel over long distances without losing their way. They fly day and night, in conditions of bad visibility and over places without any landmarks, like the ocean. The bar-tailed Godwit can migrate from Alaska to New Zealand, a trip of 10,000 km, in just 8 days! Bats, sharks and many other animals also travel long distances as well.



Bar-tailed Godwit: holds the world record for the longest non-stop migration

In 1970 bacteria that were capable of orienting themselves using magnetoception were discovered. Scientists observed that these bacteria moved en masse, as a group. Experiments showed that they were guided by the magnetic field.

Even though the homing instinct of carrier pigeons has been extensively studied, it is still not well understood. They orient themselves using the Sun. But in cloudy conditions they use the terrestrial magnetic field. Scientists showed in the laboratory that they can sense fields whose intensity is similar to that of the Earth's magnetic field. Animals most likely use a combination of many things - vision, smell, light polarization, the position of stars, and the terrestrial magnetic field - to find their way... but we're still not sure!

PERMANENT MAGNETS

Before the 1st centure AD, the Chinese used the interaction between a magnetized needle and the terrestrial magnetic field to navigate: this was the first compass. The first magnets were made from magnetite. This is an iron oxide (Fe₃0₄) whose name comes from the Greek word Magnetikos, the name of the land in Anatolia, Magnesia, where the mineral was extracted. The most common magnets were made of alloys containing iron, nickel and cobalt.

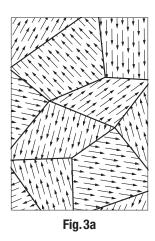


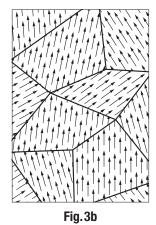
Magnetite

Under a microscope, a ferromagnetic substance is made up of regions smaller than 1 mm that each behave like separate magnets (Fig. 3a). In a non-magnetized chunk of this substance, the magnetic fields of these regions are oriented randomly with respect to one another; as a consequence, at the macroscopic scale (object) the vectorial sum of the magnetic fields of all the regions is zero. When subjected to a powerful external magnetic field, however (Fig. 3b), the separate magnetic fields tend to align themselves with the external magnetic field. Thus this material will, in the presence of an external magnetic field, create another magnetic field which will strengthen the external field.

A ferromagnetic rod immersed in a magnetic field concentrates and amplifies that magnetic field. Depending on what it is made up of, it will maintain its magnetism for a shorter or longer period of time.

Magnets used in giant windmills, as well as magnets used in hybrid vehicles and Solar Impulse, are made of lanthanides (the rare-earth metals, Nos 57-71 on the periodic table of the elements (Fig. 4)). Neodymium magnets ($Nd_2Fe_{14}B$) are the most powerful magnets that can be purchased. These magnets are the least easily demagnetized.





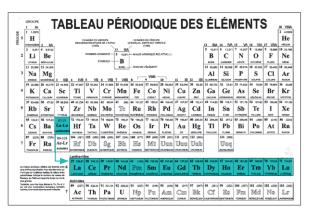


Fig.4



Getting two nails to stick together

Materials

- small nails (steel or iron)
- a magnet





THE REVOLUTION: THE "ARTIFICIAL" OR ELECTROMAGNET

Hans Christian Ørsted had been convinced for several years that magnetism and electricity were related. In 1820 he published the results of his research. Now you can do the same experiment and see what he found.

Experiment: Verify the relationship between electric current and magnetic field

Create a closed circuit with a source of voltage – this could be a battery or a generator. To avoid overheating the wire, add a dissipative resistor that reduces the Joule-effect heating, for example a light bulb. Put a compass in the vicinity of one of the wires. What do you notice?

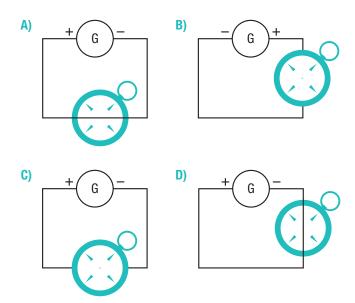
Repeat the exercise several times until you can predict how the needle will react.

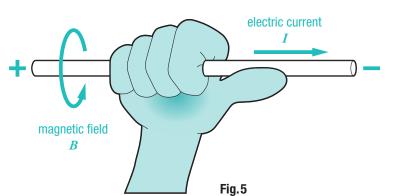
Hint: orient the wire in the direction of the terrestrial magnetic field.

Quiz

Sketch the orientation of the compass needle. The red needle indicates north.

In this exercise, we assume that the electric current in the wire is large enough that the terrestrial magnetic field is negligible compared to the field created by the current. Pay careful attention to the position of the compass in relation to the wire.



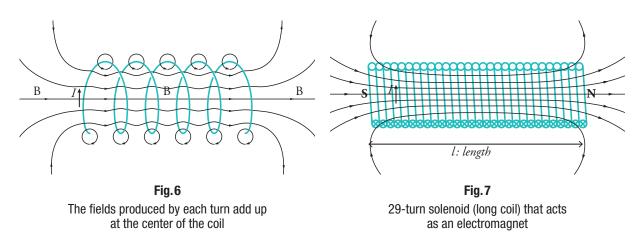


In effect, when an electric current runs through a wire, it generates a circular magnetic field. you can use your right hand (Fig. 5) to remind yourself how the magnetic field is aligned.



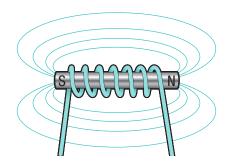


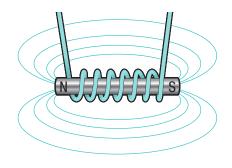
The field created around a wire is weak even with a large current. To amplify the effect, you could use several wires. But in 1824, William Sturgeon came up with a better idea yet: he wound an insulated wire in which a current was circulating around and around, into a coil. Although the fields between each turn cancelled each other out, the overall field in the center of the coil was amplified (Fig. 6). When a current was sent through the coil, it acted like a magnet (Fig. 7). If he turned off the power, the magnetic field was also cut off.



Quiz

Show which direction the current must flow in the coil to obtain the poles indicated in the figure. Use an arrow to show the orientation of the lines of the magnetic field.







Who can pick up the most metal with his/her electromagnet?

Material required

- · a battery or power source
- · copper wire with plastic or ceramic coating
- screws and nails
- · toothpick, pencil
- a blade (knife or razor blade)





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MANUELA TABASSO, DESIGNER AT ETEL S.A.

Let's set aside equations and simulations and look at a real motor. How do you manufacture all the designed elements as efficiently as possible to obtain the specifications, while keeping costs to a minimum? This is what Manuela Tabasso does. She is a designer at ETEL S.A., the company that manufactures Solar Impulse's motors. Her job is to draw up plans for building the motors, starting from a set of equations. She's also in charge of drawing up plans for all the tools that will be needed for the motors to be assembled and tested. These plans are sent to the "Supply Chain" department, which will manufacture the parts.

What does Manuela love about her job? That it evolves right along with technological progress. Solar Impulse is This challenge was met with the collaboration of two engineers and two technicians. Manuela studied at the Centre professionnel du Littoral neuchâtelois (CPNL). She has been working at ETEL S.A. for 19 years, as a designer in the R&D section of the motor department.

SOLARIMPULSE

The magnets are a critical part of an electric motor, because a magnetic field created by magnets is required for the motor to turn. However, this can result in energy loss. The motors in Solar Impulse's first prototype, the HB-SIA, included a new technology developed by ETEL, a partner company to Solar Impulse. ETEL developed an electric motor that radically reduced energy loss while still meeting weight constraints. This was accomplished by cutting the magnets into thin slices and lining them up side by side.



There are a total of 20 magnets in the HB-SIA motors, 10 north and 10 south. These developments make it possible to attain efficiencies of 98% (pre-gear).



André-Marie Ampère (1775-1836) was a French physicist. He was one of the last self-taught intellectuals who was interested in a wide range of scientific disciplines. He helped make physics more "mathematical". He did important work in electromagnetism, inventing several devices including the solenoid and the electric telegraph. The international unit of electric current, the Ampere, is named after him.

Canton de

MAGNETS (1/1)

PUTTING IT TO THE TEST...

André-Marie Ampère predicted, even before François Arago did the experiment, that the magnetic field of a coil would be proportional to the intensity of the current flowing through it and the number of times it was wrapped around.

Material required

- · a source of power and electric wires
- a long insulated or coated copper wire (2-3 m)
- an amperometer
- a tube (paper towel tube or PVC tube, ~ 4 cm in diameter)
- · a permanent magnet
- · a way to hang the magnet from a wire
- small magnetic objects (iron, steel, etc)
- a ruler and some duct tape

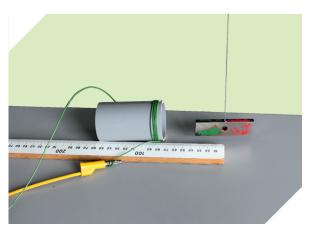


Fig.8



Be careful not to exceed the limits indicated on the devices (e.g. power supply)

Make a coil with the wire by wrapping it just 10 times around the tube. Keep the rest of the wire unrolled. You can tape the coil to keep the wire on the tube.

A) Power up the coil and verify that it's functioning as an electromagnet.

Hang the permanent magnet on a wire. (Fig. 8)

- B) Predict which pole of the permanent magnet will be attracted to the electromagnet.
- C) Inverse the current by changing the wires on the power source and see what happens.

We're going to experimentally verify that the magnetic field is proportional to the number of times the wire is wrapped around the coil and the intensity of the electric current flowing in the wire.

To quantify the field, we're going to evaluate the

attraction between the coil and the suspended magnet.

- D) Attach the amperometer to the electic circuit in the coil to see the intensity of the current. Bring the coil and the suspended magnet closer and closer together Measure the distance d between the coil and the magnet when the magnet starts to move. Increase the intensity of the current and repeat the measurements. Keep the same number of coils in the wire.
- E) Redo the experiment wrapping the wire more times around the coil. Keep the current at the same intensity.
- F) Use your measurements to verify whether Ampere's predictions were correct.

This was how Ampere established the formula that's in the next paragraph.





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ALL THIS IN NUMBERS...

the intensity B of the magnetic field in a solenoid is determined using the following relationship established by Ampere:

$$B = \frac{\mu_0 \cdot I \cdot N}{l}$$

- B the intensity of the magnetic field in teslas [T]
- N the number of times the wire is wrapped around the solenoid (coil)
- *l* length of the solenoid in meters [m] (Fig. 7)
- *I* intensity of the current in amperes [A]
- μ_0 magnetic permeability of a vaccuum: $\mu_0 = 4\pi \cdot 10^{-7} \ [Tm/A]$

The length of the solenoid must be larger than its diameter for the formula to be valid

Exercice 1

Calculate the intensity of the magnetic field inside a 500-coil solenoid that's 10 cm long with a 5A current running through it.

Exercice 2

A 120-coil solenoid is prepared that's 5 cm long. It's used with a 2A current.

The intensity of the field is		True	False
•	3 times greater if I triple the number of coils		
•	3 times greater if I space out the coils so it's 15 cm long		
•	twice as large if I use a 4A current		
•	larger if the coils are smaller in diameter		
•	identical if the current is two times less intense and there are twice as many coils		
•	identical if there are twice as many coils but the solenoid is the same		
•	identical if there are twice as many coils but the solenoid is two times longer		

Exercice 3

For each of the following uses, indicate whether a natural or an electromagnet would be better. Explain

- Sorting aluminum cans in recycling
- Attaching a piece of paper to the fridge
- · Moving car bodies around a junkyard
- Building a motor for Solar Impulse



■ TO EXPLORE FURTHER...

Exercice 4

To test if flagellated bacteria orient themselves in line with the terrestrial magnetic field, you can create a field that exactly compensates for it. A solenoid that's 6 cm long with 80 coils must be opposed to the earth's magnetic field and have the same intensity. What's the intensity of the current that must be circulating in the solenoid?

Indication: the mean value of the terrestrial magnetic field in Switzerland is 47 · 10⁻⁶ T.

Exercice 5

A 80 mA current is flowing in a wire around a 10 cm solenoid. The needle of the compass in the solenoid forms a 45° angle with the axis of the solenoid. But when there is no current flowing, the needle turns perpendicular to this axis. How many coils are on the solenoid?

Exercice 6

What is the intensity of the current that's flowing in the wire on a 5 cm solenoid with 100 coils, if the needle of the compass forms a 65° angle with the axis of the solenoid? When there's no current, the compass at the center of the solenoid is perpendicular to the axis.







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