MAGNETIC FIELD VIEWER

You can see magnetic fields in action with one of these easy-to-make viewers.

TOOL KIT

- clean glass or plastic salad dressing bottle (or similar flat bottle) with lid
- mineral oil (found at most drug or grocery stores)
- funnel
- iron filings
- bar magnet
- science journal

Fill your bottle with the mineral oil until the oil is about 1 inch to 1½ inches from the lid.

Use the funnel to carefully add 2 tablespoons of iron filings to the oil. Depending on the size of your bottle, you can add more or fewer iron filings. When you're done, screw the lid tightly on the bottle.

Shake the bottle so the iron filings mix with the oil. What do you think will happen if you place the magnet near the bottle? Write down your prediction in your science journal.

Lay the magnet on a flat surface. Place your viewer just above the magnet. (It's okay if the magnet attaches itself to the bottle.) What happens? You should be able to see the magnetic field of the magnet. Can you see the magnet's poles? Draw what you see in your science journal.

Try This!

What do you think would happen to the iron filings if you moved the magnet around or used a magnet of a different shape? Experiment and find out!

Magnet Warnings

Never put a magnet in your mouth. (And keep them away from your younger brothers and sisters, too.) Magnets can hurt you if you swallow them. This is because if you swallow two or more magnets, they can become stuck together inside your body and squeeze together things such as your intestines and make you sick. Even a single magnet can be dangerous because it could cause you to choke or become lodged in your lungs. Be careful when experimenting with magnets!

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