

The Sad Tale of the Lonely Magnet

By Alden Wicker



You've got it pretty easy, being a human. Yeah, I know, sometimes your parents make you do things you don't want to do, like go to bed early. And sometimes you get stomachaches and bruises when you fall down—ouch!

But that's nothing compared to being a magnet. Yes, I'm a magnet. What does that mean? Well, you see, with magnets, we are attracted to a lot of things. It was kind of cool when I was little and climbed the jungle gym, because I could hang off the monkey bars with no hands. I hung by my magnetic head. Cool, right? Though, sometimes it made it hard for me to get down.

When I walk past something big and metallic like a school bus, I have to try really hard to move forward, because I start getting sucked toward it. When I visited San Francisco and wanted to see the Golden Gate Bridge (it's not actually made of gold; it's made of steel) I couldn't get too close, or else I would get stuck to the big cables that help hold it up. They're the biggest bridge cables ever made, you know.

The real problem is when I try to hang out with other magnets. They also exert force, but in weird ways. When I see my best magnet friend, Rob, I always want to give him a hug, a high five or even just a handshake. But I can't get close to him! It's like we're pushing each other away, without even using our hands.

Playing tag is really hard—imagine trying to play when you can't tag each other! Playing capture the flag gets boring, because I can grab the flag and run back to our side, and no one can capture me. So we don't play that very often. Instead, we play kickball, because we can throw the ball at each other and that works great, since the ball is rubber. We play baseball with a wooden bat instead of metal bat, so we can drop the bat and run around the bases when we make a hit.

Ever since I started high school, I've wanted a magnet girlfriend. There are some smart and nice magnets in my class, but like I said, I couldn't figure out how to hold their hands! How can I invite one to the school dance? I guess our parents and teachers would be happy, because we can't dance too close to each other, but it was frustrating for me. So I kept my distance, and just passed them notes, or picked flowers for them and then threw them across the room and let them catch the bouquets.

Then one day, I was walking past the park and I saw a beautiful magnet. She was playing soccer with her friends, laughing a lot. When I looked at her, she seemed somehow different than the others.

When she was done playing her game, I started walking toward her, so I could say, "hi" and talk to her and get to know her. (From five feet away, like usual). She saw me coming, and smiled at me. Then something weird happened when I got close—we started being attracted to each other, literally!

I realized at that moment that she must be magnetized opposite from all my friends and me! Now, we're attached at the hip. She's perfect for me, and I'm perfect for her. We'll walk to the ice cream shop and share a milkshake, sitting side by side on the picnic bench out front. We're unstoppable when we play Red Rover—no one can get through!

Of course, we'll often pull apart so we can go to our different classes and play sports and hang out with our own friends. But we always come back together eventually.

It just goes to show ... opposites attract.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the magnet's real problem with being a magnet?

- A The magnet has to try really hard to move forward when walking past something big and metallic.
- B The magnet had a hard time getting down from the monkey bars because he was attracted to the metal.
- C The magnet had a hard time visiting the San Francisco Bridge because the steel cables would pull him close.
- D The magnet can't get physically close to his friends because their magnetic forces push each other away.

2. The magnet's problem was that he couldn't get too close to his magnet friends. How did the magnets solve this problem in order to play with one another?

- A They play tag with one another but they can't tag each other.
- B They play capture the flag with one another although it can get boring.
- C They play kickball and baseball by using equipment not made of metal.
- D They pass notes to one another.

3. The magnet states that opposites attract.

Which evidence from the text shows that opposites attract?

- A The magnet and his friends could not get too close to one another without pushing each other away.
- B The magnet was instantly attracted and connected to another magnet that was magnetized opposite from him.
- C The magnet and his friends don't like to play capture the flag because they can't capture each other.
- D The magnet has to keep his distance from other girls in school and throw them flowers and notes.

4. Why are the magnet and his new girlfriend unstoppable when they play Red Rover together?

- A They have a strong attraction, so nobody would be able to push through them when they are stuck together.
- B They both are good athletes and work well together because they like each other.
- C They are both very fast and the other magnets can't catch them.
- D They push away the other magnets with their forces.

5. What is this tale mostly about?

- A how humans have an easy life
- B how magnets are attracted to metallic objects
- C how opposites attract
- D how a magnet plays with his friends

6. How does the magnet tell the story?

- A like he is having a conversation with the reader
- B like he is trying to teach a really hard idea
- C like he is alone and is saying his thoughts out loud
- D like he is having a conversation with one of his magnet friends

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

The Magnet and his girlfriend often pull apart, _____ they always come back together again.

- A so
- B certainly
- C instead
- D but

8. Why is the magnet unable to get close to his magnet friends?

9. Why are the magnet and his girlfriend able to be physically close?

10. How are the magnet's friends most likely magnetized when compared to the magnet? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 890

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8. Why is the magnet unable to get close to his magnet friends?

Suggested answer: Students should explain that the magnet and his friends exert force but in weird ways which makes them push each other away without even using their hands.

9. Why are the magnet and his girlfriend able to be physically close?

Suggested answer: Students should explain they have opposite magnetic forces.

10. How are the magnet's friends most likely magnetized when compared to the magnet? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

Suggested answer: Students should explain they are most likely magnetized the same as the magnet. The magnet and his girlfriend are magnetized opposite so they can be close to one another. Since the magnet can't be close to his friends because they exert a "weird" force, they must be magnetized the same as the magnet.