

Magnets at work

Lesson at a glance

Open by holding up a steel tray with a picture kept on by a fridge magnet and wonder what is holding it. Name magnet job with a live holding model, then rotate Senior Infants through two stations: sticking pictures (holding) and fishing paperclips with magnet wands (catching). On the carpet, pairs name a job they tried; finish with a magnetic catch-box demo for closing and a short talk on magnets in bags, doors and toys.

Learning objectives

- Explore at least two everyday magnet jobs hands-on
- Name the job a magnet is doing in a simple example
- Talk about how magnets help us in daily life

Before the bell – prep

Night before: test a steel baking tray (or filing-cabinet side) so a chunky fridge magnet holds a picture. Set Station A (tray, fridge magnets, small pictures) and Station B (shallow tray of paperclips/washers, magnet wands) with a taped floor line. Keep a magnetic-catch box ready for the carpet. Pre-count magnets into a tub.

**Materials**

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
chunky fridge magnets	6	class	classroom	large craft magnets from a euro shop (still chunky, never button magnets)
steel (magnetic) baking tray — test with a fridge magnet before the lesson	1	class	classroom	the side of a metal filing cabinet or a magnetic whiteboard strip
small paper pictures or name cards	8	class	classroom	scrap paper squares the children decorate
small box or tin with a magnetic catch	1	class	hardware shop	a pencil tin or glasses case that already has a magnetic snap
chunky magnet wands	4	class	school kit	chunky bar magnets held in adult-supervised hands
paperclips and small metal washers	20	class	classroom	metal bottle caps cleaned and dried
shallow tray for the fishing station	1	class	classroom	a clean shoe-box lid
magnetic letter board with chunky magnetic letters (optional — second-adult side station only)	1	class	classroom	a steel baking tray with chunky fridge-magnet letters

Safety watch-point

Chunky magnets only; keep magnets and small metal pieces away from mouths. Teacher stays at the fishing tray; count all magnets and wands back before tidy.



Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Before they sit, hold the tray so the whole class sees the picture stay put. Ask what is keeping it up; take two or three guesses and smile at every idea without naming the magnet yet.
- **What jobs can magnets do?:** Point to the fridge magnet still holding the picture. Say magnet job and have the class repeat once. Think aloud the holding model live, then preview only holding and catching for the stations — leave closing off the board.
- **Magnet job stations:** Four groups of 5–7; only two children handle kit at a time. Stay at Station B yourself. Revoice holding and catching; at Station A run the magnet-minder and pair-turn routine. Freeze, empty hands, swap after about 5–6 minutes so every child tries both jobs.
- **What job did you notice?:** On the carpet hold up the fridge magnet and a wand. Think-pair-share, then take four or five voices with the starter My magnet was... and its job was.... If a child only says it stuck, revoice as pulling and holding.
- **Magnets help us:** Let two or three children open and shut the magnetic catch box so the class hears the click; name closing now. Only then ask where magnets help in a bag, door or toy. If time is tight, stop after the demo and one everyday idea.
- **Tidy and finish:** Count every chunky magnet, wand and letter back into the tub and check the floor for paperclips before anyone lines up. One-line recap: holding, closing and catching help us every day.

What it should show

Most Senior Infants will try both stations and name holding and catching; after the catch-box click they add closing or keeping shut. Affirm stuck, then gently revoice as the magnet pulling. A child who calls every paperclip a magnet needs the reminder: the magnet does the pulling; metal pieces only get pulled.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **It's sticky like glue — the magnet is glued on.** — Lift the fridge magnet cleanly off the tray and stick it again. Say glue sticks and stays messy; a magnet pulls and you can lift it off clean.
- **Every metal thing is a magnet.** — Hold a paperclip alone, then bring the wand near so it jumps. Name it: the magnet does the pulling; the metal only gets pulled.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Offer the two station words orally while pointing at the real object: Is it holding or catching? Pair with a partner who models try-and-say.	• After naming the job, prompt how is that helping? so they link holding or catching to a real use.	• At Station A while waiting a turn, name one thing on the table the magnet will not pull, still only two chunky magnets in hands.



Lesson 24

Cross-curricular hook

Oral language: pairs use the sentence starter My magnet was... and its job was... before sharing with the class.

