

Name:

Date:

READING COMPREHENSION

Answer the questions below.

Magnets are not an invention; magnets occur naturally in mineral called magnetite. Magnetite is an iron oxide that is easily magnetized when it forms. Magnetite is also known as Lodestone. The Greeks are credited with discovering magnetism. In one story, the nails in the shoe of a shepherd named Magnes stuck to a rock containing magnetite. The first practical use of a magnet was invented by the Vikings, who created the first magnetic compass. It was the compass that allowed them to travel so extensively by sea and to invade England. Because the magnetic compass gave the Vikings such an advantage, it was a very closely guarded secret in their culture. The Chinese invented a magnetic compass too, separately from the Vikings, and it was following the start of commercial trade with China that the magnetic compass was introduced in Europe. This made it possible for the Europeans, too, to travel vast distances across the ocean, although this didn't happen until nearly 500 years after the Vikings. Today, all ships use magnetic compasses to navigate.

What was the first practical use of the magnet?

What did the Vikings invent, and how did it give them an advantage over other civilizations?

What do many ships use for navigation today?

Who are credited with discovering magnetism?