MAGIC SAND

What makes it magic?

ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY

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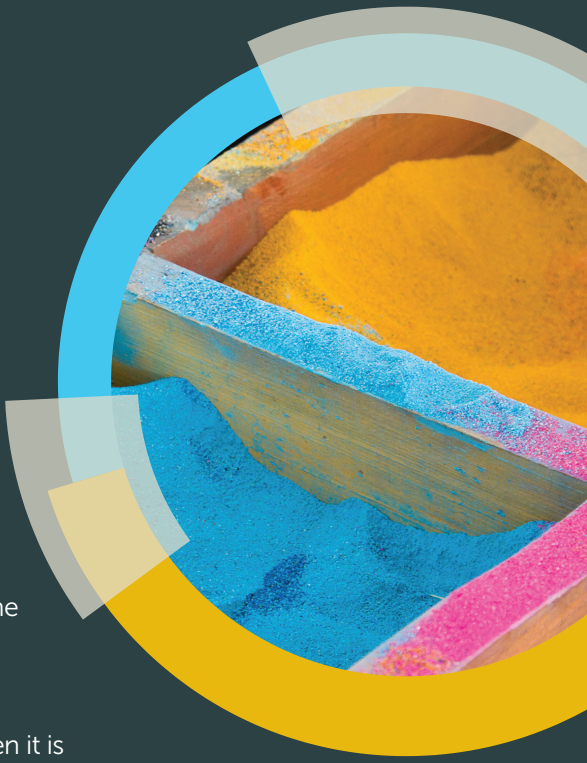
WHAT MAKES IT MAGIC?



What to do:

1. Pour some of the Magic Sand into a container filled with water.
2. Watch what happens to the sand.
3. Put your hand into the container and play with the sand, what does it feel like?
4. Try and lift some of the sand out of the water, what do you notice when the sand is above the water?
5. If you don't want to get wet put some Magic Sand on a petri dish or plate and place a drop of water on the sand, what do you notice?

How it works:

Magic Sand is magic because even when it is under water it stays dry! When ordinary sand gets wet it sticks together, forming clumps, but Magic Sand is different. It starts out as normal sand but is then coated with a substance that keeps water away, this sort of substance is called a hydrophobic substance.

The coating on Magic Sand is similar to some types of cleaning products, which are sprayed on fabrics to protect them from stains.

Why it's important:

Magic Sand was first developed as a way to trap any oil that was spilled from ships near to land. When Magic Sand is put on the floating oil, it mixes with it and makes it heavy so that it sinks to the bottom of the sea. This stops the oil from polluting beaches.

Teachers– want more ideas for fun and easy chemistry practicals and demonstrations? Visit the Learn Chemistry website at http://rsc.li/learn-chemistry to look at hundreds of free, online resources.

As with all science experiments, make sure you are supervised by a responsible person. And remember to have fun!