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COBALT ~ Co

Cobalt got its name from German miners who sometimes mistook the ores of cobalt for silver. But if they really had cobalt arsenide, instead of silver, then the cobalt was bound to arsenic. When they went to heat this metallic ore to refine the metal, they got arsenic fumes, which made them sick. (Arsenic fumes can kill you.) They called this dangerous and disappointing metal, *goblin silver*, for “*kobald*” (pronounce the “d” like a “t” as the Germans do) means goblin.

Cobalt silicate makes an intense blue color. You may have seen cobalt blue glassware.

Cobalt is also part of vitamin B-12, so we do need some in our diets!



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NICKEL ~ Ni

Nickel is used in our 5 cent piece, though it is not a common metal of currency; in fact, in our American five-cent piece, the “nickel” is an alloy of copper, being 75% copper with a lovely silver-gray color from the 25% nickel.

Nickel is also used in the rechargeable batteries called ni-cads. That stands for nickel-cadmium.

Nickel is slightly magnetic.

The core of the earth is thought to be nickel and iron, mostly iron, but perhaps 5% nickel.

