Compass Essay, Research Paper

The compass has served as a navigational aid to many tourists, travelers, and numerous explorers. Though the compass has served well in navigation, it has affected and improved mankind greatly. In China, building was refined in many ways by the compass. It has enabled many to find positions, direction or route.

?No one knows when, where, or by whom the compass was invented? (d?Estaing and Young 153). We do know though, that there were numerous inventors of the compass. The first compass was invented about two thousand years ago by the Chinese. It was discovered by Luan Te, a Chinese magician. ?He had a board game similar to chess in which one of the game pieces was a spoon. When he emptied the metal laying pieces onto the board the spoon would spin around until the handle was pointing north? (Icanberry 1). His spoon was made from what we know today as lodestone. The spoon was able to spin around because of the long handle and rounded bottom.

Elmer Sperry, an American navigator, invented the gyrocompass, a widely used tool. This device worked anywhere on Earth, day or night. When it points northward, it hold that positioning because it uses a spinning wheel set in gimbals called a gyroscope. William Gilbert, an Englishman, experimented with magnets to learn and understand their behaviors. Gowin Knight, on the other hand, rubbed magnets on iron bars to create super magnets. This magnetized compass needles for much longer periods of time. Lord Kelvin corrected this by using small magnets that surrounded the compass and prevented deviation. The small magnets were known as corrector magnets (Travers 155).

Many different compasses have been invented, with various uses, but some stand out more than others. The well-known compasses today are the magnetic compass, the gyrocompass, the liquid compass, and the steering compass.

The magnetic compass uses a magnetic needle; this is glued to the bottom. When it was attached to the pivot, the entire card rotated to the north rather than just the needle, which made the compass much easier to read than previous styles.