The main coercivity mechanisms are discussed, and in parallel it is given a history of coercive models. Pinning models could be adequate for soft magnetic materials, but fail in the description of hard magnetic materials. For hard phases as strontium ferrite, SmCoFeCuZr, and Nd2Fe14B, the coercivity has origin in the high magnetocrystalline anisotropy of these compounds. The steels with higher coercivity are martensitic, and the high coercivity can be attributed to the nanocrystalline nature of the martensite. The effect of grain size on the coercive force is evaluated with basis on variations of the magnetostatic energy of the system.