

AQA Geography GCSE

Energy Resource Management Detailed Notes

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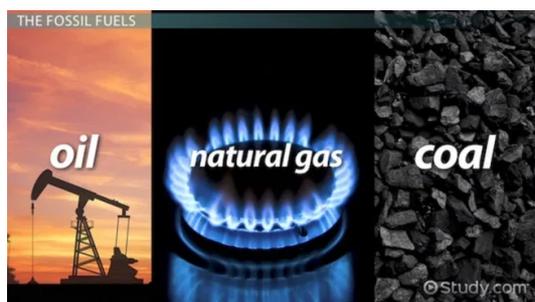
Resources across the Globe

There are many resources that humans need to live or use to enhance their living. A resource is a product that is **valuable** to living. Essential global resources can be split into three groups: **food, water and energy**.

Types of Energy Sources

Before we talk about energy consumption and trends across the world, we need to know the **different sources** of energy. Each source comes with their own **benefits** and **risks**, so governments have to weigh up the pros and cons before choosing an energy source. Often, countries use a **mix** of energies so they don't rely on one source.

Fossil Fuels - Coal, Oil, Gas



Source: DB Daily Updates

Description: Fuels that take thousands of years to form underground, from dead vegetation and animals.

- 👍 Cheap to mine
- 👍 High demand, since fossil fuels can be used in all countries and provide a reliable source of energy
- 🗨️ Polluting - releases carbon dioxide and methane, which contributes to Global Warming
- 🗨️ Non-renewable, so limited supply left of coal

Nuclear Energy



Source: The Conversation

Description: Using Uranium (through nuclear fission) to produce energy

- 👍 Very reliable output of energy, so good base energy source throughout the year
- 🗨️ Risk of radiation poisoning if uncontrolled ([Chernobyl](#))
- 🗨️ Any waste must be sealed in concrete and glass, and left underground for hundreds of years
- 🗨️ When the power station is finished, it is expensive to decommission



Solar Power



Source: Green Energy Times

Description: Panels that convert the sun's energy into electricity

- 👍 Costs are decreasing rapidly
- 👍 Large potential in desert areas
- 🗨️ Not very efficient yet (15-20%)
- 🗨️ Effectiveness dependent on climate and time of the year and day

Wind Power



Source: The Balance

Description: Wind drives large turbines and generators that produce electricity

- 👍 Low running costs
- 👍 Can be used year round
- 👍 Plenty of suitable sites
- 🗨️ Bird life can be affected
- 🗨️ Weather dependent

Wave Power



Source: E360 Yale University

Description: Waves force a turbine to rotate and produce energy - or other similar method

- 👍 Produce most electricity during winter when demand is highest
- 👍 Pioneer projects are commencing across the globe
- 🗨️ Very expensive and a 'perfect' solution is yet to be created
- 🗨️ Needs to survive storms

Tidal Power



Source: Renewable Energy World

Description: Incoming tides drive turbines in similar way to hydropower

- 👍 Has significant potential
- 👍 Reliable source of energy once installed
- 🗨️ Very expensive
- 🗨️ Few schemes currently operating in the world
- 🗨️ Impact on marine life



Hydroelectric Power (HEP)



Source: Research Gate

Description: Water from a reservoir pushes turbines built within a dam, as it escapes downhill

- 👍 Dams built for reservoirs can also generate electricity, improving clean water and energy supplies
- 🗨️ Large dams are expensive to build
- 🗨️ Disrupts fish migration along the river, as fish cannot swim through the dam

Biomass/ Biofuel



Source: Eletimes

Description: Vegetation and waste food can be burned (as pellets or directly into the fire)

- 👍 Cheap and easy to find
- 👍 Biofuel is a renewable alternative to oil, which doesn't require car engines to be modified
- 🗨️ Vegetation must be found sustainably, so land shouldn't be cleared for biofuels and not replanted.

Geothermal



Source: Daniel Allen

Description: Water is pumped beneath the ground to hot areas and the steam from the water drives turbines to produce electricity

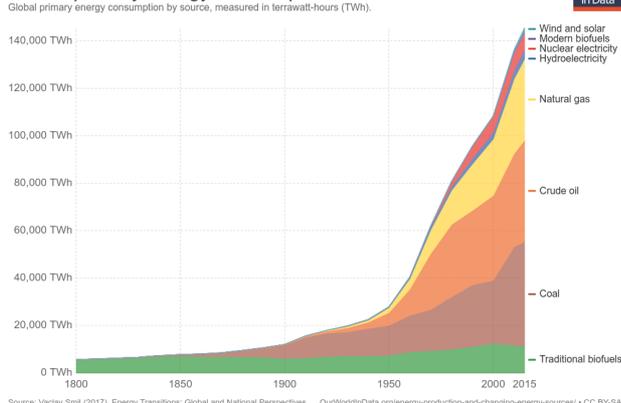
- 👍 Low maintenance costs
- 👍 Suitable where other technologies might not be
- 🗨️ High installation cost
- 🗨️ Risk during earthquakes etc.



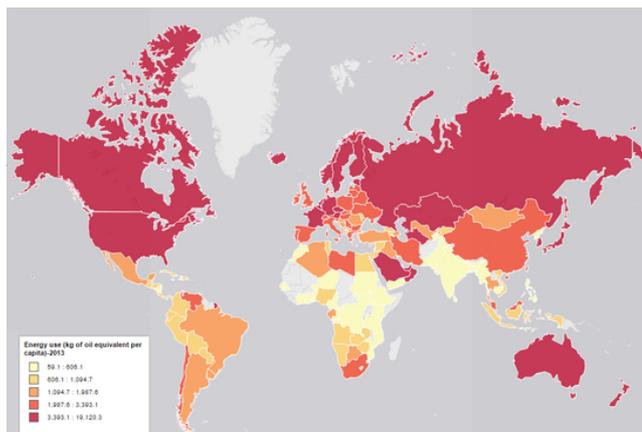
Energy Distribution

Across the world, the **demand** for electricity varies as well as the **method** we use to generate electricity. We require electricity for many purposes: **household appliances** (TVs, washing machines, etc), **industry** (machinery and factories), **transport** (for example trams).

Global primary energy consumption, 1800-2015



Graph A - Source: Our World in Data



Graph B - Source: secret-bases.co.uk

The **consumption** of energy across the world can be shown in many **different graphs**: Graph A, showing the type of energy source used and the amount of energy it contributes, or Graph B, which shows the amount of energy consumed by each country.

In general, the world is demanding more and more energy. This is because the world's **population** is growing, as is as the number of **developed countries**. As countries develop, they demand more electricity for household appliances and evolving industries.

However, there are many **inequalities** between countries relating to electricity:

- The richest, more developed countries **consume** much more electricity than poorer, less developed countries.
- Not all countries have **sources of energy**. Most of the world's oil can be found in Saudi Arabia, whereas countries (such as Chad and Sudan) have no fossil fuels to burn and few bodies of water to use to generate electricity.
- In general, **fossil fuels** tend to be cheaper and easier to source than renewable sources. Therefore only the most developed, high income countries can afford to generate electricity **sustainably**.

Energy Security

A country can have **energy surplus** or **energy deficit**. This depends on how much energy a country can produce and how much its population and industries demand. If the supply exceeds demand, the country has **energy surplus**. If the supply is less than the demand, the country has an **energy deficit**. Some examples of different countries' security is given in the table below:



Energy Surplus	Energy Deficit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russia - due to its large natural gas and oil fields, as well as many nuclear plants. - Middle East - Saudia Arabia, Iran, Iraq and Kuwait have between them 100 billion barrels of oil to be extracted, making them wealthy and energy secure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Western Europe - The UK has largely used up its supply of coal during the mining era. - Asia - Rapidly growing population means rapid demand outweighs the supply of energy.

Think Further: Energy Ownership

Energy security also depends on the **ownership** of power stations and mines within a country. Sometimes a country is too poor or lacking technology to exploit its own energy sources. Sometimes TNCs will help a country to **extract** its resources. For example, Shell (a Dutch owned company) has subsidiaries in Nigeria and accounts for over 21% of Nigeria's oil production. Although the money Nigeria is gaining from oil production is helping its economy develop, there are tensions within society due to the TNC being involved.

Alternatively, a country's government may **privatise** the energy industry, meaning private businesses own, operate and run power stations and electricity lines.

In either case, energy can be bought or operated by a **foreign TNC**, which will impact a country's energy security. Foreign **investment** doesn't just occur in developing countries. In the UK, the new nuclear power station called Hinkley Point C in Somerset will be paid for by EDF (a French owned company) and CGN (a state-owned Chinese company).

Controversial Nuclear

Nuclear energy has many benefits:

- 👍 **Reliable source** of constant energy since nuclear fission is a constant process and so the same amount of energy can be produced each day.
- 👍 The fuel (Uranium) is extremely **concentrated**, so there are small mining sites required to fuel the nuclear plant.
- 👍 The nuclear industry creates many **employment opportunities** at each plant. 475,000 jobs are created in the US's nuclear sector, from head engineers to cleaners.

However, not all countries believe nuclear energy is a good idea as the biggest negative is the possibility of a nuclear meltdown, the effects of which are incredibly long lasting. The land around Chernobyl (a nuclear power station in Ukraine) is still full of radiation and the effects are still being felt to this day. Due to this, some governments have adopted **anti-nuclear policies**. Countries such as Germany and Denmark don't use nuclear power stations to generate energy. This is because these populations share **anti-nuclear views** and are scared of the **radiation risk**. In recent years, fewer countries wish to build nuclear power plants after the [2011 Fukushima Disaster](#).



Factors that Affect Energy Supply

There are **physical and human factors** that can affect the energy supply.

 <p>Human Factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government policies affect which types of energy can and cannot be used. This will affect the overall supply of energy for a country. For example, Germany has decided to stop using nuclear power plants, which could put pressure on its other energy sources to meet demand. - Conflict can prevent energy sources being extracted. For example, conflict in Iraq stopped oil production which impacted the price of oil in global markets. - The development of a country will affect the technology available. Some energy sources are difficult to extract or power stations require high tech monitoring. This means countries with low levels of technology cannot use some energy sources, such as nuclear.
 <p>Physical Factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not all countries have access to all energy sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fossil fuels can be found only for specific geology types - either sedimentary rock or natural gas/oil has become trapped in rocks. - Geothermal energy can only be produced near magma plumes, which are only found near tectonic boundaries or in individual pockets. - Climate can impact the efficiency of renewable sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solar energy relies on limited cloud cover, so rainy climates are unsuitable for lots of solar panels. - Not all countries have wind powerful enough for wind turbines. Turbines are best out at sea, or built across low-lying plains. - For a country to use tidal energy, it must have coasts. Therefore landlocked countries cannot use tidal power. - Similarly, HEP requires dams to be built in mountainous areas. Therefore the shape of the land (morphology) is important.
 <p>Economic Factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The cost involved in using an energy source could be too much for a country, and make the electricity generated unaffordable for families. There are many different ways that cost can be added to an energy source: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extraction of the energy source could require specialist equipment or high pressure. - The energy source is dangerous (ie radioactive, or mining is hazardous) therefore wages must be higher to compensate for the risk. - Transportation of energy sources from mining to processing can involve many kilometers of pipelines or regular freight ships, which are costly to use.



Impacts of Energy Insecurity

Energy shortages have major implications for our lifestyles and our industries. We can split these impacts into three categories:

1. Impacts on Food Production

Farming and agriculture demands a large amount of energy each year. This is used to **power machinery**, as fuel for tractors and harvesters, as well as **heating** barns and greenhouses in the winter. Many farmers rely on **fossil fuels**, since they use old petrol-powered engines that are affordable and within their knowledge to fix.

Source: Thought Co



However, to try to reduce the **greenhouse emissions** produced by tractors and machinery, some farmers are choosing to use **biofuels**. Also, some farmers have stopped growing food crops and are instead growing crops for biofuels. This has mixed implications for the world:

👍 Biofuels are **carbon neutral** and so greatly reduce the need for oil or coal. Petrol engines don't need adapting to use biofuels, so there is **minimal cost** to farmers who swap fuels.

👎 Biofuels take up land that could be used for growing **food crops**, which increases the pressure on existing food supplies. In some countries (such as Mexico) this has led to **riots**; the people are unhappy that their government leaves them hungry but makes money producing biofuels.



Source: BBC News

2. Impacts on Industry

Many industries require a **constant supply** of electricity for their computers in offices and machinery in production lines. Therefore, many **TNCs** will set up operations in countries where they have constant, cheap supply of energy. This means **developing countries** - where their energy **infrastructure** is still developing and they may have regular **power cuts** - can miss out on business opportunities.

Source: Industry Forum



If energy costs too much for a company, their products will cost more and so a business may not make enough profits. Countries who **import** energy are **vulnerable** to changes or **fluctuations** in price. If the country they get their gas from decides to increase their prices then there's not much they can do to stop them. This can have a negative impact on the economy. This is why it's preferable to produce your own energy.



3. Potential for Conflict

When supply cannot meet demand, the **price** of electricity/fuel will rise. This can result in **inequality** between who can afford electricity and who cannot. This can lead to many other disadvantages:



Source: DQ Channels

- Children become behind with their **education** if they cannot access the internet.
- **Unemployed** people have a smaller chance of finding new work, especially with many online job websites.
- Families can become **isolated** if they cannot communicate through the internet or over the phone. In emergencies, how could they contact an ambulance with an uncharged phone?
- Businesses cannot afford to run **machinery** and earn less profits, making it more difficult to continue trading.

This can lead to anger within a country. There are many cases of **rioting and protests**, such as in 2018, when [France](#) protested over rising fuel taxes.



Finally, energy can be a vulnerability for a country and the supply chain can be **at risk to attack**. For example, a **terrorist group** or pirates could hijack an oil supply (see [Somalian Pirates](#)) or a country could cut off the supply following **political disagreements** with another country (see [Iran tanker capture](#) in 2019). This can threaten the energy supply, which could **escalate tensions** and lead to conflict.

Source: Business Insider

Sensitive Energy Sources

Since we have consumed a lot of energy sources within the last century, many **easy-access** energy sources have been mined and consumed. For example, in the UK, shallow coal beds and oil fields were mined and drained up until the 1950s. As the places which are easy to extract from have all been used up, **more dangerous** or **risky environments** now have to be **exploited**. For example:

- Miners have to **drill deeper** to find coal and oil that hasn't been exploited. Drilling deeper into the ground increases the risk of **earthquakes**, mines **collapsing** and high pressure ruptures in the rock, which could release the oil and let it escape.
- Energy sources in **hostile environments** are to be exploited. For example, there are large reserves of oil locked in the Middle East. Some of the Middle East is occupied by **militant groups**, so workers are at high risk of **capture** or being hurt during conflict.
- There are some fossil fuel stores in **fragile environments**, such as the Amazon and Antarctica. Despite being fragile **ecosystems** with many rare and endangered species, some governments are looking to exploit the oil found here.



Increasing Energy Supplies

There are many countries that experience **energy insecurity** now. However, there are many more countries that will experience energy insecurity in the future. Therefore, governments are looking ahead to improve their energy sources now and for the future:

- Will the energy source run out? Is it **non-renewable**? Have we over-used this source, meaning we take more than is replaced?
- Do we rely on other countries for our energy? What if we have different **political beliefs**? Will there be conflict in the future, which could stop any energy trade?
- Could we **reduce** our energy **consumption**, especially in terms of how much energy is wasted?
- Will our climate change in the future, due to the **Greenhouse Effect**? Will the renewable sources we use now be able to be used in the future? For example, will our climate warm up so fewer vegetation can grow and be used for biofuel?

Governments can choose to use new sources of energy to increase the amount of electricity generated. There are many strategies to choosing their energy mix (the different sources of energy that a country uses):

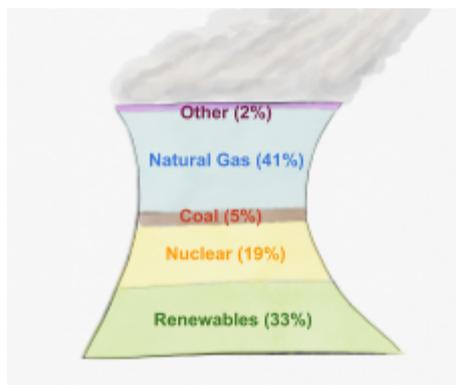
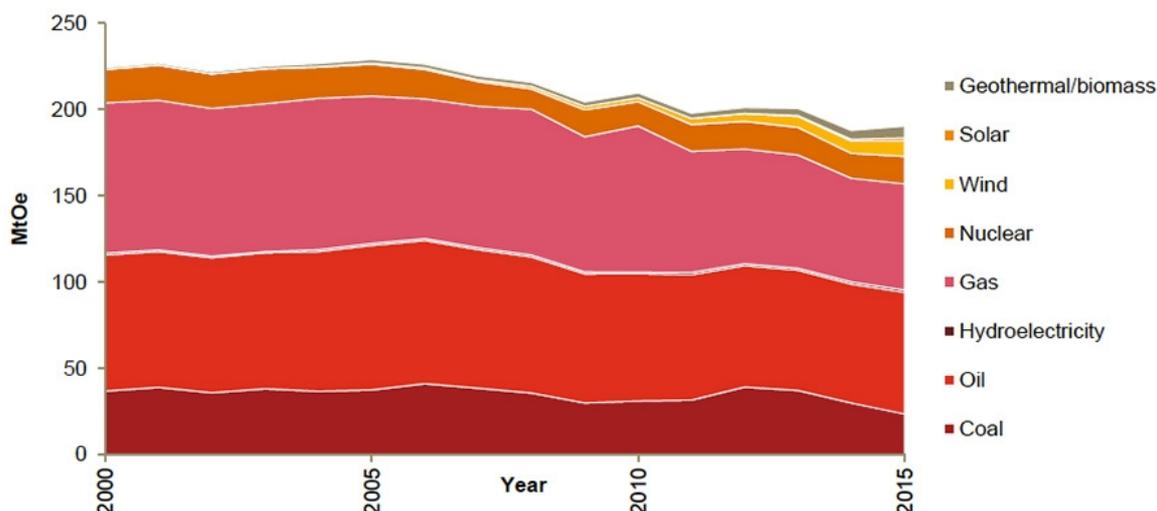
 The Sustainable Approach	Governments can choose to develop their renewable energy sources to avoid running out of fossil fuels in the future. Countries that can afford these sources can have low carbon dioxide emissions, but to depend completely on renewables is risky since solar and wind don't produce constant supplies of electricity all year (for instance, it's not sunny all year or there may not be enough wind).
 Developing and Economic	Countries that are developing (such as Brazil and the Philippines) require energy for their industries . Energy should be cheap and reliable, since businesses will not develop if they cannot afford to run their machinery or cannot access the internet throughout the day. Therefore, many developing countries rely on fossil fuels as coal and oil are cheap sources of energy.
 Dependable Supply	An increasing number of countries are choosing to have a varied energy mix so they don't rely on a single source of energy. This is good for resources, as supplies won't be exhausted as quickly. To achieve a mixed energy mix, countries need to produce a base amount of energy from a dependable source (such as coal or nuclear). However, to match any sudden spikes in energy demand, countries could use renewable or alternative sources to meet the short term peak (such as HEP or biomass).



Energy in the UK

Within the last decade, the UK's energy consumption has **decreased**. This is because the UK's **manufacturing industry** has decreased (such as the production of cars, steel and textiles) and our technology has developed to become more **efficient**. Therefore the amount of energy our household appliances waste has decreased.

UK's energy mix 2000-15



However, there is still a very high portion of **fossil fuels** burned to generate electricity. The picture to the left shows the energy mix for the UK in 2018. **46%** of the UK's energy is generated by burning coal and natural gas. In addition, nearly a fifth of the UK's energy is generated using **nuclear power plants**, which don't directly release greenhouse gases but instead pose a large **radiation risk**.

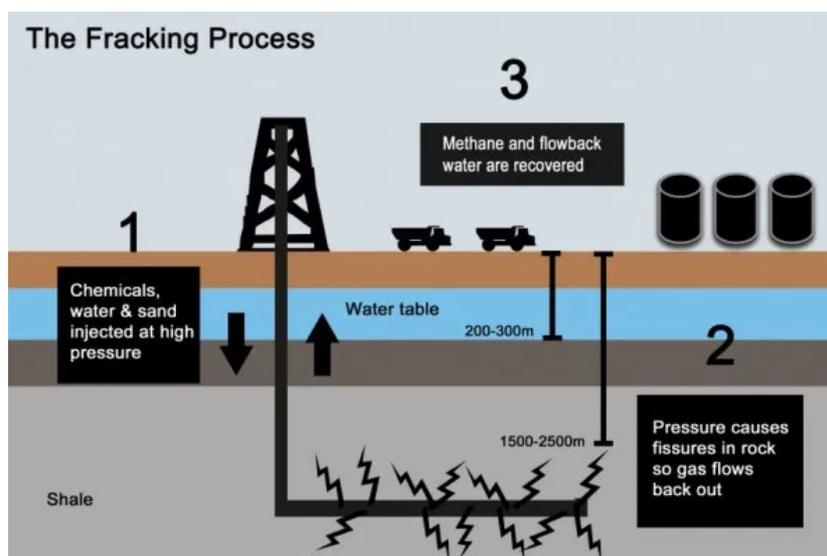
Why has the UK's energy mix changed?

- Approximately **75%** of the UK's own energy sources (predominantly coal beds) have been **exhausted**. Therefore it became **cheaper to import** energy than to extract fossil fuels from deeper beds (which is more hazardous and not as profitable).
- **Coal** has also declined due to the negative impacts of burning coal on the environment. Coal is **heavily polluting**, releasing large quantities of **carbon dioxide** when burned. This contributes to **Global Warming**. The UK Government has agreed to close all coal-powered power stations by 2025, converting them into biomass plants or decommissioning them.
- A growing awareness of **renewable sources** has meant an increase in **green tariffs** in the UK. This means that the consumer is choosing to use energy only produced using renewable or **carbon neutral** energy sources. Green tariffs may cost more, but more of the UK's population is choosing to be **environmentally friendly**.



Fracking

In the UK, **fracking** is a much debated and a controversial issue. The UK has a supply of **natural gas** trapped in **shale rocks** (a sedimentary rock made from fine sands, silts and mud). To release this trapped natural gas, the process of fracking is used:



Source: No Majesty

Fracking involves pushing **high-pressure liquids** underground, which causes the shale rocks to **crack** and the natural gas to escape. There are many protests against fracking, because

- 🗨️ Fracking is an **energy-intensive** process, since pressurising the liquids requires a lot of energy. Therefore fracking is **expensive** and the price of natural gas may increase to make up for the expenses.
- 🗨️ There is a risk of **earthquakes** due to fracking, as the shale rocks crack underground. If these earthquakes are strong enough, **structural damage** to buildings on the surface could occur. However, up till now, the UK has only experienced up to 2.0 magnitude earthquakes due to fracking (not high enough to cause damage).
- 🗨️ There is also a risk that the pressurised liquids infiltrate and **pollute** underground water sources. The liquids forced underground can be mixed with **chemicals and salt**, to increase the probability that the shale rock cracks.

