Name _____ **Date** _____

Natural Resources

"Oil in the Ground, Trees in the Forest"

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. Natural resources are the products of nature. Examples of natural resources include water, air, plant life, forests, sunshine, metals, minerals and fossil fuels (like gas, oil and coal). Some of these natural resources exist in unlimited supply, like the wind. It's not going to stop blowing. Other natural resources will run out. For example, there's a limited amount of crude oil on Earth.

Notes

2. Over 300 millions years ago (millions of years before dinosaurs lived), our planet was covered with prehistoric plant life and sea life. After these lifeforms died, hundreds and thousands of feet of sand, rock, mud—and sometimes whole oceans—piled up on top of them. Over time, intense heat and pressure transformed these organic materials into fossil fuels. Ancient aquatic life turned into natural gas and oil. Trees and plants turned into coal.

The production of the fossil fuels we use today took 300 to 400 million years to occur. Because it takes so long to make fossil fuels, it's impossible for humans to make more within the time span of our existence. That's why these sources of energy are nonrenewable. They cannot be replaced once they are gone. Although no one can say for sure when fossil fuels will run out, many people speculate that in less than 100 years finding fossil fuels will be so challenging and expensive that their use will be nearly impossible on a large scale.

Notes

3. 

The green areas are rainforests

Almost one third of our planet's land area is covered with forests. These forests house wildlife, including many endangered species, and produce the oxygen we need to breath. Forests also help to counter global climate change by soaking up excess carbon dioxide, which is harmful to the atmosphere.

Tropical rainforests are sometimes called the "World's Medicine Chest" because they produce ingredients contained in 25% of medicines. Scientists have explored the medicinal uses of less that 1% of rainforest species, which means there are likely medicine ingredients that haven't been discovered yet. However, deforestation—or the removal of forests—results in the loss of over 50 million square miles of forest every year. That's 36 football fields per minute.

Notes

4. 

Wind turbines

Renewable resources are natural resources that can be continually produced and used. Sunlight, wind, water and heat from the Earth's center are examples of renewable resources. When used for energy, they are called renewable energy. Scientists expect that solar and wind power can provide us with enough energy to last forever. They'll never run out.

Solar power is what we call energy we harness from the sun. Solar power can be gathered by setting up solar cells. The sun transfers its energy to the electrons in the solar cell, which can be harvested as electricity.

Wind power is the use of the wind's energy as a source of power. Wind turbines, which are hi-tech windmills, are how we harvest wind power. The wind turns the blades of the turbine which spins an electric generator.

Notes

5. Global climate change, or the shifting temperatures and weather patterns on the planet, is mainly a result of human use of non-renewable natural resources. For many decades our main source of energy has been fossil fuels. When we burn fossils fuels, they emit harmful gases into air. These gases damage our ozone layer. The ozone layer shields Earth from the sun's powerful heat and light. As the ozone layer weakens, our planet gets warmer. This leads to a long list of negative impacts.

Global climate change is irreversible, which means it cannot be undone or fixed. The only thing we can do is slow it down by using less fossil-fuel-based energy. This is why many people think stopping global warming is the most pressing issue facing the world today.

Notes