

Alternatives to Fossil Fuels

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For a long time now, humans have used fossil fuels. Fossil fuels have been used mostly by machines that help us travel from one place to another and those that run our industries(blogger). Fossil fuels are one of nature's wonders that have benefited humankind and helped it prosper to a point that was unprecedented in the past. Fossil fuels are known to have been formed from the organic material of prehistoric animals and plants. The commonly used fossil fuels, known to all, are coal, gas, and oil. This paper studies whether using fossil fuels is beneficial and whether an alternative can be used instead of fossil fuels to meet the world's energy demand.

According to the United States Department of Energy Information Administration, fossil fuels are an energy source that has been formed in the Earth's crust. These have been created from decayed organic material, most definitely from prehistoric times. Another source claims that they have concentrated deposits of carbon that are stored underground or under the sea(October 13, 2016). They consist of the remains of the prehistoric animals and plants that decayed millions of years ago. The decaying process has allowed the remains to turn into fossil fuels in their present avatar.

Today, fossil fuels are the primary sources of energy used on Earth. For more than a century, fossil fuels have fueled the world's economy, leading us to an ultra-modern era, where we have access to many things previously unknown to man(*Fossil Fuels: Their Advantages and Disadvantages*). The massive Industrial Revolution that led to sudden economic growth and allowed the European nations to colonize most of the planet during the late 19th and 20th centuries directly resulted from [fossil fuel](#) discovery. Among the fossil fuels, Oil is primarily used for transportation purposes. This is extracted from the ground and processed in refineries to form petroleum. The United States mostly consumes petrol; 19 million barrels per day(*Can Alternative Energy Effectively Replace Fossil Fuels? - Alternative Energy - ProCon.Org*). The second type is of coal. Coal is primarily used to generate electricity. China happens to be the leader in coal production, producing 45 % of the world's supply. And the third fuel is [Natural Gas](#). Gas is mostly used to create heat, but can also generate electricity. Industries also use it to produce fertilizers.

While fossil fuels have profound advantages that have proved helpful to us, they also have several disadvantages(*What Are Fossil Fuels? - Alternative Energy - ProCon.Org*). One of the significant problems is pollution. Land pollution is created when fossil fuels, especially coal, are mined. Additionally, when these are burned, carbon dioxide forms, which results in air pollution. The air pollution further creates a greenhouse effect. It is also the leading cause of global warming. Coal produces the most pollution because it provides more carbon dioxide than the other two. It also presents sulfur dioxide. Crude oil production creates a possibility of oil spills or fires, which is bound to affect both human and animal lives around the area.

These days, because of the many adverse effects fossil fuel usage has on the environment, most

scientists are working on [renewable energy](#) as a possible option for fuel (“Advantages And Disadvantages Of Fossil Fuels”). However, whether alternatives like biofuels, hydrogen, solar, wind, and geothermal can meet the world’s energy demands has yet to be determined. Supporters of alternative energy claim that fossil fuels are environmentally destructive, limited, and are the primary contributors to global climate change. They say that fossil fuels might not last forever. Considering the rate at which we are using them, fossil fuel reserves might be depleted in the next 30 or 50 years. We need to have an alternative that can support our energy needs (*Alternative Energy – ProCon.Org*).

Of the various alternative options, here are a few listed.

Solar Power:

Solar power gathers solar energy through solar panels and produces electricity. The electricity is saved in batteries attached to the solar panels. According to reports, solar panels are cheaper than a few years ago. Solar cells now use common salt instead of silicon, which makes them more competitive. Also, this has made them more efficient and effective.

Wind:

Another alternative is wind power. The main advantage is that it is clean and readily available worldwide, without paying anyone. When it was first proposed as an alternative, we had to install huge towers and put turbines on them. Today, however, we have a much better technology that is cost-effective. We now have wind turbines that do not have to be mounted on towers. Additionally, individual devices can even be installed on balloons.

Tidal Power:

Ocean currents are one of the most potent sources of electricity. Generating electricity from tides or ocean currents is similar to wind energy. Tidal power uses submerged turbines and floating devices that make electricity when they rotate and move up and down due to the ocean current. Tidal power is an excellent option for cities along the coast to generate nonstop electricity.

Cooking Oil:

We usually throw away the cooking oil once we have prepared our food. However, it can be used to run cars.

On the other hand, opponents of alternative energy claim that fossil fuels are far more economical and readily available than alternative energy. They claim that there are many technological hurdles,

because of which alternative power is no longer a viable option.

There are many alternative fuel options which we can use. Most of these options have already been discovered, while others are being studied. If we try, we can create a better future for ourselves by using renewable energy, instead of fossil fuels and limiting global warming.

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