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Earth's Natural Resources: Mineral, Energy, and Groundwater

Natural resources are things we get from nature that help us in many ways. We use them to build things, make energy, and get clean water. In this reading, you will learn about three important natural resources: minerals, energy, and groundwater. These resources are shaped by how the Earth works and are very important in our daily lives.

What Are Mineral Resources?

Minerals are solid materials found in the Earth's crust. They include metals



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How Are Mineral Resources Formed?

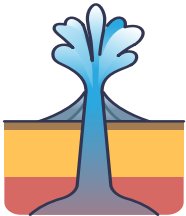
Minerals form deep underground. Heat, pressure, and special fluids from volcanoes help make them. When hot, mineral-rich water moves through cracks in rocks and cools down, it leaves behind metal deposits. These deposits can gather in one place and form what we call ore. Ore is mined to get the minerals out.



Where Are Mineral Resources Found?

Minerals are not found everywhere. Their locations depend on past events like volcanic eruptions

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Mining and Its Effects

To get minerals, people mine them from the ground. Surface mining takes off the top layer of soil and rock to reach minerals close to the surface. Underground mining digs deep tunnels. Mining can harm the land, hurt animals and plants, and pollute water. It also uses a lot of energy and water.

Sustainability and Recycling

Because minerals take millions of years to form, we need to be

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What Are Energy Resources?

Energy resources give us power. We use them to turn on lights, drive cars, and run machines. Most energy today comes from non-renewable resources like fossil fuels and nuclear power. Fossil fuels—coal, oil, and natural gas—come from plants and animals that lived millions of years ago. Nuclear energy comes from a metal called uranium. We also use renewable energy like wind and solar, but not as much yet.



How Do Fossil Fuels Form?

Millions of years ago, dead plants and animals were buried under layers of



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Where Are Energy Resources Found?

Fossil fuels are found deep underground, usually where oceans once were. The fuels get trapped in special rock layers. Big oil-producing countries include

Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Russia. Not every country has these resources, so some have to buy them from others.

How Do We Use Fossil Fuels?

To get fossil fuels, we drill into the ground. Oil is cleaned in refineries and turned into gas or other

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Environmental and Social Impact

Burning fossil fuels releases gases that pollute the air and cause climate change. It also creates waste and can lead to oil spills. Because fossil fuels are limited, we need to look for cleaner, safer energy sources.

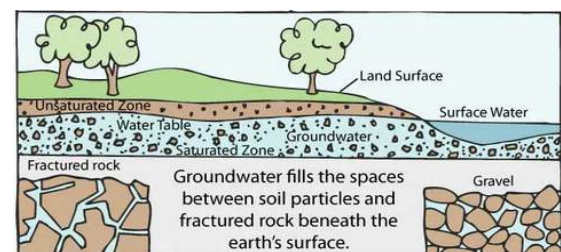
What Is Groundwater?

Groundwater is water stored underground in tiny spaces between rocks and soil. It is different

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How Does Groundwater Form and Move?

When rain or melted snow soaks into the ground, it becomes groundwater. This is called infiltration. Water



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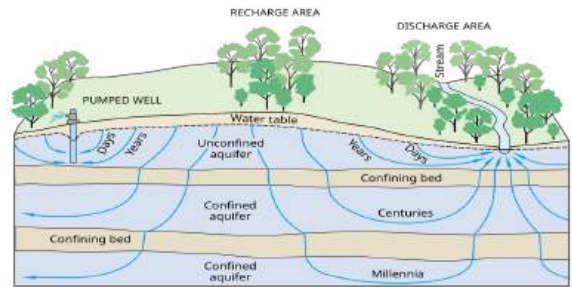
Where Is Groundwater Found?

There are two main kinds of aquifers. Unconfined aquifers are open to the surface, so water can soak in easily. Confined aquifers are trapped between rock layers. One big aquifer in the U.S. is the Ogallala Aquifer, which gives water to many farms.

How Do We Use Groundwater?

People use groundwater to drink, water crops, and

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Problems and Protection

Using too much groundwater can dry up wells and rivers. Pollution from chemicals or waste can

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Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What are
2. Why are most minerals considered non-renewable?
3. How do
4. Why are
5. What
6. How does recycling help with mineral use?
7. What
8. Why is
9. What is
10. What are two ways we can protect groundwater?

Extension Questions

1. What are some examples of products made using rare earth minerals, and why are these minerals important for modern technology?
2. How do different
3. What are the steps in
4. How does
5. What are
6. How can people in your community reduce their use of fossil fuels and switch to more sustainable energy choices?

Reading Comprehension Questions KEY

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Extension Questions KEY

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