

Clues and Questions

Clue 1.

On Earth, there are only limited amounts of fossil fuels such as oil, coal, and natural gas. There are also only limited amounts of minerals such as iron, copper, and phosphates. These resources either cannot be replaced by natural processes or require millions of years to replenish.

Clue 2.

Some nonrenewable and renewable natural resources can be recycled or reused. This process decreases the rate at which the supplies of these resources are depleted. For example, aluminum cans can be recycled and turned into new cans or other aluminum products many times over. Recycling reduces the need to mine bauxite, the mineral used to make aluminum. Another example is recycling oil. The motor oil from your vehicle can be reprocessed into fuels or re-refined into lubricating oils.

Clue 3.

Renewable natural resources include plants, animals, and water, when they are properly cared for. Minerals and fossil fuels such as coal and oil, are examples of nonrenewable natural resources.

Clue 4.

Trees, wildlife, water, and many other natural resources are replaced by natural processes. Plants and animals can also be replenished by human activities. Water is continuously cycled and reused. Sunlight, wind, geothermal heat, tides, and flowing water are resources that are constantly or “perpetually” being renewed or restored.

Questions

1. Categorize the following as renewable and nonrenewable resources:

- Corn
- Oil
- Coal
- Sunshine
- Tides
- Trees
- Tuna
- Gold
- Geothermal/hot springs
- Sand
- Wind
- Water

2. Look around the classroom and list as many items as you can that are made from renewable natural resources. Make a separate list of all the items made from nonrenewable natural resources.

3. What renewable natural resources could be used to replace the nonrenewable ones used in the items you listed in Question 2? What nonrenewable resources could be used in place of the renewable ones?

4. What advantages and disadvantages might there be for using renewable natural resources in place of nonrenewable ones?

5. Under what circumstances, if any, would a renewable natural resource not be renewable?

6. Which resources, if any, would continue to be available no matter how much people used them?