

Summary: Our Nation's Resources

Natural Resources

Many things we eat, wear, or use come from nature. Gasoline comes from oil found underground. Cars are made of iron ore from mines. Water to drink, air to breathe, and soil and sun for farming also come from nature. Without nature, humans could not survive.

Some resources are renewable. Trees are cut down for wood to make paper, furniture, or other things. New trees can be planted to replace the trees cut, so they are a renewable resource.

Oil and coal are mineral resources from the earth. They give us energy to heat our homes, cook our food, and run our cars. They cannot be replaced. They are nonrenewable.

Wind and water are flow resources. They can only be used at a certain time or place. For example, people can only use wind when it is blowing.

Other Important Resources

It takes many steps to turn natural resources into things we use. Capital resources are tools, such as tractors, computers, or other machines. Human resources are the skills and knowledge of the people doing the work. Without people, nothing would get done.

If many people want a product but there aren't enough for all of them, it is called scarcity. Sometimes people have to decide what they want most. If you can buy either a jacket or sneakers, but not both, you must choose one. The one you give up is the opportunity cost. A personal budget, or plan for spending and saving, might help you make a choice.

People need to be careful using resources so that there will be enough for the future. Everyone can practice conservation to use our natural resources wisely. Companies can use containers made from materials that can be recycled, such as metal or cardboard. People can recycle paper, cans, and bottles and not waste water, gas, and electricity.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

capital resource *noun*, a tool, machine, or building people use to produce goods and services

human resource *noun*, a person and the skills and knowledge he or she brings to the job

scarcity *noun*, not having as much of something as people want

opportunity cost *noun*, the thing you give up when you decide to do or have something else

conservation *noun*, the protection and wise use of natural resources



After You Read

REVIEW What is the difference between renewable and nonrenewable resources? Highlight a sentence that describes each kind of resource.

REVIEW What is the difference between capital resources and human resources? Draw a box around the sentence that tells what capital resources are. Circle the sentence that tells what human resources are.

REVIEW Why do people practice conservation? Circle the sentences that tell the answer.