



# Watts On Your Mind?

Solar energy educational activities for schools

## Activity Overview

Grade Level: 9-12

Activity: HS-5

## Description

Students will engage in a debate of energy issues selected from a list.

## Learning Outcome

Students will learn the importance of energy issues to their community as well as their nation.

## Subjects

Science, government, economics

## Process Skills Used

Discussion, research, presentation, negotiation

## Duration

2 class periods

## Key Vocabulary

(Refer to supplemental vocabulary page)

## Curriculum Standards

Texas (TEKS): 112.42.c.6, 112.44.c.5

Louisiana (LSCS):

SE-H-B1, SE-M-A6

Arkansas (ASCF) 4.1.28:

National (AAAS Project 2061):

The Designed World – 12<sup>th</sup>

## Energy Debates

### Materials

1. “Facts About Renewable Energy” summary and “Renewable Energy Vocabulary” by the Alliance to Save Energy

### Method

1. Read “Facts About Renewable Energy” referring to the vocabulary pages when necessary.
2. Divide the class into at least 2 groups (or more depending on the number of issues that will be debated by each group).
3. Review the list of energy issues and select issues to debate.
4. Develop a “For” position and an “Against” position on the issues selected to be debated by having students research the issues.
5. Have each group present their position on the selected issues in a debate format.
6. Summarize the activity by explaining that the differences expressed during the debate are ones that community leaders and government officials encounter regularly, and stress the importance of citizens becoming involved (voting, etc.) to ensure their views are represented.



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## Energy Issues

1. To help lessen our dependence on foreign energy, especially oil, the United States should *increase* funding for renewable energy substantially, even though this will *reduce* funding for other important programs.
2. United States car companies should be required to produce a solar-powered car, since this will help reduce our consumption of polluting fossil fuels.
3. The government should quit subsidizing R & D in renewable energy. When the price of nonrenewable sources becomes high enough, it will then be profitable for private energy to invest in renewable energy technology. Until then money spent on R & D is being wasted, and should be used for more urgent needs, such as cancer research, toxic waste clean-up, and better roads.
4. To lessen our dependence on foreign oil and to spur development in alternative energy sources, including renewable energy, the United States should impose a gasoline tax of \$1 per gallon.
5. To reduce the consumption of fossil fuels, we should develop hydropower as much as possible. We should build more dams and reservoirs, even if it means somewhat disrupting the ecological balance of certain rivers and streams. Reservoirs also provide many valuable recreational benefits.
6. We should encourage communities to develop environmentally safe waste-to-energy power plants. Not only does this reduce what is put into our landfills, but it also uses our solid waste to produce energy.

Source: *Alliance to Save Energy and Indiana Department of Education, Energy Environment & Economics*