

Formation of Coal

1. Coal, a fossil fuel, takes millions of years to form. Comment on the importance of conservation of coal and any other fossil fuel.
2. Summarize the factors that contribute to the formation of coal that takes place over millions of years.
3. Some people think that the burning of coal contributes to air pollution, including global warming and acid rain. Other concerns include damage to coal miners' health, with diseases such as silicosis, and emphysema. Other people see coal mining as a way that we can heat and provide electricity to our homes using an energy source that is produced here in Canada, and decreasing our dependence on foreign oil. Debate or discuss the all sides of this issue.

Challenge Activity

1. Make a power point presentation on the different types of rocks that can be found as part of the formation of coal. Give a brief explanation of each.
2. Designate a small surface area on a shelf or table (be sure to clearly mark off the area so it will not be cleaned, covered, or moved). Check each day to see how much dust and debris have settled from the air on this sectional. Relate how quickly a layer of dust, pollen, dirt, etc. collected in your experiment to what happens each day, week, year, century, etc. on the surface of the Earth. Discuss 1) how wind or water may carry and then deposit various materials and 2) how these materials over long periods of time (or short periods in the case of natural phenomena such as volcanic eruptions) form the layers that make up the crust of the Earth.

Origins of Coal: Graphics

The Kentucky Coal Education web site has activities and illustrations to make the formation of coal understandable for younger students. Go to the address: <http://www.coaleducation.org/resource/default.htm> and follow the links: Teachers Resources, Classroom Lesson Plans, Middle School, Origins of Coal, Graphics for Fossil Fuels: Importance and Formation.