

Earth

4. Earth's Resources

CONCEPT 1

LESSON GUIDE

EARTH RESOURCES

PRECISE LEARNING POINTS

KNOW

I know the natural resources that the Earth provides.

APPLY

I can apply my knowledge and describe how human activities limit or damage resources.

EXTEND

I can extend my knowledge to evaluate the impact of human activities on the Earth's resources.

NOTES

The Earth has many natural resources which life depends on. The sun's energy, the wind, the tides and geothermal heat (heat from the ground) all contribute to the Earth's natural resources. Other vital resources are the air we breathe, rocks and wood to build shelter and minerals that we can refine into metals. Life simply wouldn't be possible without these resources.

Other examples of natural resources are;

- Biological resources (plants and animals)
- Land
- Fossil Fuels
- Metal Ores
- Water

As we process these resources, pollution is produced. This pollution can contribute to global warming and environmental damage. As the population of the Earth increases (estimated to be 9.8 billion in 2050), so does the pollution and environmental damage caused. Developed countries tend to consume most of the world's resources to fuel their wealthy lifestyles. A staggering 75% of the world's resources are used by only 25% of the population.

Methods of extracting resources, such as mining can cause pollution and leave visible scars on the landscape, with natural habitats being destroyed. Precious gems, coal for making electricity or heating homes, and ores which metals are extracted from are all mined commodities. The environmental impact of mining means that it isn't sustainable. Sustainable means that you can continue doing it for a long time. Other examples of non-sustainable extraction of resources include oil extraction, over-fishing of seas, deforestation and intensive farming. All of these non-sustainable methods of collecting resources can lead to habitat loss and affects to food chains.

Deforestation in the Amazon rainforest has become a massive problem. Huge areas the size of small countries are being chopped down to increase the room for farming soya and cattle, mining, selling the timber and flooding the area to use in a hydro-electric power station. Unfortunately, once the trees have been cut down, the soil becomes less fertile which makes farming difficult. The huge levels of deforestation also lead to the loss of wildlife and culture as local tribes are forced to move, as well as contributing to the increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. But all is not lost – if we begin being more sustainable, the amazon rainforest could recover.