



Natural Resources and How We Use Them

KS2 GEOGRAPHY

Ages 10-14 ⌚ 3 min read

What Are Natural Resources?

Natural resources are materials and energy that come from the Earth and nature. They're things we didn't create ourselves—they already exist in forests, oceans, underground, and the atmosphere. Some examples include **water, trees, coal, oil, metals** like iron and copper, and even the **sun's energy**.

These resources are incredibly important because humans rely on them for nearly everything we do. Without natural resources, we couldn't build houses, grow food, make clothes, or power our homes and schools.

Think of it like a giant treasure chest buried under your feet. Everything valuable inside—gold, diamonds, water, fertile soil—is waiting to be discovered and used.

Types of Natural Resources

Natural resources come in two main types: **renewable** and **non-renewable**.

Renewable resources can be regrown or naturally replenished. Trees are renewable because we can plant new ones to replace those we cut down. Water cycles through rain, so it keeps coming back. Wind and sunlight are also renewable—they never run out as long as the sun shines and wind blows.

Non-renewable resources can't be quickly replaced once they're used up. **Fossil fuels** like coal, oil, and natural gas took millions of years to form underground. Once we burn them for energy, they're gone. Metals like gold and copper are also non-renewable—they exist in limited amounts beneath the Earth's surface.

Think of it like your pocket money. Renewable resources are like money your parents give you every week (it keeps coming). Non-renewable resources are like money in your piggy bank—once you spend it, it's gone unless you find more.

How Do We Use Natural Resources?

We use natural resources in countless ways every single day. **Coal, oil, and natural gas** provide energy to heat our homes and power electricity plants. **Trees** give us

wood for building and paper for writing. **Water** is essential for drinking, farming crops, and generating hydroelectric power. **Metals** extracted from rocks become everything from car parts to smartphones.

Agriculture depends heavily on natural resources too. Farmers use fertile soil (a natural resource) and water to grow the food we eat every day.

Why Should We Care?

The challenge is that we're using natural resources faster than nature can replace them. If we keep using non-renewable resources without limits, they will eventually run out. This is why scientists and governments encourage us to use **renewable energy** sources like solar and wind power instead.

Protecting natural resources means our planet stays healthy and we have enough for future generations. Learning about natural resources helps us understand our world and make better choices about how we live.