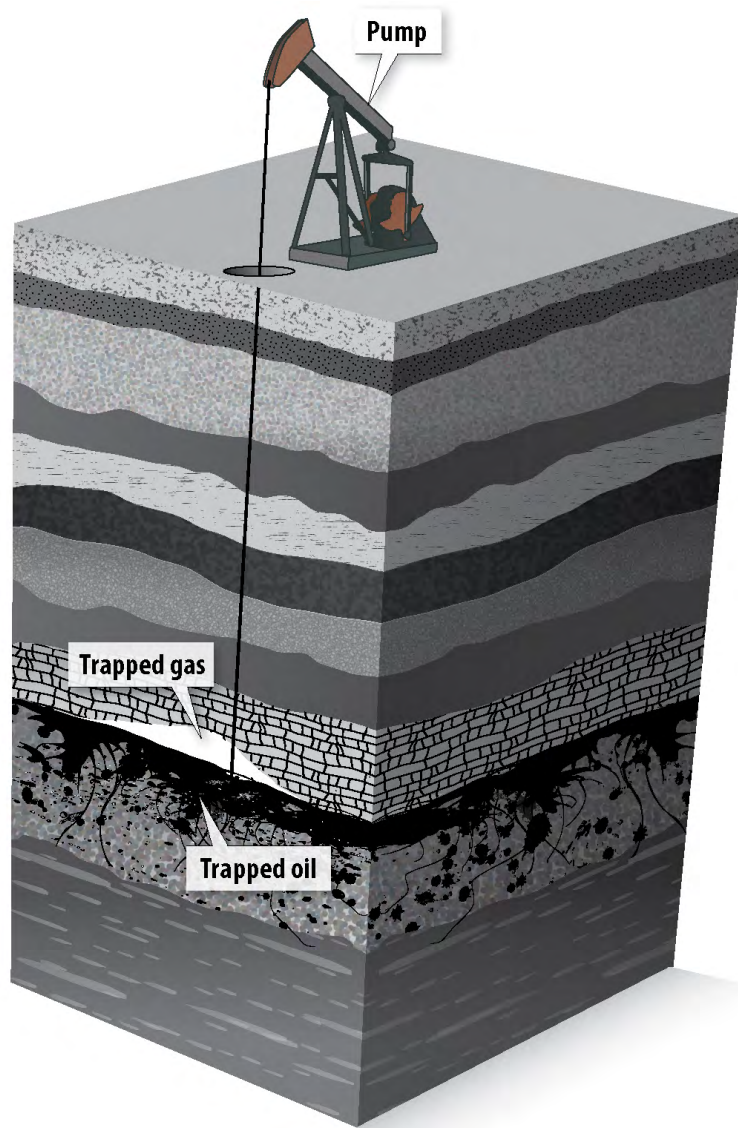




Natural Gas



Natural gas is nonrenewable.
Natural gas has no color or smell. It is a
gas when it comes from the ground.



Natural Gas

TEACHER

Natural gas is like air. You cannot see, smell, or taste it. Natural gas has a lot of energy in it. You can burn it to make heat. The early Chinese burned natural gas to get salt from sea water.

Natural gas was formed hundreds of millions of years ago, before the dinosaurs roamed the Earth. Oceans, which covered much of the Earth, were filled with tiny sea plants and animals. When the plants and animals died, they sank to the bottom and were covered by sand. Layers of dead plants, animals, and sand built up over time. Heat and pressure turned the plants and animals into natural gas and petroleum. Since natural gas is made from plants and animals, it is called a **fossil fuel**. The plants and animals got their energy from the sun. It was stored in them when they died. This is the energy in natural gas.

The natural gas we use today took a very long time to form. That is why we call it a **nonrenewable** energy source. We cannot make more in a short time. Someday, most of the natural gas we can reach by drilling underground will be gone.

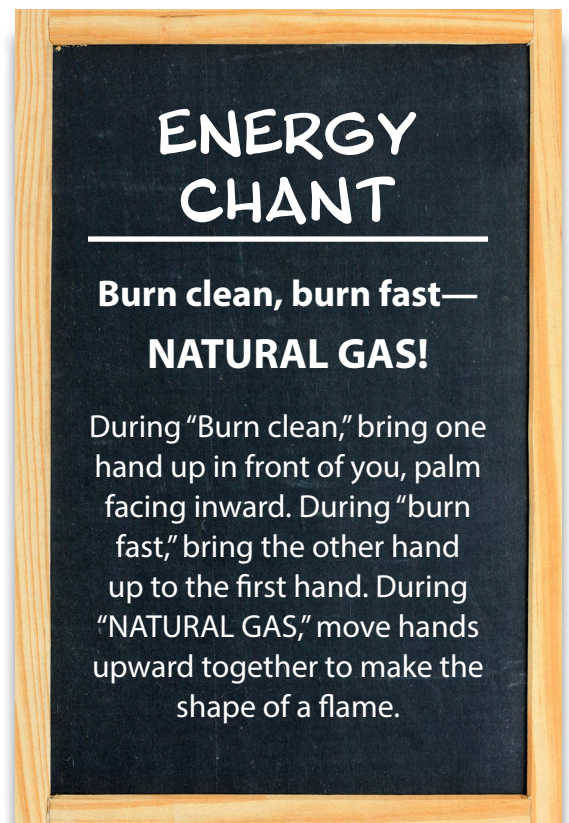
Natural gas is found underground in pockets of rock. We drill wells into the ground and pump out the gas. Some wells are more than a mile deep! The natural gas is shipped from the wells to plants that clean it. A chemical that smells like rotten eggs is added so that we can detect any leaks.

We move natural gas from one place to another in long chains of underground pipes called **pipelines**. There are more than 3 million miles of pipelines in the United States alone.

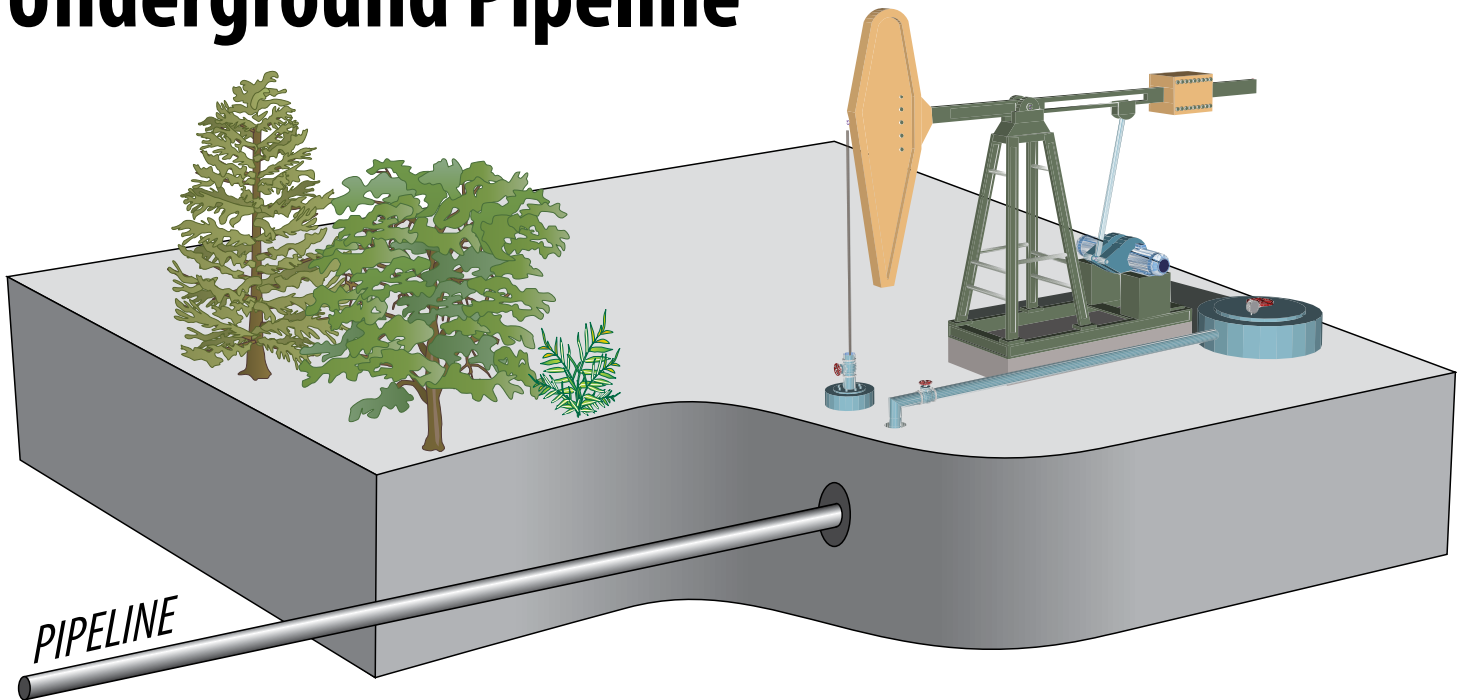
Many people use natural gas. Natural gas provides 35 percent of our total energy in the U.S. Most homes use natural gas for heat. So do schools and hospitals. Many stoves and water heaters use natural gas, too. Factories burn natural gas to make products like paper, chemicals, fertilizer, and cement. Natural gas is also an ingredient in paint, glue, fertilizer, and many other products.

Power plants burn natural gas to make electricity. Many power plants burn natural gas. It provides the U.S. with 40 percent of our electricity. Sometimes, natural gas is even used to run cars, trucks, and buses.

Natural gas is the cleanest-burning fossil fuel. It does not pollute the air as much as burning coal or oil. That's why it is a better fuel for heating our homes and cooking. Natural gas releases carbon dioxide when it is burned.



Underground Pipeline



We move natural gas in pipes
under the ground.
Never play or dig near pipelines.



Natural Gas Stove

We burn natural gas for heat.
It can cook our food and warm our homes.