
Fossil Fuels: For and Against

Segment Length: 3:05 minutes; 4:34 minutes

Videos:

“The True Cost of Fossil Fuels”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIFTpj4Hsr4>

“(2017 DVD) The Energy Debate – A Case for Fossil Fuels”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kza8n7xD-MQ>

Guide:

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

Analysis Questions:

1. In the first video John Iadarola of The Young Turks says the true cost of using fossil fuels like gasoline is greater than what you pay at the pump. What is the additional cost? Who pays for it? What are the consequences of this cost not being factored into purchasing prices?
2. John Iadarola says the true cost of fossil fuel use should be borne in mind when we make purchasing decisions. How could this be accomplished? What would be the effect on fossil fuel use?
3. What would be the cost to consumers of following John Iadarola’s prescription? What cost to government would Iadarola’s plan impose?
4. Alex Epstein describes energy as a climate protection device. What does he mean? How does the use of fossil fuels facilitate better living, according to Epstein? How might this connect to Indonesia?
5. At the end of the second video Alex Epstein says Jimmy Fallon once, unwittingly, made an argument against solar, wind, and biofuel energy. What does Fallon’s hazelnut joke have to do with renewable energy sources?
6. John Iadarola tells us prices that reflect external costs will be higher and lead to less consumption. What general principle between price and consumption is Iadarola invoking?

7. If the International Monetary Fund report John Iadarola cites is correct, fossil fuel use in the United States creates \$5 trillion in external costs every year. The U.S. could save \$5 trillion dollars every year if we outlawed fossil fuels, right? What's the problem?
8. John Stossel notes that climate-related deaths have dropped while the globe has warmed over the course of the 20th century and beyond. What point is Stossel making about fossil fuels?
9. We want forms of energy that we can control, not forms that control us, Alex Epstein tells John Stossel. What does Epstein mean? What forms of energy does this maxim favor? Why is control over our energy supply so important, according to Epstein's thinking?