
Gas Prices

Videos:

“Who REALLY Controls US Gas Prices?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85Pny0CFnKU> (5:43 minutes)

“Why Are Gas Prices So High?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65KWksO-NDA> (2:22 minutes)

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. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
3. In the AJ+ video, Mohammad Alsaafin said the U.S. is the world’s biggest oil producer. Did this surprise you? Why/Why not?
4. In the Learn Liberty video, Art Carden said that narratives about rising gas prices play to our need for news stories involving victims and villains. Do you think this is true? Why/Why not?
5. Mohammad Alsaafin said that because U.S. oil companies can sell their oil globally, U.S. oil prices are “based on global conditions, not domestic U.S. demand.” Why is this important?
6. Art Carden said that the cause of high gas prices is supply and demand. In basic terms, what is the law of supply and demand?
7. Mohammad Alsaafin said that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates “treat oil production as a matter of national security, and regulate it that way.” What did he mean by this?
8. Art Carden said, “[P]rofits and losses play a crucial role in sending signals about what people want, and what is possible to produce.” What did he mean by this?

9. In the AJ+ video, Diamondback Energy CEO Travis Stice said that oil companies “have pivoted...from a business model that is chasing growth at all costs, to now we’re chasing returns.” What did he mean by this?
10. Art Carden said we shouldn’t tax oil company profits, because doing so would distort the signals that encourage competition. What reason did he give for not subsidizing oil companies either?
11. Mohammad Alsaafin mentioned the possibility of a “windfall profits tax” for oil companies. How did he describe this tax, and what would be the purpose of it?
12. In regards to green energy competing with fossil fuels, Art Carden said, “If there are legal barriers to entry, then that’s a problem with the politics, not with the profits per se.” What did he mean by this?
13. Mohammad Alsaafin said that oil companies spend hundreds of millions of dollars lobbying the federal government. What do you think Art Carden’s opinion of this would be? Would the two sides of this debate agree that lobbying by oil companies is a bad thing? Why/Why not?
14. Other than the lobbying issue mentioned above, do you think there’s any other common ground between these two videos?
15. Have you experienced any impact from rising gas prices? If so, what was it?
16. Did you have an opinion of gas prices before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from either video that affects your views on this topic?
17. What could you learn about gas prices that might affect your view of this debate?
18. What else would you like to learn about gas prices?
19. Hear more thoughts on fossil fuels with another entry in our Both Sides of the Issue series, “Fossil Fuels – For and Against”: <https://stosselintheclassroom.org/both-sides-fossil-fuels-for-and-against/>