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# Nuclear Power Revisited

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## **Videos:**

“Is Nuclear Energy the solution?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZUMoEfTr7w> (9:15 minutes)

“Three Mile Island nearly killed nuclear. Now it's coming back.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P43moLdaitw> (8:18 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. Our Changing Climate (OCC) said that disasters at Chernobyl, Fukushima, and Three Mile Island have “persisted as specters in the imaginations of the world.” What did he mean by this? Do you think this has had an impact on people’s opinions of nuclear energy? Why/Why not?
3. In the Reason video, Zach Weissmueller said: "Nuclear power was once considered the clean energy source of the future, with dozens of new plants coming online in the late '60s and early '70s." What changed the perception of nuclear power?
4. According to OCC, what are the three main methods of dealing with nuclear waste?
5. Zach Weissmueller said that there were no casualties or lingering environmental damage caused at Three Mile Island, "but the incident spooked the nation." Was this fear justified? Why/Why not?
6. OCC said: “According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, one consequence of reprocessing spent fuel could be the proliferation of nuclear weapons.” Why is this?
7. In the Reason video, what did Adam Stein say was the "number one lesson of the Three Mile Island incident"?
8. What did OCC say was “ultimately the only answer right now to our current nuclear waste”?

9. In the Reason video, Eric Dawson said: "My view is that these supposedly environmentalist groups formed in the 1970s... are not primarily pro-environment, they're really primarily anti-nuclear." What did he mean by this?
10. OCC said that one obstacle to nuclear energy is the high cost of building nuclear power plants. Is this a permanent problem, or is it possible the cost could go down? Why/Why not?
11. Eric Dawson said that anti-nuclear protestors "conflated nuclear weapons with nuclear energy." Is it reasonable to conflate nuclear weapons with nuclear energy? Why/Why not?
12. OCC said that while France gets 75% of its energy from nuclear, it's an "outlier." What reason did he give for this? Could other countries emulate France? Why/Why not?
13. According to Adam Stein, what type of fatalities could nuclear energy prevent?
14. In the OCC video, Arjendu Pattanayak said: "It would take so much momentum that doesn't seem to exist for nuclear energy to have real legs [in the United States.]" Why doesn't this momentum exist?
15. Zach Weissmueller said that in the United States, the regulatory landscape has become more open to nuclear energy in recent years. Why do you think that is?
16. Did these two videos share any common ground? Were there any points on which they agreed? If so, what were they?
17. Both videos acknowledged that nuclear energy is the least harmful energy source per capita, which goes against the general perception that nuclear energy is unsafe. Why do you think that perception persists?
18. Do you think the use of nuclear energy will increase? Why/Why not?
19. Do you think the use of nuclear energy *should* increase? Why/Why not?
20. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
21. Did you have an opinion on this topic before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from these videos that affects your views on this topic?
22. What else would you like to learn about this topic?