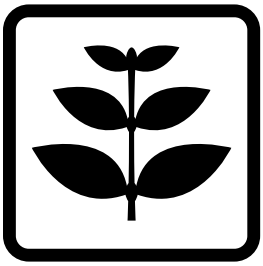
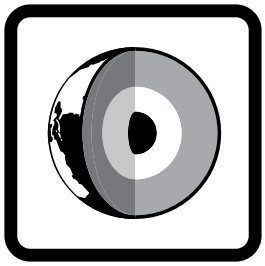
Energy Sources

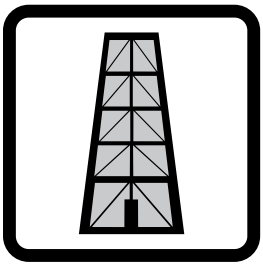

BIOMASS

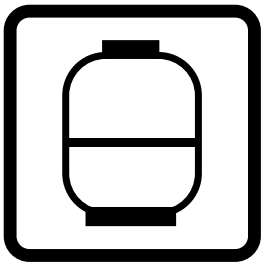

COAL

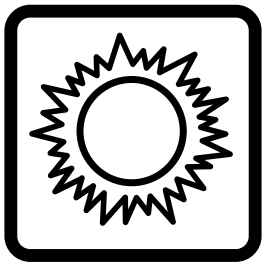

GEOTHERMAL


HYDROPOWER


NATURAL GAS

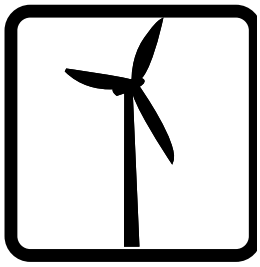

PETROLEUM


PROPANE


SOLAR



URANIUM


WIND

We use many energy sources to do work.

©2026 The NEED Project Primary Energy Infobook www.NEED.org

Energy Sources
TEACHER

We use many different energy sources to do work for us. Energy sources are classified into two groups—**nonrenewable** and **renewable**. In the United States, most of our energy comes from nonrenewable energy sources. Coal, petroleum, natural gas, propane, and uranium are nonrenewable energy sources. They are used to make electricity, heat our homes, move our cars, and manufacture all kinds of products.

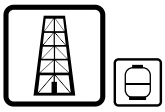
These energy sources are called nonrenewable because their supplies are limited. Petroleum, for example, was formed hundreds of millions of years ago from the remains of ancient sea plants and animals that lived prior to dinosaurs. We cannot make more petroleum in a short time.

Renewable energy sources include biomass, geothermal, hydropower, solar, and wind. They are called renewable energy sources because they are replenished in a short time. Day after day the sun shines, the wind blows, and the rivers flow. We use renewable energy sources mainly to make electricity.

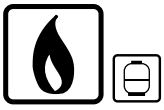
Electricity is different from the other energy sources because it is a **secondary source of energy**. We have to use another energy source to make electricity. In the United States, natural gas is the number-one energy source for generating electricity.

U.S. Energy Consumption by Source, 2025

NONRENEWABLE, 91%



Petroleum **37%**
Uses: transportation, manufacturing - Includes Propane



Natural Gas **36%**
Uses: electricity, heating, manufacturing - Includes Propane



Uranium **9%**
Uses: electricity



Coal **9%**
Uses: electricity, manufacturing



*Propane consumption is included in petroleum and natural gas figures.

Propane
Uses: heating, manufacturing

RENEWABLE, 9%



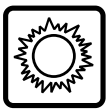
Biomass **5%**
Uses: electricity, heating, transportation



Wind **2%**
Uses: electricity



Hydropower **1%**
Uses: electricity



Solar **1%**
Uses: electricity, heating



Geothermal **< 1%**
Uses: electricity, heating

Data: Energy Information Administration

*Total may not equal 100% due to independent rounding.

Renewable

Re - NEW - a - ble

Able to be NEW again



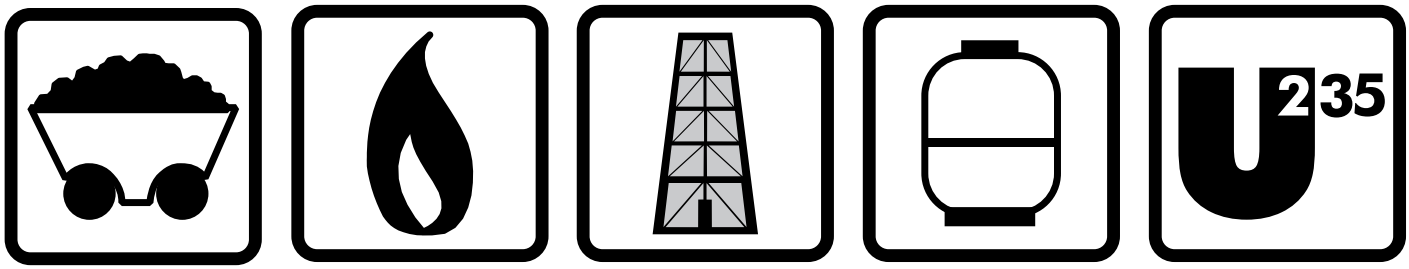
Some energy sources can be made again quickly.

©2026 The NEED Project Primary Energy Infobook www.NEED.org

Nonrenewable

NON - re - NEW - a - ble

NOT able to be NEW again



Some energy sources take millions of years to form.