

Natural Gas Power

Composition and Formation

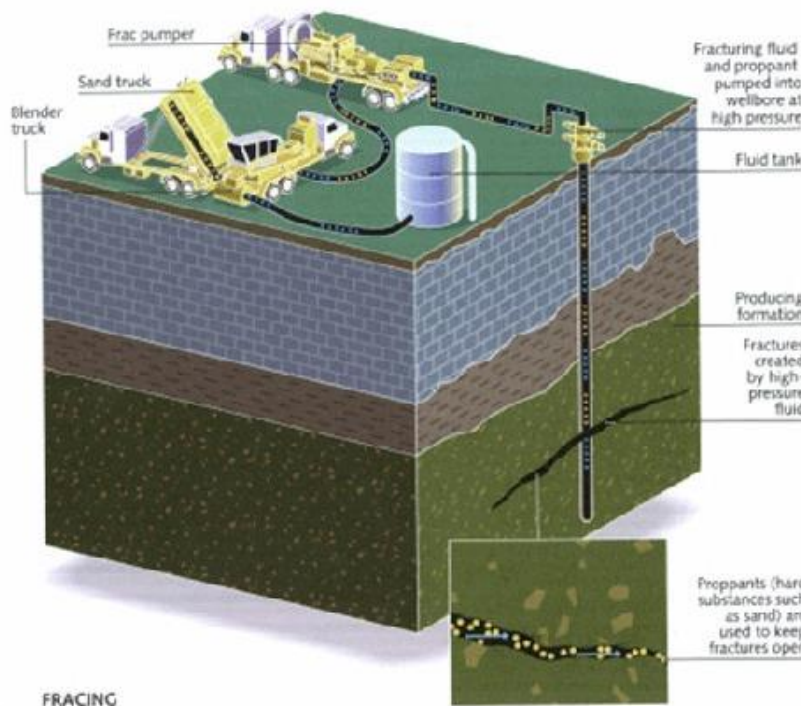
- **Natural gas** is a fossil fuel composed of hydrocarbon methane (CH_4) combined with some other chemicals.
- Natural gas forms under the Earth's surface when organic materials harden to become a shale formation that sources the gas.

Study Tip

Weigh the pros and cons of using natural gas. Do the costs outweigh the benefits? You can do additional Internet research if necessary.

Usage

- Natural gas use is becoming increasingly popular. It is now used in home appliances such as stoves and fireplaces. It is also burned to create heat for powering turbines.
- Before natural gas can be used, it must be processed because it contains poisonous chemicals. Once it is processed, what's left is mostly methane.



Fracking

- Natural gas burns much cleaner than other fuels such as oil and coal, and produces less carbon dioxide.
- Drilling for natural gas through a method called “fracking” is environmentally destructive. **Fracking** is the process of creating fractures in rocks containing natural gas by using fluids. The fluids contain radioactive chemicals as well as chemicals that cause cancer. These fluids can get into groundwater, runoff, and eventually enter other water sources. Fracking can also cause earthquakes.

Concept Check

- What is natural gas? How is it formed?
- Why is burning natural gas better than burning other fuels?
- What is fracking? What are some negative consequences of fracking?