Student Informational Text

The United States uses a lot of **energy**—over two million dollars worth of energy per minute, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. With a little more than 4.4 percent of the world's population, we consume about 18.6 percent of the world's energy resources.

All of us use energy every day—for getting from one place to another, cooking, heating and cooling rooms, making products, lighting, heating water, and entertainment.

We use a lot of energy to make our lives comfortable, productive, and enjoyable. Most of that energy is from nonrenewable energy sources. It is important that we use our energy resources wisely.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation

The choices we make about how we use energy have environmental and economic impacts. There are many things we can do to use less energy and use it more wisely. These actions include both energy conservation and energy efficiency.

Energy conservation is any action or behavior that results in using less energy. **Energy efficiency** focuses on technologies that use less energy to perform the same tasks or the same amount of work. Buying a dryer that uses less energy is an example of energy efficiency. Drying clothes outside on sunny days is an example of energy conservation.

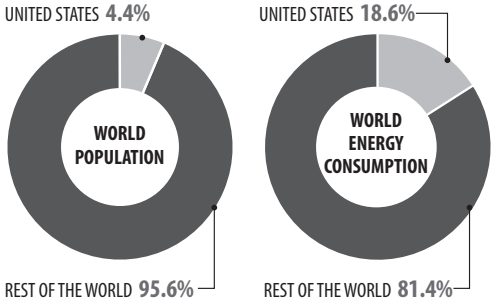
Who Uses Energy?

The U.S. Department of Energy uses categories to classify energy users—residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, and electric power generation. These categories are called the sectors of the economy.

Residences are people's homes. Commercial buildings include office buildings, hospitals, stores, restaurants, and schools. Residential and commercial energy use are lumped together because homes and businesses use energy in the same ways for heating, air conditioning, water heating, lighting, and operating appliances.

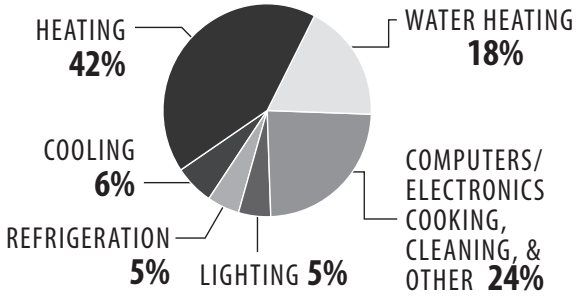
The graphic to the right shows that the electric power generation sector consumed the most primary energy in 2014. However, all of the other sectors, especially the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors, use electricity after it is generated. The other sectors are the end users of electric power. When the residential and commercial sectors of the economy are combined together and electricity consumption is included, the residential and commercial sectors consume more energy than any of the other sectors, with 39.8 total quads of energy. These two sectors actually account for nearly 40 percent of the total energy consumed by the U.S., when electricity is included. The residential portion of the sector consumed 21.6 quads of energy, with nearly 67 percent of this energy coming from electricity. The commercial portion of the sector consumed 18.2 quads of energy, of which 76% is electricity.

Population Versus Energy Consumption, 2014



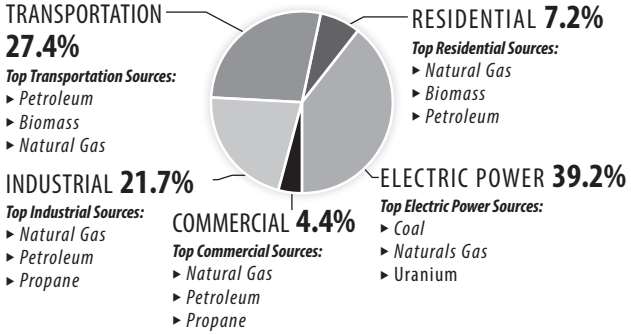
Data: Energy Information Administration

Home Energy Usage, 2014



Data: U.S. Department of Energy

U.S. Energy Consumption by Sector, 2014



The residential, commercial, and industrial sectors use electricity. This graph depicts their energy source consumption outside of electricity.

Data: Energy Information Administration