

ACTIVITY!

BURNING FOSSIL FUELS

IDEAS FOR SUPPLIES

glass . candle . matches . science journal and pencil

Burning fossil fuels releases large amounts of carbon dioxide into the earth's atmosphere. Large quantities of carbon dioxide are linked to global climate change. Humans release on average annually about 64 trillion pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. That is like releasing 3.2 trillion watermelons into the sky every year. Since greenhouse gases are invisible, colorless, and odorless, we can't see the impact. Compare that with renewable energy sources such as, wind, water and solar, which release no gases into the air. Which do you think is better for our planet? Observe first hand what burning a paraffin wax candle puts into the air. Paraffin wax is made from petroleum, which is a fossil fuel.

Caution: An adult must supervise the use of matches and a candle. Make sure to use a pyrex glass container.

1 Fill the pyrex container with ice and water. With the help of an adult, light the candle with your match.

2 Hold the glass cup of ice water directly above the flame for 2 to 3 seconds. Continue to hold the cup over the flame as you blow out the candle.

3 Observe the bottom of the cup. What do you notice about your candle emissions? What color is it and what does it look like? What happens when you touch it? What do you think it is? Record your observations in your science journal.

TRY THIS: Try the same experiment using a beeswax candle. Bees transform nectar from flowers into beeswax. Do you get the same result? What conclusions can you draw from comparing the two results?