



# BIOFUELS

## TEACHER / FACILITATOR PACK

Materials developed on behalf of the Royal Air Force to support Glasgow Science Centre Learning Lab.

Materials appropriate for P5 - P7 pupils.



### Lesson objective

To learn about the development of biofuels and how they can be used as alternatives to traditional fuels (such as coal and gas).



### Duration

Approximate **total** duration of all activities in this resource pack: 1.5 hours.  
Indicative timings provided for each component.



### Context to set the scene for the session

Biofuel is fuel from recently lifeless or living biological material. Biofuel can be solid, liquid or gas. They are renewable and good substitutes to fossil fuels which are from long dead biological material. Some biofuels are produced from plants, from waste processes and recycled material. There are a few ways to produce biofuels from plants. One way is to convert them into gas and liquid fuels. Another way is to grow plants that contain high amounts of oil, and many materials such as wood and grasses can be dried and burnt. These biofuels are used to produce power and are used to power cars, heat buildings and for cooking. Most biofuel companies are from Europe, Asia, and America.



### Scottish curriculum links

This activity provides links to experience and outcomes in a number of subject areas covered by Curriculum for Excellence. Specifically, these include:

Through carrying out practical activities and investigations, I can show how plants have benefited society. **SCN 2-02b (Biodiversity and interdependence)**

By considering examples where energy is conserved, I can identify the energy source, how it is transferred and ways of reducing wasted energy. **SCN 2-04a (Energy sources and sustainability)**

Through exploring non-renewable energy sources, I can describe how they are used in Scotland today and express an informed view on the implications for their future use. **SCN 2-04b (Energy sources and sustainability)**

Through research and discussion, I have an appreciation of the contribution that individuals are making to scientific discovery and invention and the impact this has made on society. **SCN 2-20a (Topical science)**

I can report and comment on current scientific news items to develop my knowledge and understanding of topical science. **SCN 2-20b (Topical science)**

I can analyse how lifestyles can impact on the environment and Earth's resources and can make suggestions about how to live in a more sustainable way. **TCH 2-06a (Impact, contribution, and relationship of technologies on business, the economy, politics, and the environment)**









I can make suggestions as to how individuals and organisations may use technologies to support sustainability and reduce the impact on our environment. **TCH 2-07a (Impact, contribution, and relationship of technologies on business, the economy, politics, and the environment)**

I can extend and enhance my design skills to solve problems and can construct models. **TCH 2-09a (Design and constructing models/product)**

I understand how scientific and technological developments have contributed to changes in everyday products. **TCH 3-05a (Awareness of technological developments (Past, Present and Future), including how they work)**



### Pupil resources

-  Introductory explainer
-  RAF Marham and biogas
-  Biofuels Factsheet
-  Worksheet: Which fuel?
-  Worksheet: The future and biofuels!
-  Worksheet: Biofuels word search
-  Worksheet: The biofuels bus
-  Worksheet: The biofuels quiz





### Hook into the lesson (10 mins)

Play  **INTRODUCTORY EXPLAINER.**



#### Additional context


Stocks of fossil fuels are getting smaller and smaller. Fossil fuels like coal and gas are formed from dead animals and plants that have been buried for millions of years. Burning coal and gas is bad for the environment because they have a high carbon content. The carbon dioxide causes pollution and has led to climate change. We need to find alternative sources of power if we want to keep using the same amount of energy and the same transport system. Biofuels may be part of the solution to these problems! They can be used to provide energy by harvesting crops, trees, agricultural waste and animal waste. We can use all of these things to generate heat and electricity or to fuel transport."

- Biofuel energy was slow to develop in Scotland compared to some countries even though there is a mass of biofuel sources, such as land. But exciting projects are now underway and Scotland's aim is to supply the nation with cheap and clean heat and power in the near future. (info taken from [Biomass Action Plan for Scotland](#))
- Provide pupils with a copy of  **Biofuels FACTSHEET.**
- Discuss examples of biofuels including RAF  **RAF MARHAM AND BIOGAS.**




### Activity (10 mins)

-  Ask pupils to identify why biofuels are good for the environment.
-  Ask if pupils think some biofuels will be easier to produce than others.

Lead a discussion with pupils that explores the various fuel sources used in  **Worksheet: WHICH FUEL?** (fuel sources include coal, petrol/diesel/aviation fuel/wind energy/electricity).



### Activity (20 mins)

-  Ask pupils what are the challenges about the future and fuels?

Provide pupils with a copy of  **Worksheet: THE FUTURE AND BIOFUELS.**



### Activity (10 mins)

? Ask pupils: 'What does the word Biodiversity mean?' This word appears in the wordsearch.

Provide pupils with a copy of [Worksheet: WORDSEARCH.](#)



### Activity (20 mins)


? Ask pupils who has been on a bus and how many people do they think use the bus on a regular basis? Is using public transport better or worse for the environment?

Provide pupils with a copy of [Worksheet: MY BIOFUELS BUS.](#)



**Activity**  
**(20 mins)**

? Ask pupils who can name one of the three main biofuels? And who can say how they are made?

Provide pupils with a copy of  **Worksheet: QUIZ.**

ANSWERS:

Q1: What does the word biofuel mean?

A fuel made from living or recently living biological matter.

Q2: How is biogas made?

By collecting gas from rotting animal waste.

Q3: What chemical is contributing to climate change?

Carbon dioxide.

Q4: What daily activities require fuel?

All of the above.

Q5: A fuel formed naturally in the ground from the remains of living organisms is?

Fossil Fuel.

Q6: Which of these is NOT a FOSSIL FUEL?

Ethanol.

Q7: Resources that can be produced over and over are called?

Renewable resources.

Q8: Which of these is NOT an example of a BIOFUEL?

Natural gas AND/OR Petrol.

Q9: Which of these is NOT an example of a RENEWABLE RESOURCE?

Coal.

Q10: Resources that can only be used once are called?

Non-renewable resources.

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CONTEXT AND EXAMPLES

## USE OF BIOFUELS IN SCOTLAND

It gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "one for the road". Whisky, the spirit that powers the Scottish economy, is being used to develop a new biofuel which could be available at petrol pumps in a few years.

Researchers at Edinburgh Napier University have been working with Glenkinchie Distillery in East Lothian and have developed a way of producing biofuel from some of the waste produced when making whisky!



## BIOFUELS TO FLY AIRCRAFT!

The RAF is using biofuels in a big way. By 2050 aircraft such as F-35s, Typhoons and Wildcat helicopters will replace up to half of their traditional aviation fuel with sustainable sources – these include the use of biofuels. Sustainable sources of fuel are also known as 'drop-ins,' and these include hydrogenated fats and oils, wood waste, alcohols, sugars, household waste, biomass and algae.





# BIOFUELS

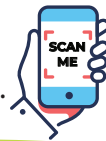
TEACHER / FACILITATOR PACK  
CONTEXT AND EXAMPLES

## SCOTLAND DRIVES FOR GREENER CARS

Scotland has set tough targets to reduce the problem of harmful gas emissions. GreenFleet is a Scottish biofuels programme aiming to replace combustion-engine vehicles with greener ones.

This fleet would consist of electric cars and vans and new engine types that use biofuel. To reach these goals there are a number of things that need to be addressed, such as plant feedstock availability, land availability, government policy and money to support the programme.

More information on [GreenFleet's](#) website.



**Rudolf Diesel**  
(inventor of the diesel engine)

Biofuel is not a new invention. It has a long history in the motor industry, going back to the 1800's. Rudolf Diesel designed car engines to run on peanut oil. And the first Model T Ford cars ran on bioethanol.



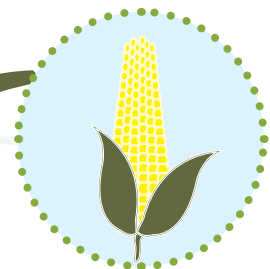
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CONTEXT AND EXAMPLES

## BIOGAS AT RAF MARHAM

RAF Marham in Norfolk is one of the RAFs most important bases. It is where the new F-35 aircraft are based.

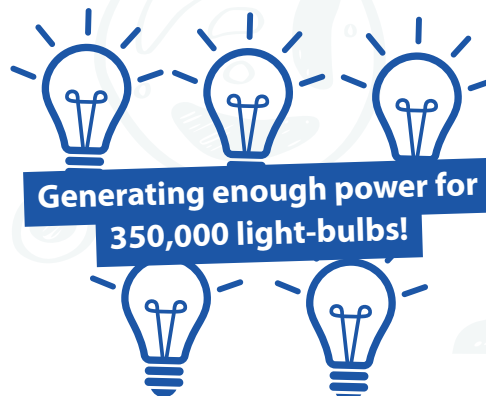
Biogas will be produced by fermenting locally grown crops. This process will provide up to 95% of RAF Marham's energy needs. That's not all, the waste from the process is then going to be used by local farmers as a fertilizer for other crops!



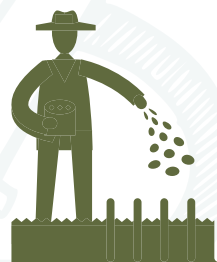
Crops fermented



Biogas produced  
from crops



Generating enough power for  
350,000 light-bulbs!



Waste product used to  
fertilise local crops



Biogas facilities being built at  
RAF Marham