



Starting Points

What and where are fossil fuels?

(good for 15 – 18 year olds)

Ask the group for ideas about what fossil fuels are, and to name some.

Fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas are made from plants and animals that died millions of years ago. They contain carbon. When we burn fossil fuels, the carbon reacts with oxygen in the air to make carbon dioxide. Increased carbon dioxide (and other greenhouse gases) in the atmosphere means that more of the sun's energy is being trapped in the earth's atmosphere. Since the Industrial Revolution 200 years ago, people have been burning more and more fossil fuels and this is affecting the Earth's climate – we call this climate change.

Divide into groups, giving each group a piece of paper and a pen. The groups move around the room (go outside too if you are somewhere suitable) and write down all the things that contain fossil fuels, either in the end product or in the process of making. Come back to the large group and see who's got the longest list. Share and discuss what the groups have found.

For more on the causes of climate change see QPSW's 'Responding to climate change' pack (downloadable at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability).

See 'The Oil Fast Guide' by Operation Noah for more detail about where oil is in our lives in particular, and details as to how much carbon dioxide each daily activity produces (downloadable at www.operationnoah.org)