

The Three Smart Pigs

Once upon a time, there were three smart pigs. No, these aren't the ones you may have heard about whose houses were blown down, but their younger cousins. These pigs had learned from the misfortunes of their relatives and had constructed houses that were sturdy, secure, and comfortable. And while an earthquake or flood might cause damage, a wolf certainly would not.

Every month, the three pigs dined together. During one meal, Samson described the powerful electric air conditioner he had just put in. Mariah, a professional chef, bragged about her new, large gas oven. George, as usual, talked about the video games he played on his computer and TV. "If only the cost of fossil fuels were lower," they lamented. So they decided to research alternative energy sources. The pigs would determine the best energy sources for their houses and discuss them at their next dinner.

The next month, Samson, who resided in a sunny location, reported that he had chosen solar energy. "It's quiet and doesn't generate any pollution," he explained. "I will have solar panels installed on my roof, where they can collect the sun's heat. The panels produce free renewable energy for 20 to 30 years. In only ten years, I will have saved enough money in electricity to cover the cost of the panels!"

The other pigs posed several questions. "Aren't solar panels rather expensive?" asked Mariah.

"And what happens when there is no sun?" pondered George.

Samson had ready answers. "The government lowers your taxes, which makes it more affordable, and you can use batteries, or even the electric company, to store energy until you need it," he explained with a smile.

renewable: can be replaced by nature

taxes: money paid to the government

Mariah announced next, "I live in a windy canyon, so I'm installing a windmill. It costs about the same as a solar energy system, and I can connect it to the power company to stash energy for when the wind isn't blowing. My windmill should pay for itself within 15 years, but it will continue to work for 20 to 30 years. Just like solar energy, wind energy is clean and renewable."

Samson queried, "Isn't a windmill rather noisy?"

Mariah responded, "It is about as loud as your new air conditioner, so I won't hear it inside my house."

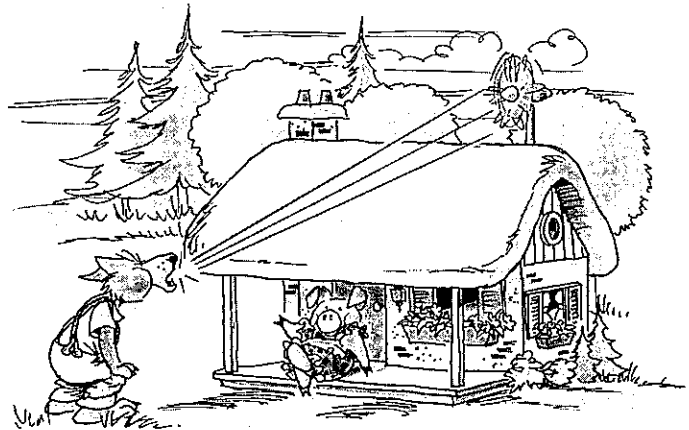
George smugly announced, "I'm getting a geothermal heat pump to heat and cool my house and give me hot water. I'll use about 50 percent less energy."

"How does geothermal technology work?" inquired the others.

"It uses buried pipes to transfer heat between the earth and the house. Geothermal technology functions almost anywhere, and it will pay for itself in around ten years!" George replied.

The pigs each installed their alternative energy systems in their homes. Of course, the old Wolf had heard about the pigs' houses, and he came to visit. When the Wolf threatened to blow Mariah's house down, she challenged, "Go for it!" knowing that the Wolf's breath would cause the windmill to race round and round, producing even more electricity. Mariah struck a deal with the Wolf—in exchange for the extra wind, the Wolf could live in her spare room and have free meals so he didn't have to threaten anyone.

So our three smart pigs learned that they could use alternative energy sources that matched their circumstances to reduce pollution and help protect the planet. As for the Wolf? Well, he learned that it's better to eat the chef's food than the chef.



functions: works

Name: _____

Dictionary

Write a sentence using each vocabulary word.

misfortune: bad luck

lament: to express unhappiness, sadness, or regret

alternative: different; unusual; not traditional

reside: to live in a certain place

generate: to make or produce

pose: to ask or suggest

ponder: to think about or consider

circumstances: the conditions in which someone lives

Name: _____

Apply Vocabulary

Complete each sentence using a word from the word box.

Word Box

alternative

circumstances

generated

lamented

misfortune

pondered

posed

resides

1. Lee _____ the loss of his turtle until he found it under the refrigerator two days later.
2. The game show host _____ a difficult question to the first contestant.
3. When we saw the traffic jam, we started to look for an _____ route.
4. They had the _____ of arriving at their hotel right before the hurricane.
5. Ms. Abercrombie still _____ in the same house she grew up in.
6. When I rubbed my hands together, I _____ some warmth.
7. Grandpa's _____ changed as he got too old to live alone.
8. Ava _____ what it would feel like to fly like a bird.

Write two new sentences. Use a word from the word box in each.

1. _____

2. _____

Name: _____

Answer Questions

Read and answer each question.

1. Why did the pigs decide to research alternative energy sources?
 - (A) They wanted to avoid earthquake and flood damage.
 - (B) They did not like paying such a high price for power.
 - (C) They had just bought new items that don't run on fossil fuels.
 - (D) They did not want their houses to be blown down.
2. Which technology is used underground?
 - (A) storage batteries
 - (B) windmills
 - (C) geothermal pipes
 - (D) solar panels

3. What do the three pigs' solutions have in common?
 - (A) They work best in a sunny area.
 - (B) They pay for themselves in ten years.
 - (C) They store extra power in batteries.
 - (D) They are forms of renewable energy.

4. Mariah made a deal with the Wolf because she _____.
 - (A) saw that he could supply more wind
 - (B) thought that he would go away
 - (C) thought that he would eat her
 - (D) felt that he needed a friend

5. Why didn't each pig choose the same form of alternative energy?

6. Do the pigs care about the environment? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

Name: _____

Write About It

Graphic Organizer

Think about how the alternative energy sources in this selection are alike and different. Think about a desert climate: hot days, cold nights, lots of sun and wind. You will be asked to compare energy sources and decide which would be best to use in the desert. Use the chart below to organize your writing.

	Solar	Wind	Geothermal
Resource needed			
How long it lasts			
How long to pay for itself			
How to store extra energy			
Appropriate environment to use it in			

Writing Prompt

On a separate sheet of paper, write three paragraphs to compare the different alternative energy sources in this selection. Describe which would be best to use in the desert. Support your opinion using details from the selection in your response.