



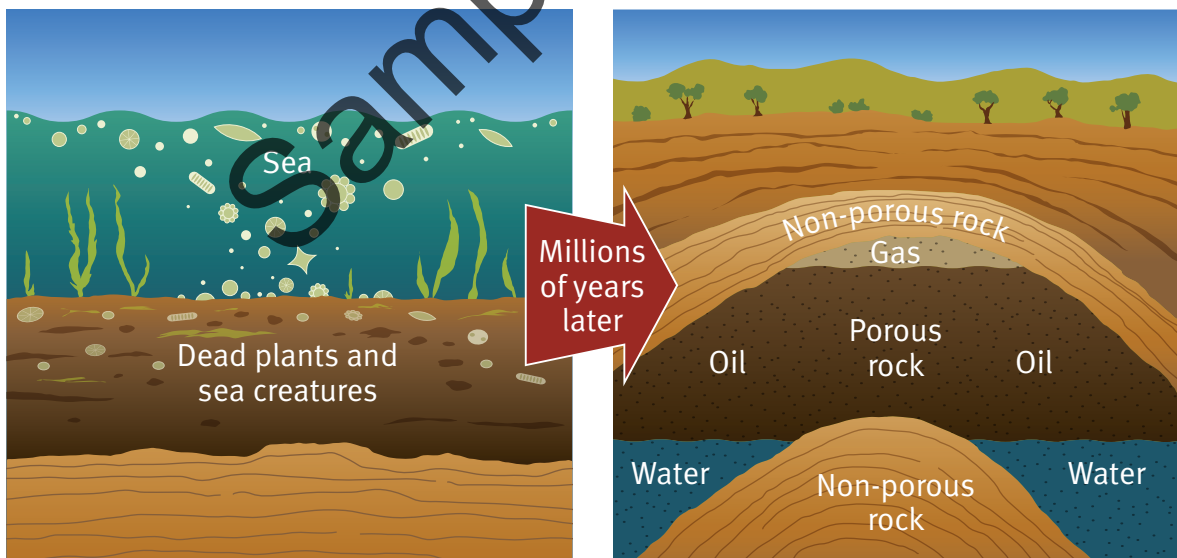
Formation of Fossil Fuels

Crude Oil and Natural Gas

Oil and natural gas were formed when ancient sea creatures and plants died and fell to the ocean floor. They were then covered by sand and mud, which stopped them from decaying.

Over millions of years, the sand and mud turned to beds of stone. Heat, and pressure from the stone, turned the remains of the sea creatures and plants into oil and natural gas, which were trapped there by the rock layers above them.

Natural gas forms when the **organic** matter is trapped at very high pressure under deep rock. Oil forms more commonly at medium rock depths.



The formation of an oil and gas deposit



Coal

Coal formed from the remains of trees and other plants that fell into shallow swamps millions of years ago. The plant remains were covered with layers of mud, which slowly turned into rock. Under pressure and exposed to heat, the buried plants changed into other materials over time. As plant matter turned to coal, it passed through four different stages, depending on the amount of pressure and heat it was exposed to. These stages were peat, lignite, bituminous coal and anthracite.

Peat

Peat is the first step in the formation of coal. It comes from the partly decomposed remains of plants.



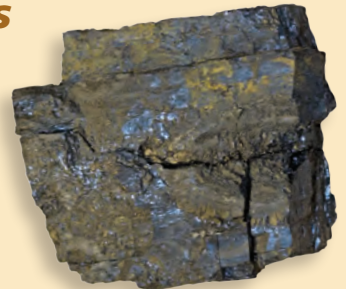
Lignite

Lignite (brown coal) is mostly used in power stations, but it is very polluting.



Bituminous coal

Bituminous coal is better quality than lignite and can be used to make **coke**.



Anthracite

Anthracite is the purest form of coal, used in heating, furnaces and electricity production.

