

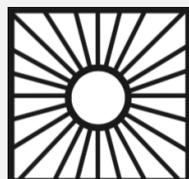


What is coal?

Coal is a sedimentary rock. It is usually black, shiny and sometimes flaky or dusty. It often breaks very easily.

Coal formed millions of years ago when the Earth was covered with huge swampy forests. When plant life died, it did not rot away, but instead became buried by layers of sand and mud. Slowly over time, the layers of dead plants became buried deeper underground and were squashed by the layers of sediment above. Over millions of years these layers of dead plants became seams of coal.

Layers of coal are called seams; layers of rock, strata. Coal seams are found in a variety of places around the world including Barrow Hill.



How does coal produce energy?

Coal is an important resource that can be used to create heat, energy and electricity. It is a good energy source because it is formed from the remains of plants. It can be burnt as a solid fossil fuel.

In order to get coal, mine workers have to dig underground. Working underground can be difficult because it is dark and because there is not much space. Mining coal is also very physical work, and there are many dangers.



During the Industrial Revolution a lot of coal was needed to fuel steam engines that powered factories, trains and boats. Today we still use coal to heat our homes. Coal is also used as fuel in some electricity generation plants.

Coal is the dirtiest fossil fuel, producing emissions that are known to contribute to climate change. Coal is mostly carbon, which when burned, reacts with oxygen in the air to produce carbon dioxide.

