Heat & Energy

1:1 Answers in Genesis

PHYSICAL WORLD

4th Edition
Debbie & Richard Lawrence
God’s Design® for the Physical World is a complete physical science curriculum for grades 3–8. The books in this series are designed for use in the Christian school and homeschool, and provide easy-to-use lessons that will encourage children to see God’s hand in everything around them.

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Unit 1: Forms of Energy

Lesson 1: Forms of Energy ........................................ 8
Lesson 2: Mechanical Energy .................................. 11
Lesson 3: Chemical Energy .................................... 15
Lesson 4: Nuclear Energy ....................................... 17
Lesson 5: Nuclear Weapons .................................... 20
Special Feature: The Manhattan Project .................... 23

Unit 2: Thermal Energy

Lesson 6: Thermal Energy ........................................ 26
Special Feature: Fahrenheit & Celsius ....................... 29
Lesson 7: Conduction ............................................. 31
Lesson 8: Convection ............................................. 34
Lesson 9: Radiation ................................................ 37
Lesson 10: Solar & Geothermal Energy ..................... 40

Unit 3: Electricity

Lesson 11: Electricity ............................................. 44
Lesson 12: Conducting & Detecting Charge ............... 47
Lesson 13: Lightning .............................................. 50
Lesson 14: Current ................................................. 53
Special Feature: Michael Faraday .............................. 56
Lesson 15: Voltage & Power .................................. 57
Lesson 16: Series & Parallel Circuits ....................... 60
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 4: Magnetism</th>
<th>63</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 17</td>
<td>Magnetic Fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 18</td>
<td>Magnetic Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 19</td>
<td>The Earth's Magnetic Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 20</td>
<td>Electromagnetism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Feature</td>
<td>Joseph Henry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 21</td>
<td>Generators &amp; Motors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 5: Waves &amp; Sound</th>
<th>77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 22</td>
<td>Waves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 23</td>
<td>Electromagnetic Spectrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 24</td>
<td>Sound Waves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 25</td>
<td>Characteristics of Sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 26</td>
<td>Behavior of Sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 27</td>
<td>Musical Instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Feature</td>
<td>Johann Sebastian Bach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 6: Light</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 28</td>
<td>Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 29</td>
<td>Color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 30</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 31</td>
<td>Mirrors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 32</td>
<td>Refraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 33</td>
<td>Lenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Feature</td>
<td>Eyes &amp; Eyeglasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 34</td>
<td>Using Energy: Final Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 35</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Glossary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo Credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You are about to start an exciting series of lessons on physical science. *God’s Design* for the Physical World consists of three books: Heat and Energy, Machines and Motion, and Inventions and Technology. Each of these books will give you insight into how God designed and created our world and the universe in which we live.

No matter what grade you are in, third through eighth grade, you can use this book.

**3rd–5th grade**

Read the lesson.

- Do the activity in the light blue box (work-sheets will be provided by your teacher).
- Test your knowledge by answering the **What did we learn?** questions.
- Assess your understanding by answering the **Taking it further** questions.

Be sure to read the special features and do the final project.

There are also unit quizzes and a final test to take.

**6th–8th grade**

Read the lesson.

- Do the activity in the light blue box (work-sheets will be provided by your teacher).
- Test your knowledge by answering the **What did we learn?** questions.
- Assess your understanding by answering the **Taking it further** questions.
- Do the Challenge section in the light green box. This part of the lesson will challenge you to do more advanced activities and learn additional interesting information.

Be sure to read the special features and do the final project.

There are also unit quizzes and a final test to take.

When you truly understand how God has designed everything in our universe to work together, then you will enjoy the world around you even more. So let’s get started!
1 Forms of Energy • 8
2 Mechanical Energy • 11
3 Chemical Energy • 15
4 Nuclear Energy • 17
5 Nuclear Weapons • 20

◊ Identify, with examples, the different forms of energy.
◊ Distinguish between kinetic and potential energy.
◊ Distinguish between chemical energy and nuclear energy.
What do you think of when you hear the word energy? Do you think of running around the block or playing football? It certainly takes energy to perform physical activities. Maybe you think of the amount of gasoline it takes to drive a car. Your car needs energy to transport you from one place to another. Or maybe you thought of the energy needed to heat your home in the winter. All of these are examples of energy, but what is energy from a scientific point of view? The scientific definition of energy is the ability to perform work.

As you have already seen in the previous examples, there are many different types of energy. Energy is found in different forms, such as light, heat, sound, and motion. Although there are many forms of energy, they can all be put into two categories: kinetic and potential. Kinetic energy is energy that is in motion. Potential energy is stored energy. Forms of kinetic energy include mechanical, thermal, electrical, sound, and light energy. Forms of potential energy include chemical, nuclear, and gravitational energy. Each form of energy was designed by God to supply the energy needs of our world.

**Mechanical energy** is the sum of kinetic and potential energy in an object. In other words, it is energy in an object due to its motion or position, or both. An object that possesses mechanical energy is able to do work. In fact, mechanical energy is often defined as the ability to do work. Our car uses mechanical energy to move us from one place to another. A crane uses mechanical energy to pick up a giant iron beam. Most mechanical energy is produced when a different form of energy is converted into mechanical energy.

**Chemical energy** is energy that is stored or released during chemical reactions. This energy is stored in the bonds between the atoms in molecules. Chemical energy is associated with the energy levels of the electrons in atoms. As the electrons are forced into a higher energy level, they store energy. When
they return to a lower energy level, they release energy. Photosynthesis and digestion are two of the most common chemical reactions that store and/or release chemical energy. Burning, or combustion, is also an example of the release of chemical energy.

Nuclear energy is also associated with the energy of atoms. However, nuclear energy is stored in the nucleus of the atom instead of the electrons. Nuclear energy can be released either by fission, which is the splitting of a nucleus into smaller particles, or by fusion, which is the combining of smaller particles to form a new nucleus. Tremendous amounts of energy are stored in the nuclei of atoms.

**Thermal energy** is also known as heat. It is the energy of moving atoms and molecules. Thermal energy is mechanical energy on an atomic or molecular scale. The more thermal energy an object’s atoms contain, the higher its temperature will be. As the temperature goes up, the molecules or atoms move faster. As the molecules slow down, the temperature also goes down.

**Electrical energy** usually involves the flow of electrons. Electrons can easily move through conductors such as copper and aluminum. This is the form of energy we use most often in our homes and buildings. When the electricity is shut off for some unexpected reason, it becomes very difficult to do many of the normal everyday activities because our society is very dependent on electricity.

Magnetism is a force you are probably familiar with. It is very closely related to electricity. **Magnetism** is caused by electric currents. The Earth itself has magnetic fields, most likely due to the flow of electrical ions in the planet’s liquid outer core.

The forms of energy mentioned so far are easily seen as energy. We often see how electricity is used to make the various appliances in our homes work for us. We also know that if we put gas in our car, the chemicals in the gas are converted into mechanical energy. But, you may not associate sound and light with energy, because we do not see them producing work as readily as other forms of energy. Nevertheless, they are definitely forms of energy.

**Sound energy** is energy that travels in waves through matter such as air, water, or wood. The speed of the sound waves depends on the type of matter through which they are traveling. In general, most humans can detect sound waves that vibrate at frequencies between 20 and 20,000 vibrations per second (called Hertz). Many animals can hear sound waves at higher or lower frequencies than humans can.

And finally, **light energy** is energy that also travels in waves but does not need to move through a medium. Light is one form of electromagnetic radiation that can travel through empty space. Other forms of electromagnetic radiation include radio waves, infrared, ultraviolet, X-rays, and gamma rays. Light waves can travel through the vacuum of space at speeds up to 186,000 miles per second or about 300 million meters per second.
**Conversion of energy**

Energy is easily converted from one form to another. We need different kinds of energy for different functions. We need heat energy to warm our homes and cook our food. We need mechanical energy to wash our clothes and vacuum our carpets. We need light energy to light up our homes when the sun goes down. Many of these functions begin with electricity that enters our home and is then converted to the form in which we want to use it. To understand the many conversions that energy experiences, complete the “Energy Conversion” worksheet.

**Energy chains**

The first law of thermodynamics states that mass and energy cannot be created or destroyed; they can only change form. This is considered a scientific law because this is what has been observed time after time in scientific experiments. Energy is converted from one form to another, but no new energy is created in any known process. Since this is true, what is the ultimate source of all energy on earth?

Energy can easily change forms, so it is easy to trace the chain of energy in most processes. For example, let’s look at the energy chain for a flashlight. At creation, God placed certain materials in the crust of the Earth. Man extracts these materials and manufactures batteries. The batteries provide chemical energy that is converted into electrical energy. The electrical energy is converted inside the flashlight into light and heat.

Earth's crust => Mining of raw material => Manufacturing of batteries => Chemical energy => Electrical energy => Light and heat

This is a fairly simple energy chain. Other energy chains are more complex. On a copy of the “Energy Chains” worksheet, draw the energy chain for a coal-powered power plant. Include where the energy came from that is in the coal, and how the energy is used after it leaves the power plant.

**What did we learn?**

- What is the scientific definition of energy?
- What are some of the types of energy recognized by scientists?
- Which types of energy can be converted into other types of energy?

**Taking it further**

- Which types of energy are defined by the energy in the atoms or parts of atoms?
- Which types of energy can travel through space?
- If the sound of a solar flare was loud enough, could we hear it on earth?
- What is the final form of almost all energy?
- If most energy ends up lost, how do we keep everything working on earth?
What is mechanical energy, and how do we use it?

Words to know:

- kinetic energy
- potential energy

Have you ever seen pictures of an area that has been struck by a hurricane? The houses and trees are smashed and torn to pieces. This type of storm has a very large amount of mechanical energy. Mechanical energy is the energy possessed by moving objects or objects that have the potential to move. The wind and the water in a hurricane have a large amount of energy; therefore, they can cause a large amount of destruction. However, most mechanical energy is not used for destructive purposes. God has designed the world so that mechanical energy can be very beneficial to man, and man has become very ingenious in finding ways to harness this energy.

For example, the energy of water flowing down a mountain can be used in a hydroelectric plant to generate electricity. Similarly, man has been using the energy in wind to turn windmills for many different purposes. Windmills have been used to grind grain, to generate electricity, and to run a pump that pumps water into animal water troughs. In recent years, giant wind generators have been built all over the country. There are more than 1,100 wind farm locations in the U.S., and that number is growing every year. Most of these wind generators are located in areas with low population density such as the plains of Kansas, Texas, and Oklahoma. Often wind generators are built on farmland and have very little impact on the farmer. As you drive across the country you are likely to see large fields of giant windmills spinning in the wind. As the blades spin, they turn a generator that generates electricity. That electricity is then sent to homes and businesses.

Not all mechanical energy comes from nature. Obviously, God designed man and the animals to be able to move about. But many of the objects that
Harnessing wind energy

**Purpose:** To make your own windmill

**Materials:** piece of paper, straight pin, soda straw

**Procedure:**
1. Carefully cut out and discard the white areas.
2. Tape each arm in place.
3. Stick a straight pin through the center and into a soda straw near one end of the straw. Now you can blow on the paper and watch it spin. This is the idea behind wind generators.

Fun Fact

Some fun water energy facts:
- Water energy was used at least 2,000 years ago when the Greeks used water to turn wheels to grind their grain.
- Water wheels became very popular during the industrial revolution when they were used for saw mills, to spin thread, and to run pumps.
- The first hydroelectric plant was built in the 1880s.
- One of the largest hydroelectric dam projects, Hoover Dam, was started in 1931 and is still in operation today.
- In 1940, about 40% of the electricity in the U.S. was generated by hydroelectric plants.
- Today, only about 7% of U.S. electricity is hydroelectric.
- About 60% of Canadian electricity is hydroelectric.

Fun Fact

The Gansu Wind Farm Project in China is the world’s largest wind farm with over 3,500 individual wind turbines.

Observing mechanical energy

**Purpose:** To observe mechanical energy

**Materials:** two pennies

**Procedure:**
1. Place a penny on a table. Does the penny have any mechanical energy? You might be inclined to say no because the penny is not moving.
2. Push the penny toward the edge of the table until it falls off.
3. Now place the penny back on the table. Take a second penny and quickly slide it across the table so that it hits the first penny.

**Questions:**
- Did the penny have mechanical energy as it was falling?
- Did the penny have mechanical energy before it fell?
- How did the penny get the potential energy?
- What happened when the pennies collided?
- Explain where the mechanical energy came from and where it went.

Fun Fact

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- Today, only about 7% of U.S. electricity is hydroelectric.
- About 60% of Canadian electricity is hydroelectric.

Many of the principles of physics are based on the ideas of kinetic and potential energy. Because the scope of this book is to examine the various kinds of energy, these physical principles and ideas are covered in greater detail in the book God’s Design for Physical Science: Machines and Motion.
Potential energy

**Purpose:** To understand the role of height in potential energy

**Materials:** marble, books, cardboard or wood, “Potential Energy” worksheet

**Procedure:**
1. Using books and a piece of cardboard or wood, construct a ramp on the floor that is 1 inch high and 10 or more inches long.
2. Release a marble from the top of the ramp and let it roll down the ramp and across the floor until it stops. Measure how far the marble rolled. Record your measurements on a copy of the “Potential Energy” worksheet.
3. Now, add one or more books to raise the height of the ramp to 2 inches.
4. Again, let the same marble roll from the top of the ramp down and across the floor until it stops. Measure how far the marble rolled this time.
5. Repeat the experiment with a ramp that is 3 inches high. Measure how far the marble rolled from this taller ramp.

**Conclusion:** The marble rolls farther from a higher starting point because it possesses more potential energy than it did at a lower starting point.

What did we learn?

- What is mechanical energy?
- What are the two forms of mechanical energy?
- What are some forces in nature that possess mechanical energy?

Taking it further

- Which has more potential energy, a book on the floor or a book on a table?
- List at least three ways that machines designed by humans use mechanical energy to make your life easier.
- When does a roller coaster have the most and the least potential energy?
- Give another example of potential energy being converted into kinetic energy.