

What's the truth about nuclear power?

Info sheet answers.

1) Match the articles to the right headlines

Answer:

Article 1 = Nuclear power is not the answer

Article 3 = Gordon Brown goes nuclear

Article 3 = Nuclear power is the short term answer

Article 4 = Nuclear 'not answer', say Lib Dems

2) Say if each article is for or against nuclear power. Or are they just reporting what other people say and not giving an opinion?

Answer:

1) against 2) for 3) just reporting, no opinion 4) just reporting, no opinion

3) For each article, find two facts and two opinions.

Article 1:

Facts:

- EU target = 20% UK energy from renewable by 2020
- Replacement nuclear plants would deliver 4-5% of power
- 50yrs of nuclear power, and still no strategy for waste

Opinions:

- New nuclear plants are not the answer
- Will do little to help tackle climate change
- Construction of nuclear plants is "irrational, unfortunate."
- Britain can meet its needs through renewables, energy efficiency, etc.
- New nuclear programme would encourage other nations to go down "dangerous nuclear route"
- Government's public consultation was a sham

Article 2:

Facts:

- Earliest time for new nuclear power plant = around 2017
- Nuclear power generates dangerous, long-lasting waste
- Billions of tons of carbon dioxide produced every year.
- Nuclear waste can be buried.
- At least another decade before CO₂ can be buried

Opinions:

- Environmental groups' opinions are as foolish as arguing against wind power because the wind doesn't blow every day
- Probably would have been better if we had spent the last 50yrs investing in renewables
- Senseless to ignore what nuclear can offer in the meantime

Article 3

Facts:

- Britain to build new generation of nuclear plants
- At least 40% of energy will come from new generation plants – twice the current output
- Nuclear could provide all energy
- UK –20% of energy from nuclear
- France – 80% from nuclear
- Britain can't cope for 50yrs on current coal, oil & gas stocks
- Wind farms costly and have huge opposition
- New generation of plants will cut CO₂ emissions

Opinions:

- Nuclear power the only option
- Can't rely on other nations
- Idea that UK can rely on renewables/efficiency is nonsense
- Nuclear power = "dinosaur"
- Britain can meet needs with renewables, efficiency, etc.

Article 4:

Facts:

- New plants due around 2020
- Lib Dems against nuclear
- John Hutton for nuclear

Opinions:

- Focus should be on renewables
- Lib Dems harbour "old prejudices"
- Technology could be obsolete by 2020
- New nuclear not the answer

4) Imagine you have to give a speech for or against nuclear power. Find five facts from the sheet that would help in each case.

See answer to Q3.

5) List the supporting facts from one of the articles. Are they convincing? List some extra facts.

See answer to Q3.

6) Look at what the IAS scientists have said about their work. Is it all facts?...

Answer: Pupils should log on to the I'm a Scientist website, read scientists' project briefs, and base their answers on what they read.