

## IELTS Essay Topic - **Alternative Energy / Minimising the Use of Fossil Fuels**

### **Exam tasks**

- A. *Fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) are the main sources in many countries, but in some countries the use of alternative sources of energy (wind energy and solar energy) are encouraged. To what extent do you think it is a positive or negative development? You should write at least 250 words*
- B. *The exploration and development of safe alternatives to fossil fuels should be the most important global priority today. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer. You should write at least 250 words.*
- C. *Renewable energy, such as solar and wind power, have shown great promise. However, they have often disappointed in practice. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these forms of power generation compared to fossil fuels?*

### **Information for the essay**

Alternative sources of energy:

- **renewable:** solar power (photovoltaic systems - solar panels), wind power (wind turbines), hydro power (hydroelectric power plants), geothermal energy (geothermal power plants, pumps), tidal power, biomass ;

- **limited:** nuclear power (uranium);

Renewable sources:

-used for: electricity generation, heating and transportation (bioethanol, biodiesel fuelled vehicles, electric vehicles);

- contributed around 19 % to humans' global energy consumption (a 2016 report);

- Denmark is planning to switch to 100% renewable energy by 2050;

-advantages: energy security, economic benefits; it would reduce environmental pollution (CO<sub>2</sub> emissions), improve public health, reduce premature mortalities, save associated health costs, reduce climate change and global warming concerns;

-downsides: generally variable or intermittent, the visual (aesthetic) impact and other impacts of some wind farms, with local residents sometimes fighting or blocking construction;

#### Nuclear power:

-provides around 14% of the world's electricity;

-potentially dangerous radioactive contamination, highly hazardous to people and wildlife (the Chernobyl disaster, Ukraine, 1986)

#### Fossil fuels (coal, petroleum, natural gas):

-non-renewable;

-increase global warming (greenhouse gas emissions) and cause more severe climate change, combustion leading to acid rain (monuments and sculptures vulnerable to it), coal also contains radioactive materials, offshore oil drilling - a hazard to aquatic organisms.