THE BASICS OF NUCLEAR ENERGY: AN INFOGRAPHIC

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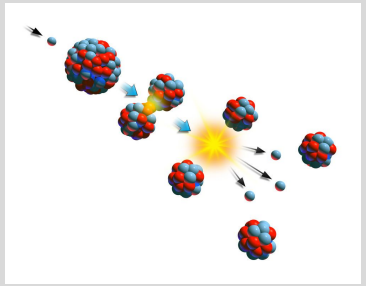
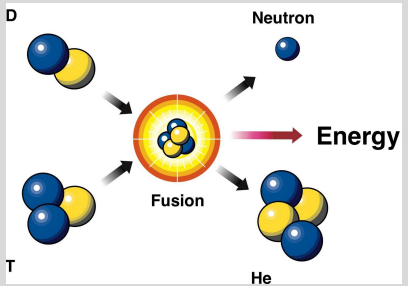
Q: What is nuclear energy?

A: Nuclear energy is the use of atomic forces to create usable energy. This may be done through fission (splitting an atom) and fusion (combining two atoms.



Fission

vs



Fusion

Q: How widespread is nuclear energy?

A: Nuclear energy accounts for about 14% of the world's electricity, and about 20% of America's electricity.

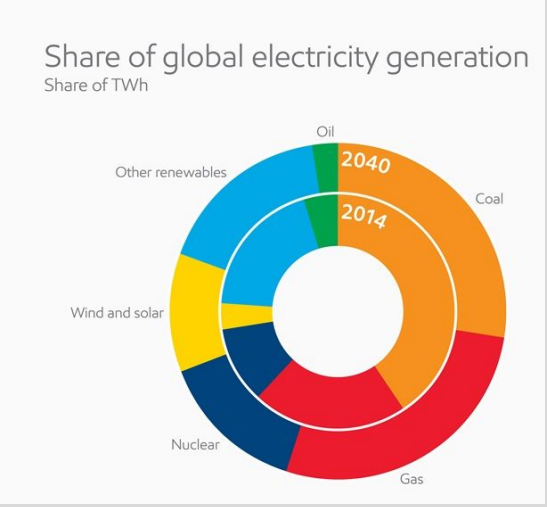
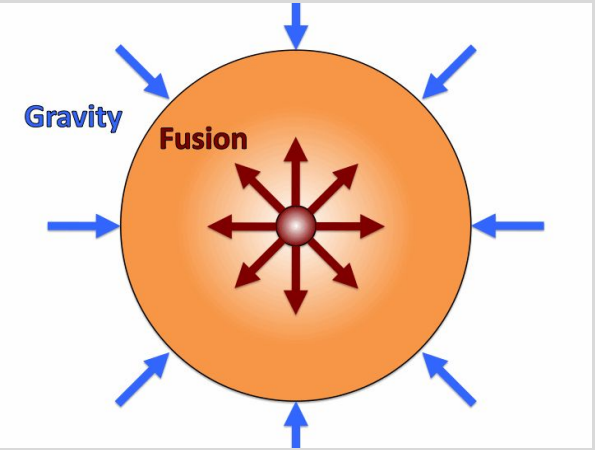


Chart above found on ExxonMobil.com

As this chart shows, nuclear energy accounts for a small part of the world's total energy, but that amount will be much greater come 2040.

Q: What's the deal with fusion?

Fusion, the process makes stars burn, occurs at very high temperatures & the tech for this is still in development. The ITER Project is one program trying to make fusion accessible.



Left: A diagram of the Sun's fusion process

Right: The ITER Project's logo

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china eu india japan korea russia usa

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Q: What are some drawbacks to nuclear energy?

Drawbacks include radioactive waste that can remain hazardous for thousands of years and the potential for the reactor to melt down, releasing this waste into the environment.

Trying to contain the 2011 meltdown at Japan's Fukushima reactor

Sources! (includes links to images)

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