



# Solar energy can generate electricity and provide heating

How does solar power work?

Energy developers and utilities use solar photovoltaic and concentrating solar power technologies to produce electricity on a massive scale to power cities and small towns. Learn more about the following solar technologies: Converts sunlight directly into electricity to power homes and businesses.

What is solar energy used for?

This energy can be used to generate electricity or be stored in batteries or thermal storage. Below, you can find resources and information on the basics of solar radiation, photovoltaic and concentrating solar-thermal power technologies, electrical grid systems integration, and the non-hardware aspects (soft costs) of solar energy.

What is solar thermal energy?

Solar thermal energy: What... There are two key methods for harnessing the power of the sun: either by generating electricity directly using solar photovoltaic (PV) panels or generating heat through solar thermal technologies. While the two types of solar energy are similar, they differ in their costs, benefits, and applications.

Why do we use solar thermal energy systems?

We use solar thermal energy systems to heat Solar photovoltaic (PV) devices, or solar cells, change sunlight directly into electricity. Small PV cells can power calculators, watches, and other small electronic devices.

How do solar panels turn sunlight into electricity?

There are several ways to turn sunlight into usable energy, but almost all solar energy today comes from "solar photovoltaics (PV)." Solar PV relies on a natural property of "semiconductor" materials like silicon, which can absorb the energy from sunlight and turn it into electric current.

How does solar energy heat a building?

The absorbed solar energy heats the building by natural radiation and convection at night. Window overhangs or shades block the sun from entering the windows during the summer to keep the building cool. Active solar heating systems use a collector and a fluid that absorbs solar radiation.

Energy harnessed through solar panels can then be used to provide electricity for homes, farms and businesses of all sizes nationwide. Thermal energy has various everyday uses like heating your home during cold weather or heating water ...



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