

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Advancing Utah's Energy Future



The Power of Wind

Grade/Subject: 4th Grade

Strand/Standard 4.2.4 Design a device that converts energy from one form to another. *Define the problem, identify criteria and constraints, develop possible solutions using models, analyze data from testing solutions, and propose modifications for optimizing a solution.* Emphasize identifying the initial and final forms of energy. Examples could include solar ovens that convert light energy to heat energy or a simple alarm system that converts motion energy into sound energy. (PS3.B, PS3.D, ETS1.A, ETS1.B, ETS1.C)

Lesson Performance Expectations:

- Identify wind power as a source of energy
- Engineer a windmill to create enough power to light an LED light bulb
- Using the engineering process students will determine construction of the blades, the housing unit and wind power enough volts to light one LED light bulb
- Students will understand why we can't rely solely on this resource for energy

Materials: Materials listed are enough for one group of 3-4 students.

- 20 - 30 small wooden craft sticks
- Small hobby motor, 6 - 12 volts -- Can be purchased in most model stores or on [Amazon](#)
- Low temperature glue gun and glue sticks
- Different types of paper (examples: construction, copy, cardstock, color copy paper, newspaper or recipe cards)
- Hair Dryer, fan or windy day
- Drill (for teacher use) and drill bit that matches the same size as motor shaft
- Alligator clips with copper wire
- 2- 3 Voltmeters for testing area.-- Can be purchased at most hardware stores or on Amazon
- Optional: [LED light bulbs](#) Amazon

Time: 3-4 days 45 - 60 mins

- Day 1 Introduction and research
- Day 2 Building the prototype
- Day 3 Testing prototype and Redesign
- Day 4 Test redesign and record the data

Teacher Background Information:

- Wind Energy Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UqVwvnXzNM>
- Wind is air moving between regions of different pressure. Temperature differences between regions, which are the result of variations in the solar energy received at the surface of the Earth, cause the pressure differences that drive winds. The rotation of the Earth also affects the direction of winds.
- Wind is a powerful force that can be used to produce energy. It is a renewable energy source, which means we

can use it over and over again without ever using it up. Another benefit of using wind as an energy source is that wind is an emissions free energy source. While wind is a great energy resource, we have to find a way to capture its power. Engineers designed machines called wind turbines that look a little like windmills in order to do just that. You may have seen wind farms or groups of wind turbines in certain parts of Utah. They most often resemble tall, white pinwheels on a large “stick”.

- A typical wind turbine contains numerous components, many of which are made from steel, cast iron, and concrete. Some parts of the wind turbine require materials mined here in Utah, like copper, iron, and zinc, so an increase in the number of wind turbines manufactured also generates increased need for mining.
- How does a wind turbine work? The turbine blades are connected to a gear box, which makes it spin faster and is connected to the generator. As the wind blows, the blades of the turbines spin, which turns a generator that creates electricity for our use. A turbine also has a brake in case the wind starts blowing too fast.
- Wind turbines may also slow or stop, producing little or no electricity, when the wind is blowing too slowly or not at all.
- Utah Geological Survey identified wind development zones covering approximately 1838 square miles of land in Utah, or about 2% of the state’s surface area. These zones have the potential of producing up to 9145 MW of wind generating capacity. Currently there are two wind farms in Utah: Spanish Fork Wind Park in Utah County and Utah’s largest wind energy project, Milford Wind, in Millard and Beaver Counties.

Student Background Knowledge:

Students need to know how to read a voltmeter. Video on How to read a voltmeter: [The Best Multimeter Tutorial](#) (1:00 min)

Teacher Step by Step: A 3-d lesson should insist students do the thinking. Provide time and space for the students to experience phenomenon and ask questions. The student sheet provided below provides guidance but is only an example of how students might respond.

Teacher Preparation:



To help the students create the windmill portion, glue two craft sticks together in the middle. Once the glue has set, drill a hole in the middle so it will fit tightly around the drive shaft on the mini motor. You may want to have a drill during the building of the project in case students need to make some changes. It is also suggested to make extra cross pieces. You will also need to divide the students into groups of 3-4 students.

Day 1: Introduction and Research

Introduce the Problem to the students on page 1. Allow students to discuss (3-5 mins) their knowledge of windmills, where they have seen them, and how they work. After the discussion, let the students come up with some questions they may need to know before they create a windmill. Have them write down their questions and draw a model of their knowledge of what a windmill will look on the outside and how does it function on the inside. As a class, look at the questions the groups came up with, but do not give answers to the questions.

Research: The student worksheet has links to videos on turbines and energy production. Students will need to take notes and look at the previous model they drew. Have students work quietly on their own notes and designs.

Bring the students together in their groups. Ask: How would you change your model to make it more effective and efficient? Using the others in your group what design will you use to create a windmill that will generate energy?

The student groups will use their research to create a model that will meet the criteria and constraints. Make sure they know that time to build their prototype is limited. Students will also need to have a look at what supplies are available to use. (You can make some changes to some of the building supplies.) Groups must make a list of supplies that they will be using. They will also need to have a detailed model with notes of length of blades, height of the windmill etc.

Day two: Building your Prototype

Students build their original prototype

Day three: Testing, Analyzing and Redesign

Teacher prep: Set up an area where the students can test their prototype by setting up a hair dryer or fan. Place the voltmeters nearby so students can test their prototype.

Video on How to read a voltmeter: [The Best Multimeter Tutorial](#) (4:35 minutes)

Students groups can test their prototype, writing down the amount of energy they have created using wind. They will record the amount of volts on the voltmeter as well as any additional observations (example: blades not long enough, blades hitting the base, etc.)

Once the group has tested their prototype, the students need to answer the analysis questions. Students will then get an opportunity to redesign and adjust their prototype. Explain that they don't need to start over but can use this as a chance to look at the problems and use different ideas to come up with a solution. Allow time for the students to make the changes to their prototype.

Day four: Testing Redesign and analyzing data

Have students test their redesigns and analyze the data. Once the groups have discussed their data have students complete the Interpretation and conclusion portion of the worksheet.

Assessment of Student Learning. Students will complete the Interpretation or Conclusion page. The following questions are asked:

- 1) Did your prototype meet the Criteria? Why or why not?
- 2) Did your group succeed in creating wind power? How did the redesign changes help your project?
- 3) What more changes in the design could you make in the prototype?
- 4) What did you learn in the process of designing and testing your project?

Standardized Test Preparation:

The Power of Wind

1. What are the advantages of wind power? Choose all that apply.

- a. Wind energy is free.*
 - b. Wind energy produces fewer emissions.*
 - c. Wind energy does not require expensive machinery.
 - d. Wind is always blowing to create a steady source of energy.
2. What are the criteria for a city that wishes to design a system to capture wind energy in a city today? Choose all that apply.
- a. The energy produced must supplement the energy sources currently used.*
 - b. The energy must be transformed into usable electricity.*
 - c. The energy must allow for enough extra to sell to the electric company.
 - d. The energy must replace all other sources of electricity for the household.
3. What are the constraints for the city as it designs a system to capture wind energy. Choose all that apply.
- a. Cost of the wind mills.*
 - b. Amount of electricity the wind mills can produce.*
 - c. Number of days of adequate wind.*
 - d. The size of the area available for windmills.*
4. Why is wind energy attractive to people living in Utah? Choose all that apply.
- a. The energy source is free.*
 - b. Wind energy produces little or no emissions.*
 - c. Current energy sources produce emissions.*
 - d. Wind energy costs less than other sources.

Extension of lesson and Career Connections:

Have students look up different careers in wind power. The following is some website to find research.

<https://www.energy.gov/eere/wind/wind-career-map> Shows different career opportunities

<https://www.energy.gov/eere/wind/wind-career-map-text-version> Give the students a chance to look at the definition of the careers.

The Power of the Wind

Name _____

The mayor of a small town is in need of your help. The town will be growing quickly in the next few years. The city council would like to see this growing city to use renewable energy as an energy source. Many on the city council would like to look into wind energy. Your job is to create a prototype using wind to generate electricity for the town.

The mayor has assigned you and your partners to create an efficient windmill prototype to see if it can generate 1.0 volts of electricity.

Together with your group discuss what 3 main questions that you will need to research before you can start building.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Research: Research is important to the engineering process. Watch the following videos and write down what you learned in them.

[Energy 101: Wind Power](#) (2:13 minutes)

What did you learn from the video?

[Energy 101: wind turbines](#) (3:16 minutes)

What did you learn from the video?

<https://www.energy.gov/eere/wind/animation-how-wind-turbine-works>

What does this animation show?

Criteria: Create a windmill that can generate electricity above 1.0 volts on a voltmeter.

Constraints: Limited supplies-- Craft Sticks, low temperature glue gun, glue sticks, different types of paper, Time: You have 1 hour to construct the windmill

Blade dimension

Height _____

Based on your research, draw a model of your windmill. Include dimensions of the blade, height of the windmill, location of the motor and wires.

List of supplies your group chose.

Testing: Place your windmill in front of the fan. Record the amount of volts created (the data) on the table below.

	Fan Test #1	Fan Test #2	Fan Test #3	Observations
Low Speed				
Medium Speed				
High Speed				

Analysis: Answer the following questions.

1) How did your windmill perform? Give some examples from your observations.

2) What changes do you need to make to the windmill to make it more efficient or fix issues during testing?

Redesign: Redesign your windmill by making changes to improve or reach the criteria. Then retest your design and record the results in the table below.

Interpretation or Conclusion: Answer the following questions about your project.

1) Did your prototype meet the Criteria? Why or why not? Did your group succeed in creating wind power? How did the redesign changes help your project?

2) Did your group work together successfully? What is your evidence?

3) What more changes in the design could you make in the project?

4) What did you learn in the process of designing and testing your project?