

INTRODUCING

THE "X" FAMILY

Father: Michael X, Computer technician
Mother: Sandra X, School counselor
Son: Mark X (Age 13), Middle school student
Daughter: Angela X (Age 7), Elementary school student

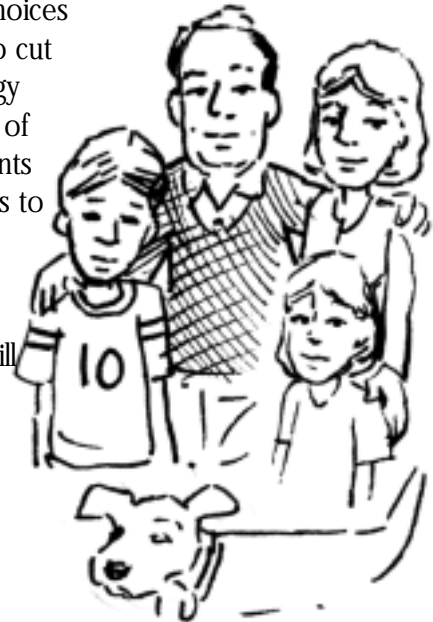
The family lives in suburban Virginia. Sandra and Michael both commute to work by car. He commutes 30 miles each day and she commutes 3 miles to the school where she works. Mark and Angela both take the school bus and get rides to their many after school activities from Sandra in the family's SUV.

The family owns a single-family home in a quiet neighborhood. The house is two stories and was built in the 1980's. They have been living here for 9 years and like the location which is less than a mile away from shopping and not far from parks and Angela's school. The house is attractive but the family has noticed that it feels a bit drafty in the winter and they are paying high heat bills.

In the last few years Sandra and Michael have become more concerned about environmental issues. They never paid much attention in the past to how their own actions might affect the environment and never factored in environmental impacts when making decisions about home, car or appliance purchases. But now they want to better understand how those decisions affect the environment and what they might do to reduce their impacts.

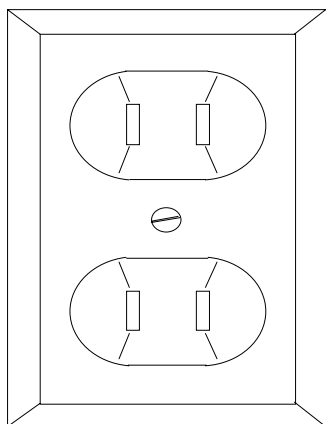
They know that energy use is one of the key areas where they can make a difference but don't know where to start or what choices will have the most benefit for the least cost. Their goal is to cut down on the negative environmental effects of family energy use by at least one third but they can't afford to spend a lot of money to do so. They are willing to make some investments now to save energy but they would like any additional costs to be offset by lower energy bills that will pay back the investment in 10 years or so.

Your job is to help the X family meet their goal. You will first analyze the family's typical energy consumption patterns and costs during one year, examining the environmental impacts of their energy use. Then you will look at some of the options for reducing home energy consumption and the negative environmental impacts of energy consumption. You will examine the tradeoffs of the various alternatives and finally will make your recommendations to the family on what *you* think they should do to meet their goal.



Annual "X" Family

Energy Consumption



All energy consumption is given in terms of kilowatt hours and BTUs so amounts of energy can be compared across different uses.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Total energy use per year: | 88,299 Kwh (305 million BTUs) |
| Annual cost of energy use: | \$3,630 |
| Share for auto fuel: | \$1,980 |
| Share for home energy use: | \$1,650 |

Breakdown of Energy Consumption for Home and Automobile Transportation

1. ENERGY USED IN TRANSPORTATION:

| | |
|---|--|
| Car 1: 1998 Sport Utility Vehicle. Drives an average of 14,000 miles/yr. Energy equivalent: 33,489 Kwh | Costs: \$1,235 for gas each year Consumes 915 gallons of gas/yr. (143 million BTUs) |
| Car 2: 1997 Mid-sized Passenger Car. Drives an average of 12,500 miles/yr. Energy equivalent: 20,130 Kwh | Costs: \$ 745 for gas each year Consumes 550 gallons of gas/yr. (69 million BTUs) |

2. ENERGY USED TO HEAT THE HOME:

The family uses **natural gas** to heat the home. They have a typical natural gas furnace heating system (which has an efficiency of about 70%) and have never done anything to upgrade the efficiency of their current system.

Energy use: 21,500 Kwh per year (74 million BTUs) **Costs:** 4 cents per Kwh \$860 per year

3. ENERGY USED IN THE FORM OF ELECTRICITY:

(for Lights, Refrigeration, Appliances, Water Heating etc.)

The following are the major uses of electricity in the family home and the annual energy consumption for each (Kwh):

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| Water heating | 6,060 | Lights | 1,960 |
| Stove | 1,160 | Refrigerator | 870 |
| Air conditioner | 580 | Televisions (2) | 574 |
| Clothes Dryer | 480 | Dishwasher | 420 |
| Computer | 270 | Hair Dryers (2) | 240 |
| Coffee maker | 96 | Microwave oven | 89 |
| Stereo system | 73 | Vacuum cleaner | 48 |
| Clocks (4) | 48 | Printer | 45 |
| Toaster | 36 | Clothes washer | 31 |
| Other | 100 | | |

Energy Use Total: 13,180 Kwh **Costs:** 6 cents per kilowatt hour \$790 per year

Energy Use of the "X" Family

Environmental IMPACT

Environmental costs of current energy use include increased medical expenses for health problems caused by pollution, costs of cleaning up water, soil and air and repairing damage done to land, plants, animals and people. There are also many less tangible costs, such as loss of beautiful views, faltering ecosystems and the potential costs of global warming which need to be accounted for. We know these costs exist but it is very difficult to measure them accurately.

The Department of Energy, recently attempted to put values on the health and environmental costs associated with each energy type. Although we know that these numbers are imperfect measures at least they give us some basis for comparison of relative environmental impacts.

According to these estimates the *environmental costs* of producing energy from various sources is as follows. (Note that environmental costs are **not** at this time included in the price we pay for energy)

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Electricity from Coal: | 5.7 cents per Kwh |
| Electricity from Nuclear: | 5.0 cents per Kwh |
| Energy from Oil: | 2.7 cents per Kwh |
| Energy from Natural Gas: | 1.0 cent per Kwh |
| Energy from Biomass: | 0.7 cents per Kwh |
| Energy from Solar cells: | 0.4 cents per Kwh |
| Energy from Geothermal: | 0.1 cents per Kwh |
| Energy from Wind: | 0.1 cents per Kwh |



1. Impacts from Family Cars:

Burning gasoline in automobiles produces pollution which is released into the air. This contributes to smog, asthma and accumulation of warming greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. The major pollutants from auto exhaust are Hydrocarbons, Nitrogen Oxide, Carbon Monoxide and Carbon Dioxide.

Evaporation of gasoline from the fuel tank, especially on hot days and when refueling the car, gives off hydrocarbons which contribute to smog. Oil leaks from automobiles contaminate ground water when washed from roadways or parking lots by rain.

The pollutants produced by the "X" family's cars each year are as follows:

Car 1: Sport Utility Vehicle

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Hydrocarbons (smog and air toxics) | 114 lbs |
| Carbon Monoxide (poisonous gas) | 894 lbs |
| Nitrogen Oxide (smog and acid rain) | 59 lbs |
| Carbon Dioxide (global warming) | 16,800 lbs |

Estimated environmental costs:

98.7 cents per gal. \$903 per year

Car 2: Mid-size Passenger Car (1)

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Hydrocarbons | 80 lbs |
| Carbon monoxide | 606 lbs |
| Nitrogen Oxide | 41 lbs |
| Carbon Dioxide | 10,000 lbs |

Estimated environmental costs:

98.7 cents per gal. \$543 per year

"X" Family Environmental IMPACT



2. Impacts from Home Heating with Natural Gas:

Natural Gas is generally less polluting than other fossil fuel energy sources like oil and coal. The biggest environmental impact from use of natural gas is release of Carbon Dioxide into the atmosphere which is thought to contribute to the greenhouse effect and global warming.

Using natural gas to heat the X family home releases 9,030 lbs of Carbon Dioxide into the atmosphere each year.

Estimated Environmental costs: 1 cent per Kwh. (\$215 per year created by family consumption.)

3. Impacts from Electricity Use:

The electricity for most Virginia households comes from two main sources: coal fired power plants and nuclear electric plants.

Coal is a cheap and plentiful source of locally mined energy but it is also the dirtiest fossil fuel energy source, producing more pollutants per Kwh than either oil or natural gas. Coal mining also takes its toll on land and water systems. It disrupts large land areas, destroying the existing ecosystems. Leaking of toxic chemicals from coal mining operations into groundwater is also a common problem. Coal is a non-renewable resource although by some estimates we are not likely to face coal scarcity for several hundred years.

Nuclear energy produces very little air pollution but it does produce large amounts of thermal pollution (waste heat). The main environmental impacts associated with nuclear energy are the risks associated with using radioactive materials, possibility of plant failure or meltdowns and storage or disposal of nuclear wastes from plants.

Estimated environmental costs:

5.7 cents per Kwh for coal

5.0 cents per Kwh for nuclear

(\$751 per year total from family consumption).

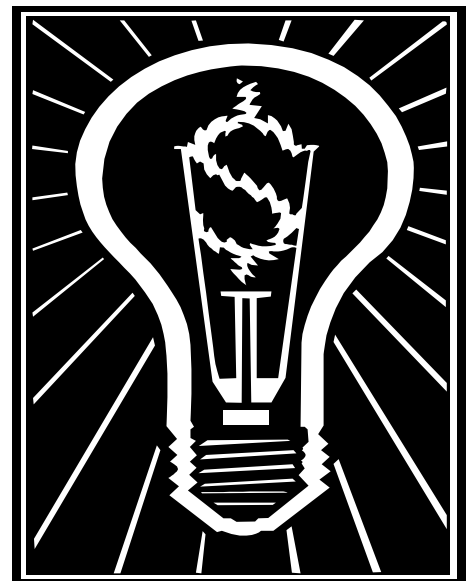
"X" Family Causes & Environmental Effects

1. What are the top five home and transportation energy consumers for the "X" Family?

| Energy Consumer: | How much energy is consumed in one year? |
|------------------|--|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |

Energy

2. What are the major environmental impacts of energy produced from fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas?



Hybrid-electric Cars

Hybrid vehicles blend the power of a combustion engine and an electric motor. Current models run on gasoline but can get as much as 70 miles to the gallon with the added power of the electric motor whose battery is recharged every time the driver uses the brakes. Hybrid car makers include Honda, Toyota and GM. The high mileage per gallon and a special catalytic converter combine to create a big cut in pollutants - 84% fewer hydrocarbons and 50% less nitrogen oxide than a typical car. Since the cars get from twice to three times the gas mileage of typical cars - owners save significantly on gasoline costs.

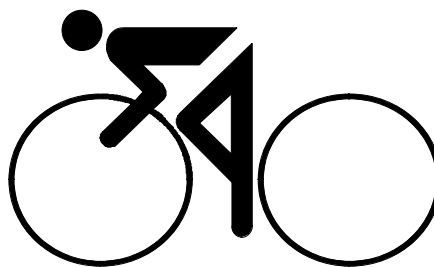
Drawbacks are that they are smaller and lighter than many conventional cars. Thus, they provide less protection in collisions and the initial price is somewhat higher than comparably sized conventional cars.

Fuel Cell Cars

Researchers hope that within 20 years fuel cells will replace internal combustion engines in powering vehicles. Fuel cells generate electricity directly from a chemical reaction between hydrogen and oxygen. If hydrogen is used as the original fuel then the only emission is pure water. Right now, although hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe, it is not readily available in pure form and is difficult to store and transport. It is possible to draw hydrogen from fuel sources such as gasoline, ethanol or methanol using fuel "reformers" built into the engine of the car. Even if fossil fuels are used as the source of hydrogen, fuel cells are cleaner than internal combustion engines because they create two to three times as much energy and thus get more mileage out of every gallon. The auto companies Ford and Daimler-Chrysler both

hope to market fuel-cell cars in the near future that will match the performance and cost of today's cars.

Eventually solar energy may be used to extract hydrogen from water, which can then be used as a completely pollution-free fuel but this may not be practical for some time.



Muscle Power

Bicycles as a primary form of transport are not practical for every situation but there are many advantages to using bikes (or walking) in place of cars whenever possible. For much of the world bikes outnumber cars ten to one as a primary source of transportation. Bikes are not only low cost and easy to repair, but they use no fuel except the food you put in your body and they provide numerous health benefits to the rider.

A new invention called the E-bike uses an electric motor to help the rider on steep hills or long rides. It has a rechargeable battery and can run at 15 miles per hour. The energy used by the E-bike is only a tiny fraction of that required to power an automobile yet can replace the car for quick trips to the store and commuting to nearby school or work. The current cost of the E-Bike is about \$1,000, while more conventional bikes cost anywhere from \$50 to \$2,000.

Ideas for Sustainable Energy for Transportation

Energy Conservation through Sharing and Other Measures

Saving on energy used for transportation can be as simple as finding ways to share rides with others. Carpooling to work or after-school functions cuts down on the number of trips made, saving fuel and wear on the automobile. Commuting in heavy traffic uses more fuel and creates more wear on cars than other kinds of driving. If workers share rides it has a significant impact on cutting pollution and easing rush-hour congestion of the roads.

Cars start to lose fuel efficiency at speeds above 60 miles per hour thus, energy is wasted when drivers exceed speed limits.

Choosing smaller, fuel-efficient cars is a better bet for saving energy than light trucks or Sport Utility Vehicles. Smaller, fuel-efficient cars can get twice as much mileage to the gallon as larger cars and trucks.

Ethanol fuel

Ethanol is fuel produced from corn, wood and other agricultural products and wastes. It can be used in place of gasoline in typical automobiles. Ethanol produces less pollution than gasoline in automobiles and in fact, you can buy gasoline/ethanol mixes at many fuel stations today. Increasing the use of ethanol fuel tends to help farmers in the United States since it increases demand for their crops and gives them higher revenues. Some drawbacks of ethanol are that it is more expensive than gasoline, it requires land and soil to produce which contributes to soil degradation, and a great deal of energy is used to produce, harvest and process the agricultural products into fuel for automobiles.

Alternative forms of Transportation

Public transportation such as bus or light rail systems provide a good energy saving alternative for many families. A full bus uses only a fraction of the energy needed to transport its occupants individually by car and cities such as Chattanooga, Tennessee provide low-emissions busses to serve the public. Light rail uses electricity to transport passengers, and although the electricity was generated in power plants which cause pollution, the trains themselves release no emissions and can transport many people using the same amount of energy used by a single family car.



You can find out more about these sustainable transportation options and others by searching the following web sites and other resources.

Center for Renewable Energy and Sustainable Technology
www.crest.org

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov

U.S. Department of Energy
www.doe.gov

Sustainable Home Heating



A key to providing sustainable heat for the home is to cut out as much unnecessary waste of energy as possible. Energy is lost, not only in the home itself through leaky windows and poor insulation, but also in the process of extracting, transporting, generating and transmitting the energy that is used to provide home heat.

In seeking the most sustainable method of heating the home, look for ways to minimize *energy waste* and the *life-cycle costs* of the heating system. Life cycle costs include both the cost of installing the heating system and the costs of operating the system over its lifetime.

1. Cut out the Waste

No matter what the family's source of heat, energy consumption can be reduced by as much as one third simply by making the following changes and improvements to the home. The costs of these improvements will be paid for in two or three years by the increased energy savings.

- Lowering the thermostat just 5 degrees in winter will save about 231 therms of gas and 2798 lbs of CO₂ emissions per year.
- Seal up leaky windows with caulk or weather stripping or replace old windows with more energy efficient ones.
- Check the attic and crawlspace for insulation. If there is none, insulate these areas.
- If the walls are not insulated, have an insulation contractor blow cellulose into the walls.
- Seal up the largest air leaks in the house. Look for areas that feel drafty on cool days. The worst areas are often hidden: holes made in the walls for pipes, gaps around chimneys and recessed lights and unfinished space behind cupboards and closets.

2. Geothermal Heat Pump

This technology uses the relatively constant temperature (50-70 degrees year round) of the ground to reduce the amount of energy needed to heat and cool the home. The system does not convert electricity to heat, instead it uses electricity to move heat between the house and the ground which reduces the amount of energy required to provide comfortable indoor temperatures. This system reduces consumption of electricity 30-60% over conventional heating systems and these reductions bring cost savings on electric bills that pay off the installation costs in 2 to 10 years. Geothermal heat systems can be installed in existing homes or built into new ones.

Ideas for Sustainable Home Heating

3. Super Insulated House

Perhaps the most efficient way to sustainably heat the home is to build a super insulated house. These houses are so heavily insulated and airtight that heat from sunlight, appliances and human bodies warms them, requiring only a minimum amount of heat from other sources. These homes use extremely heavy insulation and insulated glass windows which are placed mostly on the south side of the house. This is the best direction for absorbing the heat of the sun in winter. Few windows are placed on the north side of the home to keep out cold winter winds. An air to air heat exchanger is used in these homes to prevent buildup of indoor air pollution.

These homes cost about 5% more to build than a typically insulated home but the extra cost is paid back by energy savings usually within 5 years and can save a homeowner \$50,000 to \$100,000 over a 40 year period.

4. Passive Solar Heating

Passive solar heating requires that homes be designed from the outset to take advantage of the natural warmth that comes from the sun in winter. Passive solar heat for the home works on the same principle as how a car interior will heat up so much more than the outside air when left in the sun. Windows allow solar energy to enter the home, this energy is absorbed by floor and wall materials during the day and released slowly back into the house at night. A home designed to take advantage of passive solar heat orients many windows on the south facing side of the home which receives the best exposure to sunlight in winter. Windows are minimized on the north side of the house to add additional insulation to the home. Designing and building a passive solar home is not necessarily more expensive than a conventional home, but careful planning must go in to placement, orientation and building materials if maximum solar gain is to be accomplished.

Passive solar heat does not typically replace other, more conventional sources of heat for the home but it cuts down significantly on the amount of energy needed from those conventional sources.

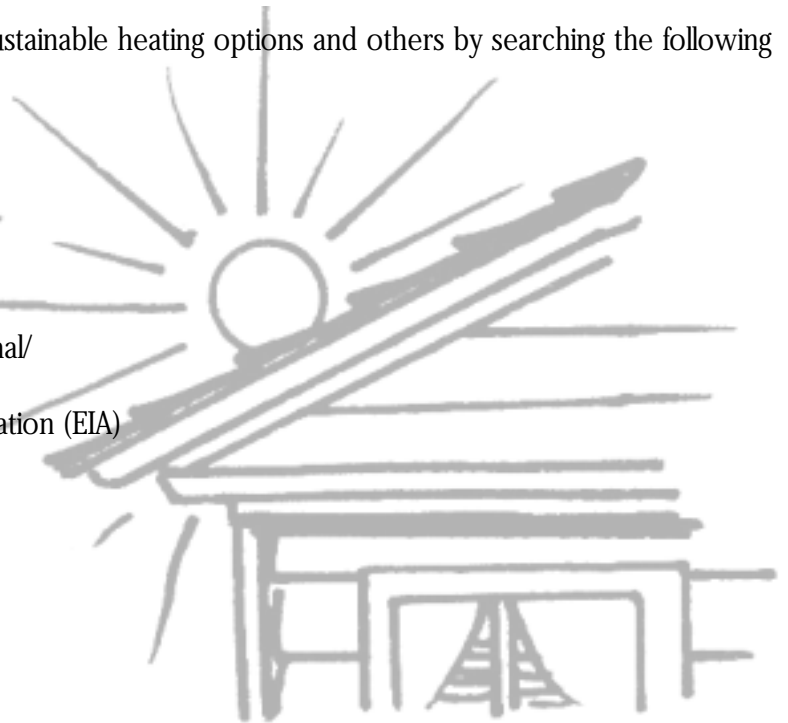
You can find more about these sustainable heating options and others by searching the following web sites and other resources:

ENERGYguide.com
www.energyguide.com

Geothermal Energy Program
www.eren.doe.gov/geothermal/

Energy Information Administration (EIA)
www.eia.doe.gov

ECONET
www.econet.org



Ideas for

Sustainable Electricity

1. Improve the energy efficiency of appliances.

Reduce electricity consumption by replacing old appliances with the most energy efficient ones on the market. The benefits of more energy efficient appliances that will save money over time in electric bills must be weighed against the initial costs of buying the appliances.

Lights: Replacing standard incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs saves energy. These bulbs typically cost between 18 and 25 dollars each, but last much longer than a typical light bulb. For every 10% of lights replaced in the home each year the family will save:

440 Kwh of electricity
696 lbs of CO₂ emissions
\$25 dollars on electricity

Refrigerator: Refrigerators with freezers on top are more energy efficient than those with side freezers. Currently Maytag and Jenn-Air make the most efficient models on the market. If the X family replaces theirs with one of these, every year they will save:

385 Kwh of electricity.
608 lbs CO₂ emissions
\$22 on electricity

Dishwasher: If the family replaces their dishwasher with the most energy efficient one currently on the market (made by Asko), each year they will save:

76 Kwh of electricity
120 lbs CO₂ emissions
\$4.25 on electricity

Water Heaters: If the current water heater is replaced with the most efficient electric model on the market today (made by A.O. Smith), each year they will save:

1,436 Kwh of electricity
2,268 lbs CO₂ emissions
\$80 on electricity

If they change to a **solar water heating** system in their home, each year they will save:

3,983 Kwh of electricity
6293 lbs CO₂ emissions
\$223 on electricity

Ideas for Sustainable Electricity



2. Implement electricity conservation measures in the home.

There are many simple things that can be done in the home to cut down on waste of energy without spending much time or money.

- Turn down water heater to warm setting (120 degrees) and put an insulating blanket around it.
Cost: \$10
Savings: 1,600 Kwh per year
2544 lbs CO₂ reduction
\$89 on electricity
- Replace or clean filters for furnace, air-conditioner and heat pumps.
Cost: \$30
Savings: 300 -500 Kwh per year
\$18 - \$28 on electricity
- Install low flow shower heads which cut down on amount of hot water used.
Cost: \$20 (two)
Savings: 1,700 Kwh per year
\$95 of electricity
- Reduce need for air-conditioning by planting shade trees and shrubs around house - especially on south and west sides.
Cost: \$ 50 -500
Savings: Variable
- Turn down thermostat in winter. For every degree turned down they save:
47 therms
574 pounds of Co₂ emissions
\$32 per year on gas

3. Buy electricity from a supplier of green or renewable power.

Green power is electricity generated from renewable resources such as solar, wind, geothermal, small hydro, and biomass. These “environment friendly” resources provide the consumer with an alternative to power generated by coal, oil, natural gas and nuclear sources.



Keep in mind that the electricity supplied to the X family home is part of the power grid which mixes all power sources in a regional pool. There is no way to physically separate green power from that generated by non-renewable sources. But by selecting the green power option the family is sending a message to its energy supplier to buy a greater percentage of its power from renewable sources. If everyone were to purchase the green power option it would drastically increase the demand and use of electricity produced by renewable resources and decrease demand for non-renewables. It is important to note that the option to buy green power is not yet available to all consumers but this option is becoming more widespread over time.

By choosing the green power option each year the family would save:

18,383 lbs of CO₂ emissions

At present, green power costs more than regular power so electricity bills might increase \$3-5 per month for the same amount of power used.

Sustainable Energy Options



You can find out more about sustainable energy options by searching the following websites:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov

U.S. Department of Energy
www.doe.gov

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Network (EREN)
www.eren.doe.gov

EPA's Energy Star Program
www.epa.gov

Rocky Mountain Institute
www.rmi.org

Solstice
www.solstice.crest.org

Center for Renewable Energy and Sustainable Technology
www.crest.org

Top Rated Energy-Efficient Appliances:
www.aceee.org/consumerguide/

ENERGYguide.com
www.energyguide.com

Geothermal Energy Program
www.eren.doe.gov/geothermal/

Energy Information Administration (EIA)
www.eia.doe.gov

ECONET
www.econet.org

Sustainable Energy Recommendation for the "X" Family

TRANSPORTATION

| Action: | Effect on Energy Consumption: | Effect on Environment: | Economic Costs: | Reasons for Choice: |
|---------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |

Energy

HOME HEATING

| Action: | Effect on Energy Consumption: | Effect on Environment: | Economic Costs: | Reasons for Choice: |
|---------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |

Sustainable Energy Recommendation for the X Family

ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION

| Action: | Effect on Energy Consumption: | Effect on Environment: | Economic Costs: | Reasons for Choice: |
|---------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |

Questions:

1. What were some of the tradeoffs you faced in making your choices?

2. If the family follows all of you recommendations, how much energy will they save in one year?

3. How much money (if any) will they save over 10 years?

4. How much air pollution and CO2 emissions will be reduced in one year? Over 10 years?

