

CHAPTER  
**24**

**GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION**

*Oil Consumption in the 1970s*

**Section 3**

*Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the graphs carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.*

In the 1800s, gasoline was considered a useless by-product of oil refining and was often discarded into bodies of water. Kerosene, for burning in lamps, was the main product distilled from oil. In the 1900s, however, technology changed the way oil was used. Electric lighting replaced kerosene lighting, and automobiles and other motor vehicles began creating a need for all of that unwanted gasoline.

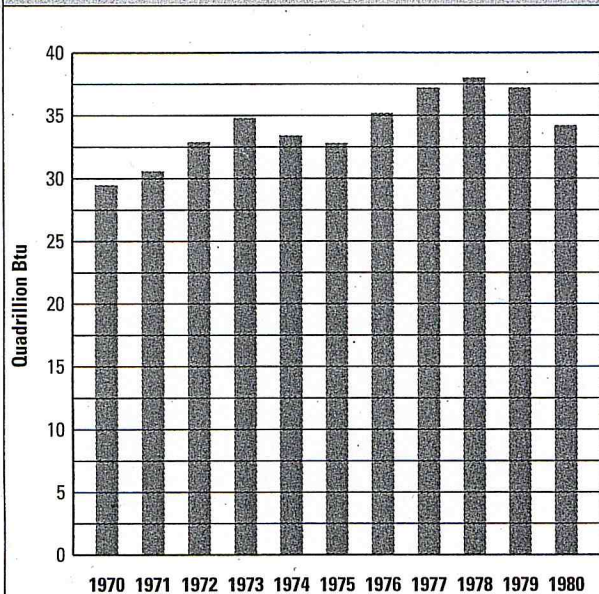
Throughout the century the demand for oil increased, and by 1973, 47 percent of U.S. energy consumption from all sources was coming from oil. Nevertheless, supplies were always abundant, so the price of oil stayed low. As demand began to outstrip U.S. production, however, the United States became increasingly dependent on foreign sources for oil.

Then, the United States experienced two oil crises. In 1973–1974, the Arab members of the

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), a collective-bargaining group of oil-producing nations, were angry about Western support of Israel during its 1973 war with its Arab neighbors. They cut off oil exports to the United States, and at the same time the other OPEC members raised prices, from about \$3 to more than \$12 a barrel. U.S. gasoline and heating-oil prices soared. In 1979, OPEC again increased oil prices drastically, and the cost of a barrel of crude oil rose from around \$12 to more than \$30.

The bar graphs below dramatize how dependent the United States was on foreign oil in the 1970s and how the increased cost of oil affected consumption. Oil consumption is measured in British thermal units (Btu), with 1 Btu being the quantity of heat needed to raise the temperature of one pound of water one degree Fahrenheit. A quadrillion is a million billion.

**Total U.S. Oil Consumption**



**Imports as a Percentage of Total U.S. Oil Supply**

