

CHAPTER  
**32**

Section 3

GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTIONS

***Oil Consumption in the 1970s***

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

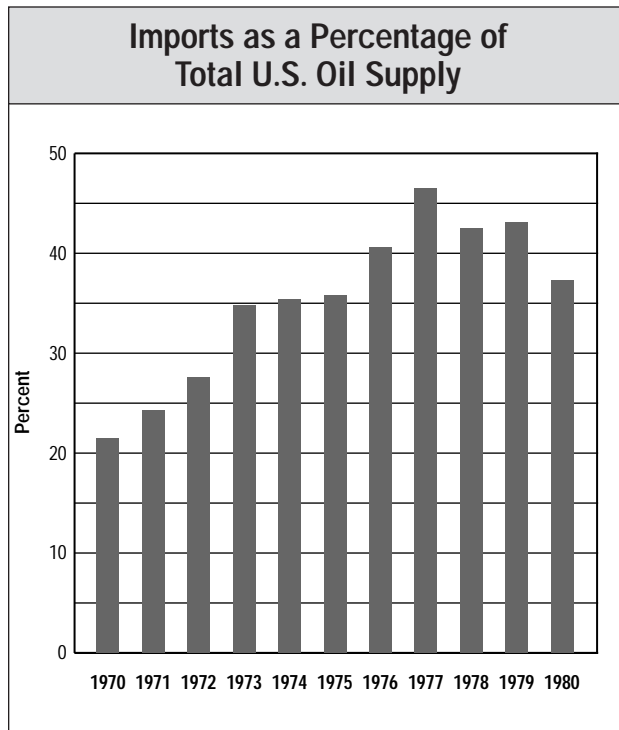
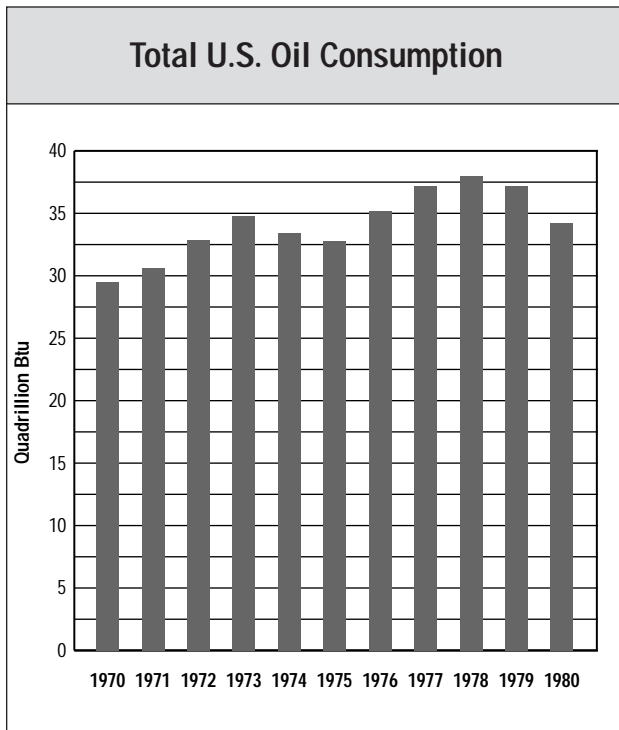
In the 1800s, gasoline was considered a useless by-product of oil refining and was often discarded into bodies of water. Kerosene, for burning in lamps, was the main product distilled from oil. In the 1900s, however, technology changed the way oil was used. Electric lighting replaced kerosene lighting,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



### Interpreting Text and Visuals

1. What was the trend in oil consumption from 1970 through 1973? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. How much oil did Americans consume in 1973? \_\_\_\_\_

3. In which year during the 1970s was oil consumption the greatest? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why were there rather sharp declines in oil consumption after 1973 and 1979? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What do you imagine happened to oil consumption in 1981? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Logically, why should the percentage of imported oil consumed in the United States have dropped in 1973–1974? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why do you think it did not? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Until 1969, imported oil had never been more than 19.8 percent of the total amount of oil consumed in the United States. In your own words, summarize what happened to U.S. reliance on imported oil in the 1970s.

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