



Name:

Date:

Landfill Mining

Human beings have always produced waste, and they have often gotten rid of it by burying it in certain locations in the ground. This way of dealing with waste has continued in modern times, although the amount of waste being produced has increased enormously. However, putting waste into landfills, as these sites are now called, sometimes causes poisonous substances to get into the surrounding area. Landfills, also take up valuable land that could be used for other purposes.

In recent years, though, people have been paying more attention to what is known as “landfill mining.” This means removing waste from landfills in order to recycle metals and other materials that have been buried in them. As resources such as metals become harder to find and more expensive to buy, a number of companies are finding the idea of landfill mining attractive. At the same time, governments want the poisonous chemicals contained in many landfills to be removed and treated. Nevertheless, landfill mining remains uncommon because it is still relatively expensive.

Now, though, a British company has come up with a new approach to landfill mining that could make it much more profitable. The company, Advanced Plasma Power (APP), is building a plant next to an old landfill in Belgium. This landfill contains 16 millions tons of waste that have been buried there since the 1960s. The plant will remove any metals or other materials that can be recycled and then change the remaining waste into a new type of gas called “syngas.” This gas can then be burned as fuel to make electricity, which can then be sold.

APP believes that its project will make a lot of money as well as be good for the environment near the landfill. According to the company, about 45 percent of the buried waste can be recycled. The remainder, when it is turned into gas, will provide enough power for more than 60,000 homes. Moreover, the process will remove all poisonous chemicals from the waste. APP says that, as resources become more expensive and the price of electricity rises, this kind of project will become more and more common. It will also create space for new landfills or allow the land to be used in new ways.



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1. Burying waste to get rid of it
 - a. is becoming less common because there is not enough room.
 - b. is an idea that was not thought of until modern times.
 - c. can cause poisons to be released into the local environment.
 - d. can improve the value of land in areas with too much waste.

2. Why are some companies attracted to the idea of removing waste from landfills?
 - a. It is the best way to get certain metals that are illegal to mine.
 - b. It is much cheaper than buying materials made of recycled products.
 - c. They are being offered money by governments to clean up the waste.
 - d. They can dig up materials that are becoming rare and expensive.

3. How will Advanced Plasma Power use some of the waste from landfills?
 - a. By turning it into a special gas which can then be used as fuel.
 - b. By selling it to people so they can burn it to heat their homes.
 - c. By adding metal to it to make a new kind of building material.
 - d. By creating islands with it which can become sites for power plants.

4. APP says that its approach will
 - a. reuse the metals and other materials to build new power plants.
 - b. result in almost half of the waste buried in the landfill being recycled.
 - c. create a new kind of landfill that is safer for the environment.
 - d. provide enough materials for thousands of new homes to be built.