

10.2: The Nature of Energy - Key Definitions

; the potential energies of electrons in the force field created by atomic nuclei lie at the heart of the chemical behavior of and molecules. "" usually refers to the energy that is stored in the of molecules. These bonds form when electrons are able to respond to the force fields created by two or more atomic nuclei, so they can be regarded as manifestations of electrostatic potential energy. In an chemical reaction, the electrons and nuclei within the reactants undergo rearrangement into products possessing lower energies, and the difference is released to the environment in the form of heat. chemical reaction heats surrounding , the kinetic energy gets dispersed into the molecular units in the environment. This "microscopic" form of kinetic energy, unlike that of a speeding bullet, is completely random in the kinds of motions it exhibits and in its direction. We refer to this as "thermalized" kinetic energy, or more commonly simply as . We observe the effects of this as a rise in the temperature of the . The temperature of a body is direct measure of the quantity of thermal energy is contains. , energy comes in different types. Energy can be converted from one form into another, but all of the energy present before a change occurs always exists in some form after the change is completed. This observation is expressed in the : (a type of potential energy) is stored in the molecules that compose gasoline. When gasoline is combusted within the cylinders of a car's engine, the rapidly expanding gaseous products of this chemical reaction generate mechanical energy (a type of kinetic energy) when they move the cylinders' pistons. The is also one version of the first law of thermodynamics, as you will learn later. in glucose to keep us warm and to move our muscles. In fact, life itself depends on the conversion of to other forms. So when you go uphill, your kinetic energy is transformed into potential energy, which gets changed back into kinetic energy as you coast down the other side. And where did the kinetic energy you expended in peddling uphill come from? By conversion of some of the chemical potential energy in your breakfast cereal.). Kinetic energy (KE) is the energy of motion; potential energy is energy due to relative position, composition, or condition. When energy is converted from one form into another, energy is neither created nor destroyed (or first law of thermodynamics). has thermal energy due to the \overline{KE} of its molecules and temperature that corresponds to the average KE of its molecules. Heat is energy that is transferred between objects at different temperatures; it flows from a high to a low temperature. Chemical and physical processes can absorb heat () or release heat (). The SI unit of energy, heat, and work is the .

10.2: The Nature of Energy - Key Definitions is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.