

LEVELED BOOK • L

Oil: A Messy Resource



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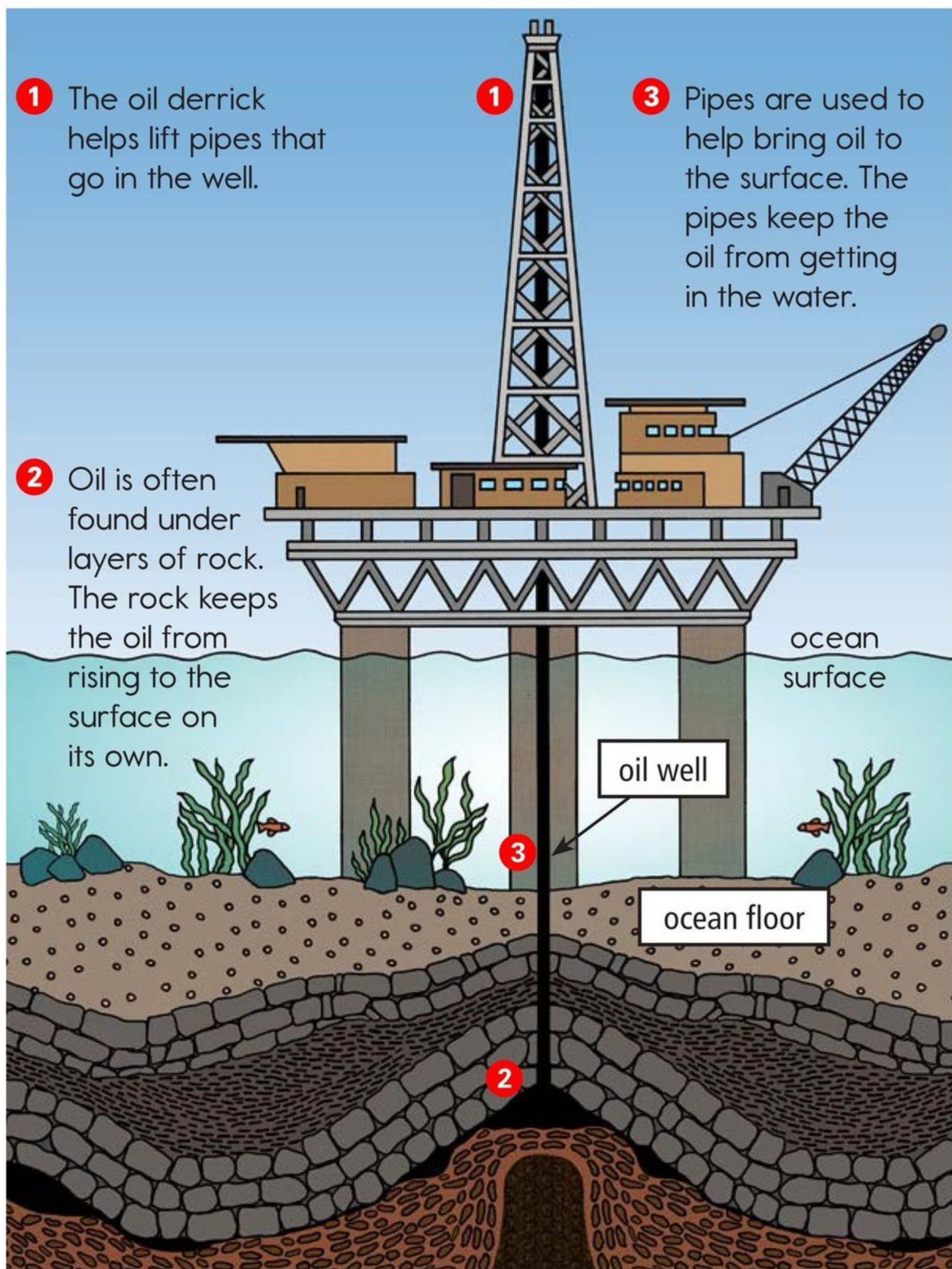
Introduction

Oil is a very important **resource**. We use oil for **energy**. We use it to make gas for cars. We use it to heat buildings. We even use it to make plastic things and medicines.



This pump helps bring oil to the surface.

Oil comes from below the ground. We use large drills to dig **wells**. The wells bring oil to the **surface**. Then we can use the oil.



How We Get Oil

Oil is found in many places. Some of these places are below land, but others are below the ocean floor.



The *Development Driller III* rig in the Gulf of Mexico

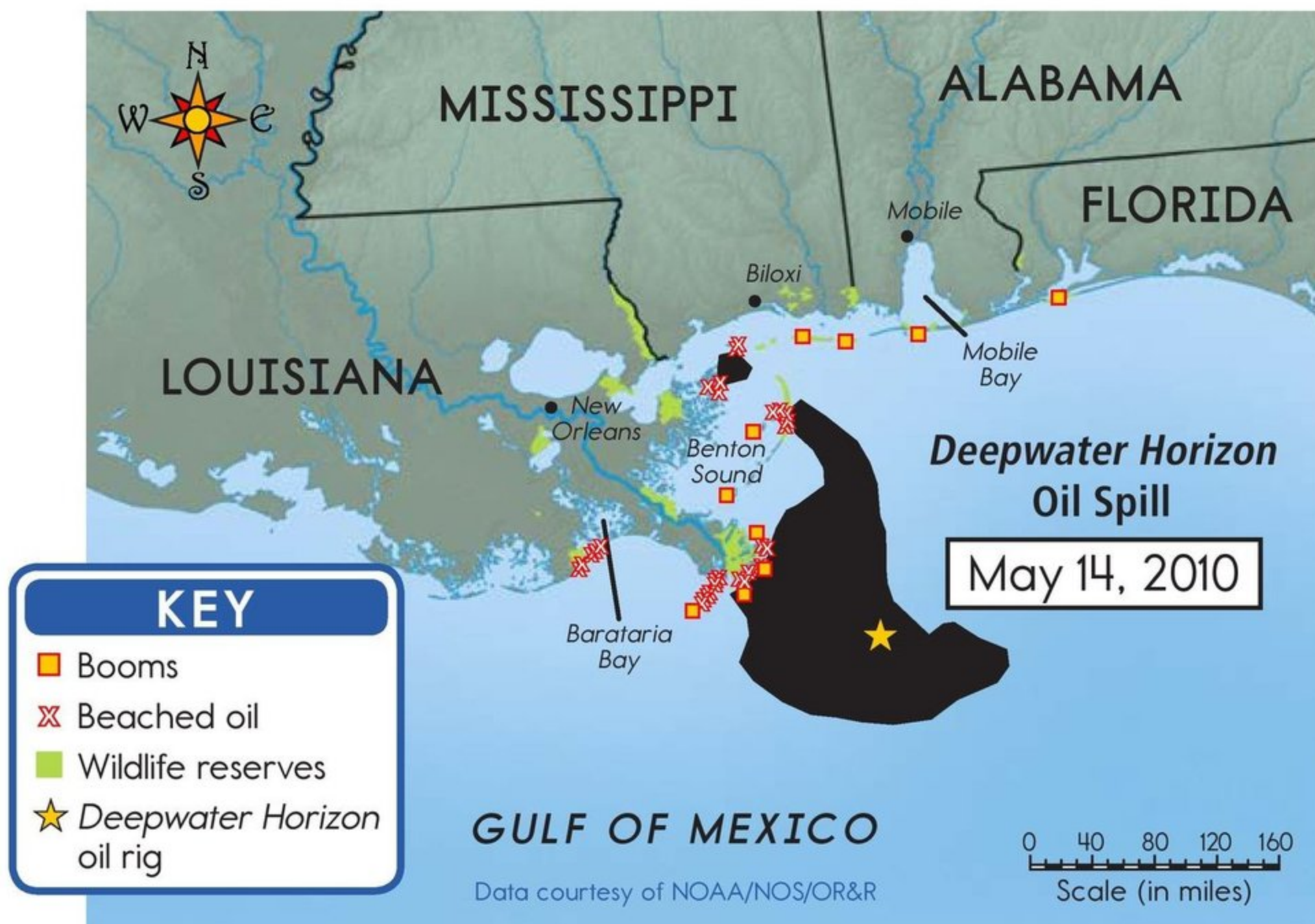
An oil rig is a machine that drills for oil. Oil rigs drill deep into the ground. Some special oil rigs can float on the ocean. They use pipes to bring the oil to the surface.



Deepwater Horizon oil rig on fire in April 2010

Problems with Drilling Underwater

Problems can happen when people drill for oil. This floating oil rig caught fire. Some people were killed, and others got hurt.



Oil looks red floating on the ocean's surface.

The oil rig burned and sank into the water. Oil from the well below the rig began to **leak** into the ocean.



Officials look for signs of oil on shore.

When lots of oil leaks from a well, it makes an **oil spill**. Oil spills can become very large. Oil spills cause harm to people and other animals.



Pelicans would be in serious danger if oil got near their island home.

When oil floats to the shore, it covers everything. Sand and rocks get covered. Birds and other animals get covered. Oil makes a mess and can kill many plants and animals.



(Above) The *Exxon Valdez* tanker spill in 1989 was one of the worst oil spills in U.S. history. (Below) A worker is covered in oil after helping clean up part of the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.

Other Sources of Oil Spills

Wells are not the only cause of oil spills. Oil tankers are big ships that



carry oil across oceans. If an oil tanker crashes or sinks, lots of oil can get in the water. It can take years to clean up the mess from a large oil spill.



People rally for the shore to be cleaned after the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.

What People Think About Oil Drilling

Some people think we should not drill for oil under oceans. Some people think we should not ship oil in large tankers. They say it would be easy for something to go wrong. They say that oil spills could happen.



Safety rules help keep oil workers and the environment safe.

Other people think we should keep drilling for oil under oceans. These people think we can find safe ways to drill for oil and carry it on ships. They say that good rules help keep oil spills from happening.



Oil rig in the Cook Inlet in Alaska

Conclusion

Everyone agrees that oil spills are bad. But it's also true that oil is an important resource. Do you think drilling for oil under the ocean is a good idea? Do you think we can take a chance on another oil spill happening?

Glossary

energy (<i>n.</i>)	the power to do work, make a change, or move objects (p. 4)
leak (<i>v.</i>)	to accidentally allow liquid or gas to escape (p. 9)
oil spill (<i>n.</i>)	the accidental release of oil into the environment (p. 10)
resource (<i>n.</i>)	a supply of something valuable or very useful (p. 4)
surface (<i>n.</i>)	the outside or top part of a thing; the part of the ocean or land that touches the air above it (p. 5)
wells (<i>n.</i>)	deep holes that are dug into the ground to get water, gas, or oil (p. 5)

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