

Chronological Outline & Content Prompts

Title Page

- **Title:** The History of Renewable Energy in the United States: A Chronological Overview
- **Prepared for:** [Intended Audience]
- **Prepared by:** [Your Name]
- **Date:** [Date]
- **Course/Organization:** [If applicable; will not be for your report]

Executive Summary (~0.5 page; separate page)

- **Purpose:** Give readers a concise overview so they can grasp main points without reading the full report.
- **Content Prompts:** Summarize renewable energy's historical trajectory, major policy and technology shifts, and changes in public perception. State the report's objective (informational, chronological).
- **Evidence & Sources:** Current renewable energy capacity data, key historical milestones.

Introduction (~0.5 page)

- **Purpose:** Define scope, explain why a historical view matters, and identify audience relevance.
- **Content Prompts:** Define “renewable energy” and main types covered. Explain why history is relevant for informed decision-making. Describe the chronological approach and embedded case studies.
- **Evidence & Sources:** DOE overviews, reputable summaries on renewable energy history.

Discussion

I. Early Foundations (1800s – Early 1900s) (~0.75 page)

- **Purpose:** Establish the origins of U.S. renewable energy.
- **Content Prompts:** Early hydropower, windmill use in rural areas, solar heating experiments. Case study: Appleton, Wisconsin hydropower plant (1882).
- **Evidence & Sources:** NREL archives, historical engineering records.

II. Pre-War and Mid-Century Developments (1920s – 1960s) (~0.75 page)

- **Purpose:** Show scaling and industrialization of renewables.
- **Content Prompts:** Major hydropower projects (Hoover Dam, TVA), early wind turbine work (Smith–Putnam), early solar research, federal investment in infrastructure. Case study: Rural Electrification Administration's impact.
- **Evidence & Sources:** DOE histories, TVA archives.

III. The Energy Crisis Era (1970s) (~1 page)

- **Purpose:** Explain how the oil embargo and political shifts fueled renewable interest.
- **Content Prompts:** 1973 oil embargo's impact, DOE creation (1977), early commercial solar adoption, public attitude changes. Case study: Carter's White House solar heating system.
- **Evidence & Sources:** 1970s news archives, DOE policy documents.

IV. Retrenchment and Technological Growth (1980s – 1990s) (~1 page)

- **Purpose:** Describe political pullbacks but highlight tech progress.
- **Content Prompts:** Federal funding cuts, removal of White House solar panels, California wind farm expansion, emergence of state renewable portfolio standards. Case study: California's wind boom and environmental debates.
- **Evidence & Sources:** State energy commission reports, environmental assessments.

V. 21st Century Acceleration (2000 – 2010) (~1 page)

- **Purpose:** Show climate awareness and market forces accelerating growth.
- **Content Prompts:** Kyoto Protocol debates, tax incentives, net metering, PV efficiency gains, manufacturing cost drops. Case study: Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating System.
- **Evidence & Sources:** NREL data, energy market reports.

VI. The Current Landscape (2010 – Present) (~1 page)

- **Purpose:** Capture recent explosive growth and structural shifts.
- **Content Prompts:** Surge in solar/wind capacity, corporate renewable commitments, energy storage advances, state leadership (Iowa wind, California solar). Case study: Iowa's wind leadership.
- **Evidence & Sources:** EIA energy review, Bloomberg New Energy Finance data.

VII. Looking Ahead (~0.5 page)

- **Purpose:** Offer forward-looking insights grounded in history.
- **Content Prompts:** Projected adoption trends, emerging tech (floating solar, green hydrogen), challenges (grid modernization, materials supply).
- **Evidence & Sources:** IEA projections, DOE innovation roadmaps.

Conclusion (~0.25–0.5 page)

- **Purpose:** Reinforce key themes and historical lessons.
- **Content Prompts:** Recap U.S. renewable energy's historical path, link past developments to future planning.
- **Evidence & Sources:** Pull from earlier sections for synthesis.

References (not counted in page length)

- **Purpose:** Provide full citations for verification.

- **Content Prompts:** Use APA or required style, include 8–10 credible sources from government publications, peer-reviewed journals, and reputable news outlets.