

Carbon Encyclopedia Article

Carbon

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Carbon Encyclopedia Article.....	1
Contents.....	2
Carbon.....	3

Carbon

The seventeenth most abundant element on earth, carbon occurs in at least six different allotropic forms, the best known of which are diamond and graphite. It is a major component of all biochemical compounds that occur in living organisms: carbohydrates, proteins, lipids, and nucleic acids. Carbon-rich rocks and minerals such as limestone, gypsum, and marble often are created by accumulated bodies of aquatic organisms. Plants, animals, and **microorganisms** cycle carbon through the **environment**, converting it from simple compounds like **carbon dioxide** and **methane** to more complex compounds like sugars and starches, and then, by the action of **decomposers**, back again to simpler compounds. One of the most important **fossil fuels**, **coal**, is composed chiefly of carbon.