**Student Handout 3**

**Finding Gas**

**Gas Formation Student Reading**

Though there are differing theories on the origin of hydrocarbons, the organic theory is the more widely held and studied hypothesis.

Petroleum scientists are particularly interested in the association between hydrocarbons and sedimentary rocks. Sedimentary rocks (rocks formed from fragments of other rocks or chemically precipitated) are much more likely to have properties that allow hydrocarbons to generate, migrate, and be stored between their grains. Sedimentary rocks that accumulate in water-rich environments, such as lakes and oceans in particular, tend to preserve and generate hydrocarbons more efficiently

Marine life, from the simplest plankton and single-celled life forms to the more complex crustaceans and fish species, contains carbon molecules. As these animals die and decay over millions of years, carbon molecules, through processes of heat and pressure, degrade into hydrocarbon compounds. Sufficient volumes of accumulations may form oil and gas reservoirs over time.

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| **What I Know!** | What I Want to Know! | What I Learned! |