A Bright Idea!

Objective
Students will study an example of potential energy converted to energy in the forms of heat and light.

Curriculum Focus
Science

Materials
- Several general purpose C dry cell batteries
- A string of holiday lights, cut apart and stripped at the ends or small bulbs and sockets with wires
- Battery operated toy and batteries
- Small flashlight bulbs and sockets
- Copies of "Student Sheet: A Bright Idea!"

Key Vocabulary
chemical energy, circuit, closed circuit, current, electrode, electrolyte, kinetic energy, open circuit, parallel circuit, potential energy, radiant energy, series circuit, thermal energy, transformation, voltage

Next Generation Science Correlations
4-ETS1 – 1-2
4-PS3 – 2-4
4-ESS3 – 1
MS-PS3 – 3
MS-PS3.B
MS-LS2 – 1
MS-ESS3.A

Introduction

Alessandro Volta, an Italian physicist, made the first battery in 1799. Volta placed two different metal electrodes in an electrolyte solution (a chemical mixture which will conduct an electrical current). The chemical reaction caused an electromotive force. A common misconception is that batteries store electrical energy. This is not really true; batteries convert chemical energy to electrical energy. They store chemical energy that can be released during a chemical reaction. By using metals or carbons that have different chemical properties and an acid or base that will allow the movement of electrical charges, an electric current can be produced.

Procedure

1. Demonstrate a battery operated toy with and without the battery. Explain that energy is the ability to do work or cause change, such as moving the toy or powering a light bulb.
2. Discuss:
   - How do we know the energy from the battery is working?
   - What kind of energy is the toy giving off? (possible answers include kinetic energy, mechanical, light, sound and heat)
   - The battery converts chemicals (chemical energy) to electricity (electrical energy) and the toy converts electricity to many possible forms of energy, including mechanical energy, heat (thermal energy), light and sound.
3. Have students use the materials provided to experiment with simple circuits by following the guided inquiry activity on the student sheet. As the students do the activity, have them note the light and heat energy given off.
4. Give students examples of types of potential and kinetic energy.

   Kinetic energy: a person riding a bike, a fire in a woodburning stove, a person running

   Potential energy: a lump of coal, a sandwich, a rock at the top of a hill

Discussion

Write the word choices on the board. Read the statements to the students and have them fill in the blanks using the words.

1. A battery converts chemical energy into _____ energy.
2. Electricity is a form of _____ energy.
3. The light bulb converts electrical energy into _____ and _____ energy.
4. A battery contains _____ energy.

Word choices:

potential electrical heat kinetic light

Answers:

1. electrical 2. kinetic 3. light, heat 4. potential

To Know and Do More

Ask students if they believe batteries are important to our way of life today. Have students make a list of all the items they used yesterday that contained a battery. Their list might include:

Wristwatch	Tablet
Automobile	Video game controller
Cell phone	TV remote control
Laptop	

To continue this, have students add to the list all of the items they can think of that use batteries. Are your students surprised at how many items today depend on batteries to operate and how many battery operated items they depend on daily?

Career Awareness Activity

Search the internet for a company that produces batteries. Discover the various job opportunities and careers within that company. Your list might include: scientists, chemists, research analysts, accountants, purchasing agents and administrative assistants.

Student Sheet: A Bright Idea!

Alessandro Volta, an Italian physicist, made the first battery in 1799. Volta put sheets of two different types of metal in a jar of water with a chemical that could carry electricity (an electrolyte). The chemical reaction between the electrolyte and the metal plates caused electrons to move when the plates were connected with a wire. The flow of electrons moving in a wire is called an electric current or electricity.

Using one battery and one light, make the bulb light up. Congratulations, you have made an electrical circuit!

1. What did you have to do to get the light to come on and complete the circuit? How was it touching the battery?

2. What do you have to do to make the light bulb turn off and then back on?

3. What do you think the electrical terms open circuit and closed circuit mean?

4. How do you think a light switch works?

5. What type and form of energy is in the battery?

6. The battery's energy was transformed into what other forms of energy?

Using one battery, try to light up two lights.

1. Sketch how the wires are connected to the battery when you light two lights.

2. Are the lights the same brightness as when you lit only one or are they dimmer?

3. A series circuit has only one path that electrons can follow as they are pushed from one side of the battery to the other. A parallel circuit has more than one path and the electrons can go more than one way to get from one end of the battery to the other. Which type of circuit did you make and draw?

4. Experiment with multiple batteries connected together, placing the positive end of one battery touching the negative end of another battery. What effect does the number of batteries have on the brightness of the bulbs?

5. If you leave the battery connected to a bulb long enough, you will feel the wire and the ends of the battery getting warm. What do you think is causing this?

6. Can that heat be useful? Can it be dangerous? Give an example to prove your point.

7. Wash your hands when you are finished.