



# What is gw in energy

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Written by Zach Stein | Reviewed by Subject Matter Experts

A gigawatt (GW) is a unit of power, and it is equal to one billion watts. Power measures the rate at which energy is generated, used, or transferred. Watts are the standard unit of power, and a gigawatt is a much larger unit, equivalent to one billion watts.

**Continuous Power Output:** Imagine a power plant that consistently generates electricity at a rate of 1 GW. Over the course of one hour, it would produce 1 gigawatt-hour (GWh) of energy. This means that in a single day (24 hours), the power plant would generate 24 GWh of energy.

**Household Comparison:** On average, a typical U.S. household consumes around 10,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity per year. One gigawatt-hour (GWh) is equal to 1 million kWh. So, a power plant with a capacity of 1 GW could power approximately 876,000 households for one year if they collectively consume 10,000 kWh each, assuming the plant operates continuously throughout the year.

**Electric Vehicle Charging:** Electric vehicles (EVs) require energy for charging their batteries. If a fast-charging station operates at a power level of 1 GW, it could charge approximately 1,000 electric vehicles simultaneously at a rate of 1,000 kWh per hour.

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We follow ethical journalism practices, which includes presenting unbiased information and citing reliable, attributed resources. Much of our research comes from leading organizations in the climate space, such as Project Drawdown and the International Energy Agency (IEA).



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The term "gigawatt" is also employed in discussions related to energy consumption, demand, climate change, and sustainability. As a standard unit of measurement in the International System of Units (SI), the term "gigawatt" is recognized and utilized globally in the field of energy.

Furthermore, gigawatts are also utilized to quantify the capacity and output of renewable energy installations, including solar farms, wind farms, and hydroelectric power stations, contributing to sustainable and clean energy production.

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