THE NATURAL GAS SERIES

Natural Gas: From Reservoir to Electricity

How Molecules Become Markets, Power, and Global Infrastructure

Etadju Isaya Pierre

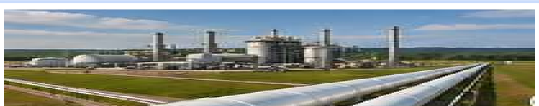
Unified Edition — Narrative + Visual Companion, All 10 Parts

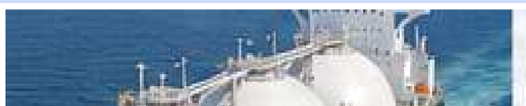
INTRODUCTION

Natural gas seems simple — until you follow its journey

> *It begins deep underground, trapped in porous rock and sealed by geology. It rises through wells, but it does not arrive as a finished product — it must be treated, compressed, transported, cooled, liquefied, shipped, regasified, traded, and finally converted into electricity, heat, or industrial feedstock.*

Every stage of that journey is engineered. Every stage carries consequences. Natural gas is not just a commodity — it is an infrastructure system connecting reservoirs to processing plants, pipelines to ports, LNG terminals to ships, turbines to power grids, and energy markets to the digital economy.


Pipeline Transmission


LNG Carrier

WHAT THIS DECK COVERS

- The physical journey — reservoir, processing, pipelines, LNG
- The market — producers, midstream, traders, and buyers
- The conversion — how gas becomes grid electricity
- The AI question — data centers and the power bottleneck
- The risks — methane, safety, and emissions
- The future — hydrogen, carbon capture, and nuclear

PART 1 / 10

From Underground to Energy

Extraction is the beginning of the story, not the finished product.

- What rises from a reservoir is a mixture: methane along with water vapor, CO_2, hydrogen sulfide, ethane, propane, butanes and heavier hydrocarbons.
- It must be separated and conditioned before it can enter the wider energy system — extraction is only the first step.
- Natural gas powers electricity generation, industry, chemicals & fertilizers, data centers, and communities alike.

Extraction

Natural gas isn't just a fuel. It's infrastructure, innovation, and opportunity.

KEY FACTS

CH_4	Main component: methane
-162°C	LNG cooling temperature
1/600	LNG volume vs. gas

1. Extraction →
2. Processing →
3. Transport →
4. LNG / Pipeline →
5. Regasification →
6. End Uses

PART 2 / 10

Inside a Natural Gas Processing Plant

Raw gas in. Pure energy out.

- A processing plant is a place of separation and preparation, not merely a cleanup facility.
- Water vapor is reduced to prevent corrosion and hydrate formation in pipelines and equipment.
- Acid gases (CO_2, H_2S) are removed to meet pipeline specifications and protect downstream infrastructure.
- Natural gas liquids — ethane, propane, butanes, natural gasoline — are recovered as valuable products in their own right.

RAW NATURAL GAS CAN CONTAIN

Water vapor	CO_2
Hydrogen sulfide	Methane (CH_4)
Ethane	Propane
Butanes	Heavier HCs

1. Separation →
2. Dehydration →
3. Acid-Gas Removal →
4. NGL Recovery →
5. Pipeline-Quality Gas

Processing

A processing plant isn't just "cleaning gas." It's separating molecules into different commercial products.

PART 3 / 10

The Long Arteries of the Energy System

Energy moves when pressure, steel, and control systems work together.

- Pipelines carry gas under high pressure across states, countries, and continents — linking wells, storage, power plants, and industry.
- Friction and distance cause pressure to fall, so compressor stations act as the network's heartbeat, pushing gas onward.
- Storage — underground reservoirs and salt caverns — balances supply and demand, responding to sudden need.

Pipelines don't create energy. But without them, energy cannot travel.

Geography creates barriers. Oceans divide markets. When steel corridors can't connect producer and customer, engineering has to transform the gas again.

1 Processing → 2 Transmission → 3 Compressor → 4 Storage → 5 Customer

ACTIVELY MANAGED, NOT PASSIVE

Flow meters, sensors, temperature monitoring, gas detection, SCADA platforms, valves, and inspection tools give operators a real-time view of the network.

PART 4 / 10

The Decision to Liquefy — and the Ship That Carries Cold

When pipelines end, thermodynamics takes over.

- Cooling natural gas to about -162°C turns methane into a cryogenic liquid — LNG — shrinking its volume to roughly 1/600th.
- The liquefaction plant integrates compressors, refrigeration units, heat exchangers, and cryogenic tanks to cool the gas safely.
- An LNG carrier is a floating cryogenic machine: insulated cargo tanks (membrane or spherical Moss-type) preserve LNG across open sea.
- Some LNG evaporates as boil-off gas (BOG) — used as fuel, reliquefied, or managed by dedicated systems.

THE LNG VALUE CHAIN

1. Gas Field
2. Processing
3. Liquefaction
4. Shipping
5. Regasification
6. End Use

Engineering made the molecules transportable — LNG is more than a product; it's a system of engineering, infrastructure, safety and global cooperation.

-162°C	1/600	BOG
Liquefaction temperature	Volume reduction vs. gas	Boil-off gas is managed, not just lost

PART 5 / 10

Regasification: LNG Back to Pipeline Gas

Liquefaction makes shipping possible. Regasification reconnects LNG to the energy network.

Regasification

1

Marine Unloading

LNG moves from the carrier through cryogenic transfer systems.

2

Cryogenic Storage

Insulated tanks hold LNG near -162°C until it is needed.

3

Vaporization

Heat exchangers warm the LNG and return it to gaseous form.

4

Quality & Pressure

Metering and controls prepare the gas for the transmission network.

5

Pipeline Send-Out

Gas moves to storage, power plants, industries and communities.

At the destination, LNG is unloaded, stored, warmed, and returned to its gaseous form before being sent into pipelines or local distribution systems.

PART 6 / 10

Fire, Motion, and Electricity

Combustion becomes rotation; rotation becomes the grid.

- Inside the plant, methane is mixed with compressed air and burned in the combustion system of a gas turbine.
- The resulting hot gases expand rapidly, spinning the turbine blades and turning the shaft at high speed — the shaft drives a generator, which turns motion into electricity.
- A great deal of energy remains in the exhaust. In a combined-cycle plant, a Heat Recovery Steam Generator (HRSG) captures that heat to create steam, which drives a second turbine.
- One fuel, two cycles — gas turbine and steam turbine — more output from the same input, supporting grid reliability.

Digital systems do not consume "AI." They consume electricity.

1. Fuel Delivery →
2. Combustion →
3. Gas Turbine →
4. Generator →
5. Combined Cycle (HRSG)

Combustion

Chemical energy → heat → rotation → electricity.

PART 7 / 10

The Market Behind the Molecules

Energy security is the ability to move, store, and use energy reliably.

- Upstream producers extract gas; midstream companies gather, process, and transport it; LNG companies liquefy it when pipelines aren't enough.
- Traders and marketers move molecules through long-term contracts, spot cargoes, and commodity markets to utilities, industry, chemicals — and increasingly, data centers.
- Energy security depends on production diversity, pipeline capacity, storage, LNG trade, and resilience: redundancy, maintenance, cybersecurity, and emergency planning.

The commodity is only the beginning. The real business is the value chain — and at the end of it, gas becomes electricity.

Data Centers

1 Production → 2 Pipelines → 3 Storage → 4 LNG Trade → 5 Resilience

WHO BUYS THE GAS

- Electric utilities & industrial manufacturers
- Chemical & fertilizer producers
- Heating systems & LNG importers
- Data centers — the newest major buyer

PART 8 / 10

The AI Question Is Really an Energy Question

Compute scales only as fast as power and infrastructure can follow.

- As AI data centers grow, the challenge shifts from building servers to supplying enormous, reliable electricity quickly and continuously.
- Gas turbines and engines provide dispatchable power — produced when needed, not only when nature cooperates — attractive where grid capacity or transmission is limited.
- Some operators consider on-site generation: gas moves from pipeline to turbine to generator to the data-center electrical system.
- The challenge isn't only power — it's pipeline capacity, emissions permits, cooling, noise control, and grid interconnection.

AI Data Center Campus

THE AI POWER CHAIN

Gas Supply	Generation	Elec. Infrastructure	Data Center	GPUs & Servers

THE LONG-TERM ANSWER IS A MIX

Nuclear

Solar

Wind

Storage

System must deliver: reliability + speed + cost + scalability + lower emissions.

PART 9 / 10

The Risks That Ride Alongside the Fuel

Risk is not a side topic; it is part of the system.

Methane Leakage

Methane can escape during production, processing, compression, storage, and LNG operations. Because it's a powerful greenhouse gas, even small leaks matter.

Leak Detection

Operators use fixed detectors, optical gas imaging, pressure and flow monitoring, aerial surveys, satellites, and advanced sensors.

FIRE & EXPLOSION — REMOVE ONE ELEMENT TO PREVENT IT

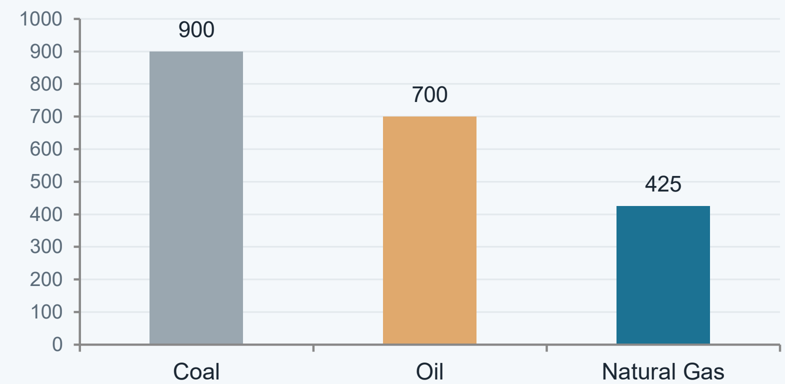
Fuel (Gas) + **Oxygen (Air)** + **Ignition Source**

If gas escapes, mixes with air within its flammable range, and meets an ignition source, fire or explosion can occur.

- Layers of protection: gas & flame detection, emergency shutdown, isolation valves, ventilation, fire protection, process monitoring, and emergency response.
- Natural gas produces less CO_2 per unit of energy than coal, but it is not carbon-free — its footprint depends on the full lifecycle.

TYPICAL CO_2 EMISSIONS

kg CO_2 per MWh of electricity



Values vary by plant design and efficiency. Ranges shown are midpoints for illustration.

The strongest energy systems aren't those pretending risk doesn't exist — they're engineered to understand, monitor, and reduce it.

PART 10 / 10

What Comes Next

Natural gas isn't disappearing tomorrow — but its role is changing.

LNG Keeps Connecting Markets

Liquefaction moves gas between regions pipelines can't reach — important for trade and energy security.

AI Reshapes the Power Conversation

Data centers need dependable electricity; gas can provide fast, dispatchable generation alongside nuclear, solar, and wind.

Gas Can Become Hydrogen

Methane converted with carbon capture is “blue hydrogen” — its value depends on leakage rates and capture quality.

Carbon Capture Could Change Gas Power

The challenge isn't just capturing carbon — it's doing so reliably, economically, and at massive scale.

Gas and Nuclear May Both Matter

Not gas vs. nuclear: gas provides dispatchability, nuclear provides firm low-carbon output — different technologies, one system.

“How do we build an energy system that is reliable, affordable, scalable, secure, and progressively lower-carbon?”

That's not just an energy question. It's a systems question.

CONCLUSION

The quality of the system matters as much as the molecule

From reservoir to processing, from pipelines to LNG, from shipping to electricity, and from power plants to AI infrastructure, natural gas is more than a fuel — it is a chain of systems.

Chemistry & Thermodynamics

Logistics & Markets

Safety & Environment

Global Infrastructure

The future will not be defined by a single molecule or a single technology. It will be defined by the quality of the systems built.