

LESSON 3

Water and Sanitation for All: Bringing the Issue Home

An Elementary School Unit (Grades 3-5)

YOU CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION!

TOTAL TIME: 55 MINUTES

Objectives

Students will:

- Become familiar with the concept of water conservation.
- Become aware their own water use and how to conserve water.
- Discuss ways that they can help to raise awareness in their families and among their peers.

Materials Needed/Setup

- National Geographic: “Water Footprint Per Capita” <http://earthpulse.nationalgeographic.com/earthpulse/earthpulse-map>
- Worldmapper: “Water Use” <http://www.worldmapper.org/display.php?selected=104>

Directions

1. **(10 minutes)** Discuss the homework from the previous lesson, “Habu and Diana.” Have students share their pictures and then discuss with the students Habu’s and Diana’s conservation and access to water.
2. **(10 minutes)** Ask students to look again at the water cycle handout from the previous lesson. Point out that the water going into the house is the same water over and over again. It rises from the lake into the clouds as vapor, turns into rain, and helps to fill the well and the lake again. The water we have now on earth is the same water that we’ve had for millions of years. We can’t make more water, yet we need more of it for the many new things we use it for. Because of this, we have to conserve water, which means we must use it carefully and not waste it. This way we’ll be able to have enough for everyone.
3. **(20 minutes)** Tell students that they are going to look at a map(s) that shows how much water people in different countries use in a whole year. Some countries use more water than other countries. Ask students if they think that people in the U.S. use more water than people in other countries, or less. Show or distribute the National Geographic map, “Water Footprint Per Capita” and/or the Worldmapper “Water Use” map. Ask students:

- Which region of the world appears to use the most amount of water? And the least?
 - How does the water use of the U.S. compare to other countries?
 - Why do you think some countries use more water than others?
 - Does having access to water impact a country's economy?
4. **(15 minutes)** Our country uses more water than most countries. We can try to change that if we use only the water that we need and if we make sure not to waste water. What are some ways we can conserve water at home and at school? Divide students into small groups and have them make lists or draw pictures of ways to conserve water. Post the lists or pictures around the room and ask students to walk around and review each other's work. Discuss the ideas and explore which ones are "doable."
5. **Homework:** Have students take home the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, "Weekly Water Use Report Card." Ask them to keep track of their water use for one week and to bring the card back to class to share with their classmates. To download this activity visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/pdf/workbook/page7.pdf>.

Ask your students to tally their answers to see how much water the entire class uses per week.

Unit Expansion Ideas

- Have students create water cinquain poems. See student samples at http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/news/tapwalkcinquains_2008.shtml.
- Create posters, flyers, and banners about conserving water to post at school above drinking fountains and sinks and in hallways.
- Read about children in other countries where UNICEF has programs <http://www.unicef.org/voy/>.
- Develop lessons about the importance of hand washing in preventing disease <http://globalhandwashingday.org/>.
- Use a world map to identify other countries affected by water and sanitation issues. This can lead to further lessons in geography, math, creative writing, art, and more.

Service Projects

- Create a "Drip Squad" at school, and have student squad members look for leaks and report them.
- Ask students to hand out copies of the "Weekly Water Use Report Card" to members of their neighborhoods, scout troops, or places of worship to encourage others to keep track of their water consumption.
- Have students write a play about water and sanitation to perform at a school assembly.