



Water

Let's be sustainable

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Topic 6: Using our water wisely

Introduction

In Topic 6, students will consider how water comes into their community and how it goes out. They will discuss how our use and disposal of water can affect its supply and the implications for the future.

Students will then select a water sustainability topic that they would like to investigate further.

Whatever they choose, they should demonstrate an understanding of the fact that water is a limited resource and we are all responsible for conserving and protecting it.

This topic is delivered in two parts, each of which will take more than one lesson to complete.

Topic 6 is part of six topics that can be taught individually or together to form a complete unit of work. Visit the 'For educators' section of the website to access the other topics.

Learning outcomes

- Students will understand that how we use water affects its future supply.
- Students will explore what happens to water after it is used.
- Students will develop their research skills while focusing on a water sustainability topic of their choice.

Resources

- Maps of your school and local community (if available)
- Different coloured markers for highlighting
- A3 paper and pencils
- Computers with internet access
- 'How much do we use?' sheet

Lesson steps

Part 1

This lesson can be completed as a whole class (conducting activity 1 first followed by activity 2).

Alternately, if your class has enough students, you can create two groups and group one will complete activity 1 and group 2 will complete activity 2. In this case, students should present their findings to the rest of the class.



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Whole class

As a class, consider maps of your community and school (if these are not available you may wish to create them as a mathematics activity).

On the map/s, highlight (using two different colours) the places where water comes in and the places it goes out.

Ask students to then draw rough maps of their own homes and repeat the task (i.e. highlight water in and water out). Discuss these maps.

Activity 1 - 'Water in'

In this activity, students will consider what they do with the water in their community (e.g. drinking, washing, cleaning, irrigating).

They can refer back to the ideas from Topic 5 if you have completed it. Then, discuss and research what can be done to ensure water from these sources is being conserved and used sustainably (e.g. turn off taps, have shorter showers, recycle water if possible, etc.).

The 'Using water wisely' section of the website has some ideas to help here.

Activity 2 - 'Water out'

Discuss what goes down the drains/toilets etc. For example, consider toothpaste, soap, cleaning products, human waste, cooking by-products (e.g. oil), food, medicines, paints and garden chemicals.

What happens to the water that goes down our drains and toilets? Investigate stormwater drains, recycling/treatment plants, etc.

Whole class

Overuse is a major threat to ground and surface water supplies, so this is an ideal opportunity to discuss how water is wasted in your community.

You may also wish to discuss the areas that may flood with surface water in the wet season. The '**How much do we use?**' graph shows how much water is used (on average) per month in several communities.

Discuss this with your students in relation to your community.

If your community is not on the graph, ask students how much water they think is used (in general terms). Do they see water being wasted? Where? How?



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Part 2

Students to choose a water sustainability topic to investigate further and present to the class or community in a mode of their choice.

Here are some suggested topics:

- Seasons – how do they affect the amount of water available? What does this mean in terms of water use and conservation?
- Balancing human and environmental needs.
- Examining different viewpoints on water use in your community.
- Custodial responsibility for place and how this influences water use and views around sustainability. What does our culture say about water?
- Who looks after our water?
- The science and technology involved in water conservation and protection.
- Water from a global perspective. How is Australia similar to and different from other places?
- Educating the community. Developing a 'use water wisely' campaign. Students could present their findings to their peers in a format agreed upon with the teacher.