

ACTIVITY ONE: WATER IN OUR LIVES

This listening and group work **LANGUAGES** activity looks at freshwater in our lives. Using a simple demonstration the teacher is easily able to show learners how limited our freshwater resources are and allow the children to consider ways that they can conserve water. The worksheet provided can either be used as a consolidation of the ways we use water in our daily lives, or as a homework activity.

Everyone has a birthday, don't they? Mine is on the 3 November! I wonder when yours is? Did you know that **WATER** has a special day as well. It's 22 March and it's called World Day for Water¹. It's not really a birthday, but it's a day when people all over the world remember how important water is in our lives.

In South Africa, we're very lucky because our government knows how important freshwater is to all South Africans and they have decided to make the week² that includes 22 March, National Water Week – that's a whole week dedicated to thinking, talking and doing lots of active things about and for water!

Our country is very rich in gold and diamonds but it is very poor in freshwater. A few parts of South Africa get lots of rainfall but there are many many towns and villages in the western part of the country that receive very little rain throughout the year. Whether we live in towns, cities or on farms where we get lots of rain, or in places where there is very little rain, freshwater is essential to all of us – for our lives and our good health.

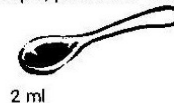
Although there are many oceans and seas covering our Earth, we have to remember that all that water is salt water, not freshwater. Only a very small amount of all the water that we find on Earth is freshwater, which we can drink.

A demonstration for you, the teacher, to show the learners how little freshwater there is on the planet for our daily needs

Fill a teacup with water (200ml) – this represents all the water on Earth. Now take out just less than half a teaspoon (2ml) – these 20 drops of water represent the amount of freshwater available for use by all the people, animals and plants on the Earth! Whew, that's not very much, is it? Water is precious – so, let's make sure that none of us waste a drop.



Earth's available freshwater for people, plants and animals



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We use water in many ways - for drinking, for washing our bodies, for cleaning our homes, for preparing and growing food and for our livestock and pets.

ACTIVITY:

- In groups of four or five, think and talk about all the different ways you use water every day. Each person in the group will need to report back to the rest of the class.

One can see from all the report backs that there are so many different ways, each day, that we use water in our lives. Using the worksheet that follows (either during the lesson or as a homework exercise), learners will be able to consolidate and think about other ways that freshwater plays a role in their lives.

Water in our lives

Draw a line from the words on the right to the pictures on the left



Swimming



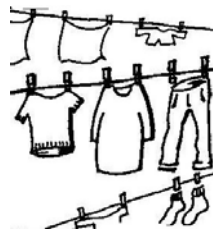
Washing clothes



Watering vegetables



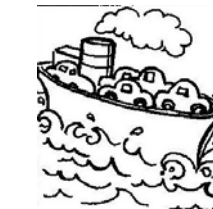
Transport



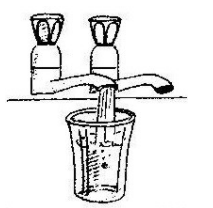
Cooking



Drinking



Watering flowers



Factories

ACTIVITY:

- In the same groups, let the children think and discuss ways that they can save water.

Some ideas to get the children thinking

- Don't leave a tap running
- Fix leaking taps
- Put the plug in when washing dishes or vegetables.
- Greywater (that is, water used for washing dishes, bath water or the washing machine) can easily be diverted into the garden
- Plant indigenous trees and bushes – they don't need as much water as plants that are not South African
- Boil just the amount of water you need when making a cup of tea or coffee
- Turn the tap off when brushing teeth or washing hands
- Collect rainwater for watering plants
- Use a bucket to wash the car or one's bicycle rather than a hosepipe

Once again, each learner in the group will need to clearly report back to the rest of the class what they spoke about within their group. The rest of the class is encouraged to ask each group questions about their water saving ideas.

It may be a good idea to write all the ideas on the chalkboard.

- Finally, from the list that is drawn up on the chalkboard, let the children decide which actions they can take to reduce their water use. Let them choose a simple one (such as making sure that the tap is not running when they wash their hands or brush their teeth) and see, through the week that follows, if they manage to remember this environmental action. You may even choose to conduct this activity during National Water Week, held in March each year.

Criteria to assess learners during this languages lesson

Criteria	Exceeded requirements of the Learning Outcome	Satisfied requirements of the Learning Outcome	Partially satisfied requirements of the Learning Outcome	Not satisfied requirements of the Learning Outcome
The learner listened attentively to the information on water without interrupting the teacher				
The learner listened attentively to the instructions and responded appropriately				
The learner was able to talk about their personal experiences of using water				
The learner was able to report back to the rest of the class				
The learner participated confidently and fluently in a group during discussions about water use and water saving				

For the teacher's interest:

- World Day for Water was declared an international day in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly and was first celebrated in 1993. It was suggested that the day be observed in conformity with the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) contained in Chapter 18 of Agenda 21. The theme for World Day for Water 2007 is 'Coping with water scarcity'.
- For more information on National Water Week or World Day for Water, contact the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Private Bag X313, Pretoria, 0001. Tel: (012) 336 8250. Tollfree number: 0800 200 200. Useful websites are: www.worldwaterday.org; www.dwaf.gov.za and www.unesco.org/water/water_celebrations/