

3. WATER & SANITATION

Preparation:

Have students complete a log of daily water consumption before beginning this lesson. **(Handout provided)**

Activate:

With their completed water consumption log, students will tally amounts of water used for daily activities.

Students should calculate the following totals:

- Total Water Used per Day
- Total Water Used per Week (Day total x 7)
- Total Water Used per Month (Week total x 4)
- Total Water Used per Year (Month total x 12)
- Total Water Used for each category (eg. Drinking, cooking, bathing etc.)

Materials Needed:

- Water consumption handouts
- 2L container with clean water
- Computers with internet access for research component
- Joseph's Story handout
- Mary's Story handout
- 2L container with dirty water

As a class graph the results from a few of the totals on the board or overhead. Encourage students to discuss amounts of water used.

- Do they believe they have used water fairly, or that they have used it excessively?
- What are some areas where they feel they could cut back?
- What are some areas where they feel they 'needed' the amount of water they used?

After the discussion, provide students with a 2L container of water. Explain that refugees in a camp should have a minimum of 5L per person, which should rise to 20L, but 2L is all they may be provided with initially.

Acquire:

Students will research water consumption and sanitation in Canada compared to countries with refugee situations.

Assign students (either individually or in groups) a country that has refugee camps and have them complete the research assignment. **(Handout provided)**

WATER CONSUMPTION & SANITATION RESEARCH

NAME: _____
COUNTRY: _____

Using internet resources research water consumption and sanitation for both Canada and a country with refugee situations.

Information can be presented in slides, poster, brochure, or your own creative idea. If you have your own idea, check with your teacher before proceeding.

Remember to include all sources for your information! Here are some places to begin your research:

- <http://www.unhcr.ca/>
- www.ec.gc.ca/water
- <http://www.msf.ca/en/refugees-and-idps>

You **must include** answers to these questions in your research, but you may include more information if you feel necessary.

1. How much water is given to an individual in a refugee camp?
2. Where can water be obtained in a refugee camp?
3. How much water does an average Canadian use?
4. How is water sanitized in Canada? What standards do Canadians need to meet for our water regulation?
5. Why is it important to sanitize water?
6. How is water sanitized in a refugee camp? What standards do refugee camps need to meet for water regulation?
7. What are problems that can occur when water is not sanitized?
8. In a situation where there isn't proper sanitation, what other areas of life are affected? How are they affected?
9. What diseases can be caused by unclean water?
10. Describe some ways that international agencies are trying to provide water to refugee camps.

JOSEPH'S STORY

Hi, my name is Joseph. I am from Liberia, a country in West Africa. When we were forced to flee from Liberia into refugee camps, water and sanitation was a major problem for us. I have lived in refugee camps both in Sierra Leone and Guinea.

Before we arrived people in the refugee camps got their water from wells and from small rivers and streams. Even before we arrived there was a limited amount of water for the people in the camp, and with many more people arriving in the refugee camps, getting water was extremely difficult. Another problem was that most of the rivers and streams would completely dry up during the dry seasons.

Water in these streams and rivers was not as clean as some people were used to, and many times these water sources were contaminated with human waste.

We had to walk long distances in order to get water. Refugees would have to line up for hours with our water containers and buckets to wait for water. Refugees were often the last to get water. The water tables of the wells were very low and we were only allowed to fetch water early in the morning or late at night from these wells.

If we were lucky to get water it would be very cloudy with mud, clay and dirt. We had to let the water sit for a long period of time before we could drink or cook with it. To bathe or do our laundry we would have to travel long distances to the small rivers and streams. Many times there would be conflicts between refugees and local people because there was always an insufficient supply of water.

The water we would get was not purified, and because of this many of us got sick from water borne diseases, especially children because their immune systems were already weakened. It took a long time before conditions at our refugee camps improved. Our water situation was improved with the help of some international humanitarian assistance.

MARY'S STORY

I am from Eastern Africa, and my name is Mary. My country of origin is Sudan and I have lived in a refugee camp for more than ten years.

I was one in a group of children from my region of Sudan that were forced to leave the country due to the civil war between the north and south. First I went to Ethiopia in 1987 and then later I ran to Kenya in 1992. In 2001 I was accepted by the Canadian High Commission for Refugees to be relocated in Canada. I now live in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The major problems in the refugee camp were the lack of sufficient resources, like water, food and proper sanitation. The population in one refugee camp was 80,000, from seven nationalities in East Africa. There were so many problems, but water and sanitation were the main problem facing refugees in the camp.

The shortage of water was a major concern because the camp was located in Northern Kenya, which is in the desert. We had to fetch water twice a day, once in the morning at 7 am and again in the evening at 4 pm. Water containers were used for collecting water used for drinking, cooking, showering and washing clothes. There were some days when we had to go without water because the tankers were unable to reach the water points in the camp.

Poor sanitation was fuelled by the lack of clean water for drinking and cooking. This caused multiple diseases in the camp, such as cholera, frequent diarrhea and other diseases. All of these diseases could have been prevented if the camp environment was kept clean. Refugee life was complicated by poor health.
