

Using Water Wisely Classroom Activity

The Classroom Activity introduces students to the context of a performance task, so they are not disadvantaged in demonstrating the skills the task intends to assess. Contextual elements include: an understanding of the setting or situation in which the task is placed, potentially unfamiliar concepts that are associated with the scenario, and **key terms** or vocabulary students will need to understand in order to meaningfully engage with and complete the performance task. The Classroom Activity is also intended to generate student interest in further exploration of the key idea(s). The Classroom Activity should be easy to implement with clear instructions.

Please read through the entire Classroom Activity before beginning the activity with students to ensure any classroom preparation can be completed in advance.

Resources Needed:

- Each student should have access to paper and a writing tool¹
- Optional—Blackboard or whiteboard, for tallying student responses

Learning Goal:

- The student will understand the context of the key ideas related to the topic:
 - How the average American uses water
 - Practices that waste water
 - Practices that conserve water
- The student will understand the following vocabulary:
 - **wasting water:** using water in a way that is unnecessary or ineffective
 - **saving water:** conserving water and not wasting it

Definitions are provided here for the convenience of facilitators. Students are expected to understand these key terms as they arise in the context of the task, not to be able to recite the definitions.

¹ Students who need an accommodation may use their preferred tool for writing.

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Purpose: The facilitator’s goal is to help students understand ways in which we use water, practices that waste water, and practices that can conserve water.]

Facilitator says: “Today, in preparation for the Using Water Wisely Performance Task, we are going to talk about water conservation. I’m going to read you some facts about Earth’s water.”

Facilitator says: “About 97 percent of Earth’s water is salt water, most of which is in oceans. The rest of Earth’s water is fresh water found underground, in icecaps/glaciers, lakes, rivers, and the atmosphere. Fresh water can only be replenished through the process of the water cycle, in which water evaporates, forms clouds, and returns as precipitation (rain, sleet, snow, etc.). The amount of fresh water for humans, animals, and plants depends on how water is used. If more fresh water is consumed through human activities than is naturally restored, this may result in reduced fresh water availability. Since fresh water is an important natural resource, preserving both the quality and quantity of our freshwater supplies is important.”

Note: The following section can be modified to accommodate various teacher-student interaction types such as a teacher-led discussion with the entire class, teacher-student discussion for remote locations with a single student, or small groups.]

Facilitator says: “Let’s briefly discuss some of the factors that can impact the **quality** of our freshwater supply. What can negatively impact the quality of our water?”

[Allow time for student responses. Possible responses may include:

- Cleaners, detergents, and fertilizers
- Animal waste and untreated sewage
- Toxic spills (like oil spills, industrial accidents/spills)
- Industrial, Commercial, personal waste/garbage
- Agricultural chemicals]

Facilitator says: “While we know that the quality of fresh water is very important, today we are going to focus our discussion on the **quantity** of fresh water. This is an area on which all of us can have a direct impact. In groups, discuss what it means to waste water.” [Allow time for discussion, and then have groups share what they discussed.]

Facilitator says: “For this performance task, wasting water is defined as water being used in a way that is unnecessary or ineffective.”

Facilitator says: “What are some common ways water is wasted?” [Allow time for student responses.

Possible responses may include:

- leaving the faucet on while brushing our teeth or washing hands/dishes
- leaving the water running until it is warm before showering or taking a bath
- having a leaky faucet or toilet

Facilitator says: “Conserving water means to save water by using less of it. What are some common ways to conserve water?” [Allow time for student responses. Responses may be listed on a board.]

Possible responses may include:

- turning off the water while brushing your teeth
- running full loads of the dishwasher/washing machine
- checking for and fixing leaky pipes
- not leaving the water running when washing dishes
- taking shorter showers
- using low-flow shower heads or faucets
- minimizing/restricting water used on grass, flowers, plants, etc.]

Possible Class Discussion Questions (*unscripted*):

1. Which water-conserving practices would be easy to do? Which would be difficult to do?
2. Do you think more water is used during a shower or a bath? Why do you think so?
3. How many gallons of water do you think you use while showering? How did you come up with your answer?

Facilitator says: “Today, we discussed how we use water, practices that waste water, and practices that can conserve water. These ideas may help you when you complete your performance task.”

Facilitator says: “Are there any questions?” [Allow time for student questions.]

Facilitator says: “You are ready to complete the Using Water Wisely Performance Task.”