Water Grades 4–6

Water is Life: Flash Animation Activity

Students will
• understand that not everyone in the world has access to safe water
• reflect on the ways they use water in their lives
• use media sources to identify key information about natural resources and their uses
• apply critical thinking skills and demonstrate growing social awareness

Related International Dates
• World Water Day (March 22); World Environment Day (June 5)

Preparation
• Preview the flash animation Water is Life included on the DVD in the GEAR resource.
• Read information in the Water is Life: Flash Animation Couplets (page 58). Copy for follow-up activity (one couplet per group).
• Review Quick Facts About Water (page 60). Copy for follow-up activity (one per group).
• Provide laptop and projector for viewing Water is Life flash animation on GEAR DVD.

Instructions
1. Show the Water is Life flash animation. Do not reveal what it is about. Tell the class that the video presents a riddle and they are tasked with solving it. Once they figure it out, ask them to write their answer on a piece of paper, fold it in half and wait until the end of the video to give their answer.

2. After viewing, ask the students what they think the riddle is about. When they say “water”, ask:
   • How do you know it is about water?
   • Did any of the information about water in the flash animation surprise you? Concern you? Puzzle you? (You may need to show the flash animation to them again.)
   • Why do you think the video is called Water is Life? Write the word “water” in a circle on the board and create a web of student responses.

3. Tell the students you are going to focus on one of the statements from the video: One in six people don’t have enough of it; others use it like no one else needs it. Write this statement on the board.

4. Ask students to stand at their desks. Have them number out loud from 1 to 6. Ask all the students numbered 2 through 6 to sit down. The students numbered 1 remain standing. They represent the fraction of people in the world who do not have access to safe water.

5. Repeat the statement. Pause. Read it aloud again, followed by another pause before asking the questions below. Pauses and silences are powerful ways to make a point, and provide time for students to reflect on a concept. Ask the students who are standing to sit.

Discussion
• What are your thoughts when you hear the statement: One in six people don’t have enough of it; others use it like no one else needs it.
• Why is it important to have access to clean and safe water?
• How does your family get its water each day?
• Do you have enough water for your daily needs? Was there ever a time in your life when you did not have enough water or had to conserve water? What did you do?
• Has the water you use ever been unsafe to drink? What was it like? What did you do?

Follow-up Activity
Use the Water is Life: Flash Animation Couplets as a basis for small group work. Ask students to form groups of two or three, assign each group one couplet and give them time to discuss the questions and the quotation. Give each group a copy of Quick Facts About Water. Each “expert” group presents one fact and two ideas to the class inspired by the problem identified in the couplet.
Water is Life: Flash Animation Couplets

1. **It is the basis of all life, yet we fail to respect it.**
   In its smallest form, water is remarkably simple, just three tiny atoms (H₂O—two hydrogen and one oxygen). Yet there exists on Earth an incredibly complex web of life, all dependent on this one incredible molecule.
   - What are the properties of water that allow it to sustain life?
   - In what ways is water the basis for all life?
   - How do humans show their disrespect for water?

   *As children of a culture born in a water-rich environment, we have never really learned how important water is to us. We understand it, but we do not respect it.—William Ashworth*

2. **While we waste it here on our own, we search for it on distant planets.**
   Water is critical to sustaining human life. Scientists have forever been fascinated by the connection between living things and this elixir of life. They have searched in far-off places for evidence of water, desperate to claim that life once existed there or still does. The irony is that the resources we spend to find water on other planets could be used to protect and restore our own sources of water here at home.
   - Where and how have scientists been searching for water in far-off places?
   - What can we do to better manage and protect our water resources on Earth?

   *All the water that will ever be, is right now.*
   —National Geographic (October 1993)

3. **We’ve shared it with ancient dinosaurs, and it will be here long after we’re gone.**
   The amount of water on Earth is all there ever was, and all there will ever be. We drink the same water that someone living long ago drank, and we bathe in the same water that dinosaurs once used. The water cycle ensures that water is continuously recycled or renewed. Water is a timeless resource.
   - If a resource is renewable, can humans use as much of it as we want? Why or why not?
   - Name some key ways that humans can be better stewards (guardians) of their water for future generations.

   *Between Earth and the Earth’s atmosphere, the amount of water remains constant; there is never a drop more, never a drop less. This is a story of circular infinity, of a planet birthing itself.* —Linda Hogan

4. **One in six people don’t have enough of it; others use it like no one else needs it.**
   One billion people on this earth do not have access to safe water. And yet there are people living in water-rich nations who treat water as if it is a limitless resource. The world has declared safe water a priority for development by including it in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
   - What can be done to improve access to safe water in developing countries?
   - What can be done to discourage water over-use and misuse in developed countries?

   *We never know the worth of water till the well is dry.*
   —Thomas Fuller

5. **For many it costs next to nothing, still they spend billions to buy it.**
   In Canada and other industrialized nations, we take safe, clean water for granted. Our tap water is safe to drink and affordable, yet the bottled water industry in Canada is a billion-dollar-a-year industry.
   - The average Canadian uses 335 litres of water each day. How might this compare with the amounts of water used by people in developing countries?
   - Do you think it is a good thing that we drink so much bottled water in Canada? Why or why not?

   *Life has no price, so water has no price.* —Virginia Museo
6. **Some walk hours just for a little; others simply reach out for more than they need.**
Water scarcity has many far-reaching effects. Sometimes it means travelling several kilometres a day in search of water. Other times it means using a water supply that is contaminated or unsafe. The disparities between water-rich countries and water-scarce countries are staggering.
- What would be the impact on families in countries where water is scarce?
- Canada has more than its fair share of the world’s available fresh water. What are some global implications of our water wealth?

   *For many of us, water simply flows from a faucet, and we think little about it beyond this point of contact. We have lost a sense of respect for the wild river, for the complex workings of a wetland, for the intricate web of life that water supports.* —Sandra Postel

7. **Some people argue it’s a basic human right; others claim it and sell it for profit.**
There is much controversy over water. Some people believe it is a basic human right that should be available to all. Others think they have a right to own it. There is a struggle between the public and private sectors over who should be in control of our waters.
- Is water a basic human right for all? Why or why not?
- What could be the results if the world’s fresh water resources were bought and sold for profit by governments or companies?

   *Water has become a highly precious resource. There are some places where a barrel of water costs more than a barrel of oil.* —Lloyd Axworthy

8. **It determines the way we live, without most people even noticing.**
Most of us take for granted the importance of water. Water is not only critical for life and good health, it is also important for a healthy economy.
- Think about all the ways that water has an impact on your daily life. Can you think of any product you use that does not involve water in some part of its production?

9. **It has the power to form a community and the power to start a war.**
Water can be a reason for people to work together, or a reason for people to fight. Some countries have rich water resources, while others have none. Some bodies of water are contained within the boundaries of one country, while others, like the Great Lakes of Canada or Africa, are shared between two or more countries.
- Do you think countries should have ownership over all the water within their borders?
- In the future, do you think wars will be fought over water? If so, how can these wars be prevented?

   *The wars of the future are going to be fought over water.* —Maude Barlow

10. **It gives life. It can take life too. You might even say it is life itself.**
Water is the basis of all life. It sustains all living things on Earth. In Africa, where water is often scarce, there is a saying that “Water is life”.
- How can water give life and take life too?
- What could you do to help shape a future in which there is water for all?

   *There is no substitute for water, this precious liquid so essential to life.* —Vandana Shiva
Quick Facts About Water

1. Worldwide, one billion people lack access to safe drinking water; 2.4 billion to adequate sanitation.

2. Water-related diseases are a growing human tragedy, killing more than five million people each year, 10 times the number of people killed in wars. Every year, 1.8 million people die from diarrheal diseases (including cholera); 90% are children under five, mostly in developing countries.

3. Over the past 10 years, Africa has experienced nearly one-third of all water-related disasters that have occurred worldwide (mostly droughts), with nearly 135 million people affected.

4. The average distance that women in Africa and Asia walk to collect water is six kilometres. The weight of water that these women carry on their heads is equivalent to your airport luggage allowance (20 kilograms).

5. Residential indoor water use in Canada: toilet, 30%; bathing and showering, 35%; laundry, 20%; kitchen use and drinking, 10%; and cleaning, 5%. A five-minute shower with a standard showerhead uses 100 litres of water. A five-minute shower with a low-flow showerhead uses less than 50 litres.

6. About 83% of our blood is water, which helps us digest our food, transport waste and control body temperature.

7. Each day humans must replace 2.4 litres of water, some through drinking and the rest absorbed from the foods we eat. It is recommended that people drink 2 to 3 litres (about 8 glasses) of fluid every day.

8. You can survive about a month without food, but only 5 to 7 days without water.

9. Water is used in the manufacture of almost every product. To make a single car requires about 120,000 litres of water—80,000 to make one tonne of steel and another 40,000 to put it all together. Saving paper saves more than trees: approximately 300 litres of water is required to produce 1 kilogram of paper (one piece of paper from the photocopier represents 1.5 litres of water).

10. Approximately 10 litres of water are required to manufacture one litre of petrol. One drop of oil can contaminate 25 million litres of water and make it unfit for drinking.

11. A single lawn sprinkler spraying 19 litres per minute uses more water in just one hour than 10 toilet flushes, two five-minute showers, two dishwasher loads and a full load of clothes combined.

12. Today, around 3,800 cubic kilometres of fresh water is withdrawn annually from the world’s lakes, rivers and aquifers. This is twice the volume extracted 50 years.

13. Ninety per cent of the 14 billion water bottles sold in the United States in 2002 were not recycled and became landfill.

14. The Great Lakes provide drinking water to 8.5 million Canadians, support 25% of Canada’s agriculture and 45% of Canada’s industry, and contribute $180 billion to Canada–U.S. trade each year.

Sources:
Waste Not, Want Not

Students will
• understand that not everyone in the world has easy access to water
• calculate their approximate daily water use and discuss ways to conserve water
• predict outcomes and solve problems involving collection and analysis of data
• develop a plan of action to address a global problem

Related International Dates
• World Water Day (March 22); Environment Week (1st week of June)

Preparation
• Collect materials: 2 buckets of water totalling 15 litres, 2 large tubs for “waste” water, one-litre graduated measuring cup or bottle, washbasin.
• Copy class sets of World Water Use Fact Sheet (page 63) and Down the Drain: Personal Water Use Chart (page 64).

Note: This activity is done as a demonstration because of the large amount of water and materials needed. It could also work as a station that students rotate through or as a group activity if you have access to enough supplies. Choose a location where water spillage will not pose a problem (e.g. outdoors).

Instructions
1. Set up water, tubs, measuring cup and washbasin. Ask for three volunteers to help with this activity. Tell the class to imagine they have just collected their personal daily water supply (15 litres) in a bucket. Some people walk long distances to get their water. Ask them about the weight of the water. Can they imagine carrying the full bucket one kilometre? Two kilometres? More? Ask for volunteers to test the weight of a small bucket of water by carrying it around the classroom, down the hallway and back, or around the outside of the school.

2. The 15 litres of “clean” water is all they have for one day. Explain that whenever water is “used,” it goes into the wastewater container. List on the board or chart paper the following water uses typical of the daily needs for families in water-scarce countries:
   1. Making porridge for breakfast
   2. Washing dishes
   3. Washing some clothes
   4. Drinking water for you and your three children
   5. Drinking water for your cow and chickens
   6. Watering your garden, where you grow vegetables and fruit to feed your family
   7. Bathing the children
   8. Taking a bath yourself after a hard working day

3. Students suggest how much water should be used for each activity on the list. The class comes to a consensus around each amount. Try using a voting procedure such as Fist to Five (page 40). The volunteers then measure out the water, transferring from the “clean” water supply to the wastewater container. The goal is to be strategic in using the supply so that all the daily activities can be fulfilled. Encourage students to think of ways to “recycle” the waste water.

Discussion
• Did you have enough water? If not, at what point did you run out of water? If you did have enough water, how did you make sure there was enough?
• Did you or can you think of a way to conserve fresh water? (e.g. reuse/recycle wastewater for other purposes)
• Which tasks do you consider to be the most important? Why?
• What is the minimum amount of water a person needs to bathe? In some parts of the world, people wash themselves using only 250 millilitres of water.
• How much water do we use in Canada to accomplish the same tasks?
Extension Activity: Down the Drain

1. Ask students to create individual mind maps, webs or charts that illustrate at least 10 uses of water in their daily lives. Share ideas with a partner and add any uses that were left out. Predict which activities would use the most and least water and rank them in number order on their charts.

2. Hand out Down the Drain: Personal Water Use Chart (page 64) to each student. Review the chart and have students complete all sections. Collect all responses and calculate the class average for daily personal water use.


Discussion

- How did your predictions of daily water use compare to your calculations?
- Which three activities use the most water? Which use the least?
- Look at the World Water Use Fact Sheet. How does the class average compare with the average for Canadians and people in other countries?
- Do Canadians use too much water? Why do people in some countries use less? How can Canadians decrease the amount of water we use?
- As a water-rich country, debate whether or not Canada should share its water resources (this could be a journal assignment).
# World Water Use

## Fact Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Domestic Water Use¹ (Average water use in litres/day/person)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


² Domestic water consumption includes the quantity of water used for household purposes such as washing, food preparation and bathing: http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/
## Down the Drain: Personal Water Use Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average # of times activity is done each day</td>
<td>Estimated water use in litres</td>
<td>Total daily water use in litres</td>
<td>Rank daily water use from most (#1) to least (#11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking a shower (10 minutes with standard shower head)</td>
<td>200 (20/min)</td>
<td>90 (9/min)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking a shower (10 minutes with low-flow shower head)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking a bath</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brushing teeth (water running)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flushing the toilet (standard flow toilet)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flushing the toilet (low-flow toilet)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing dishes by hand</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running a dishwasher</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing a load of laundry</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watering lawn</td>
<td>1136</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing car</td>
<td>190</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL Daily Water Use by Household Member (litres)**

Sources:
1. Children’s Water Education Council: [www.cwec.ca](http://www.cwec.ca)
2. Environment Canada: [www.ec.gc.ca](http://www.ec.gc.ca)
3. Water Partners International: [www.water.org](http://www.water.org)
**Water**  
**Grades 4–6**

**DVD Activity**  
**Safe Water for All**

**Students will**  
- understand how water scarcity impacts the lives of people in a community  
- use critical thinking skills to analyze cause and effect relationships  
- engage in problem solving and hypothesizing

**Related International Dates**  
- World Water Day (March 22); International Development Week (1st week of February)

**Preparation**  
- Provide a world map to locate Niger.  
- Preview the Safe Water for All DVD and cue for viewing.  
- Copy two class sets of Safe Water Cause and Effect Web (page 66) plus one copy for overhead.

**Instructions**

1. To begin this activity, refer back to the Rights activities from Section II (if the class did these). Find the right that deals with food and safe water.

2. Hand out blank cause and effect webs. In pairs, students brainstorm ways their lives would be affected if they did not have access to safe water. In the centre square, students write: “Not enough clean water”. The effects of this “cause” are written in the web emanating from the centre square. Some effects will have secondary effects or impacts. See Sample Safe Water Cause and Effect Web (page 67). Collect ideas on an overhead copy of the blank web.

3. Instruct students to set aside their webs to revisit later. Tell them they will be watching a video about water, set in Niger in western Africa. Locate Niger on a world map and explain that it is a landlocked country with a very hot and dry climate. Niger is prone to long periods of drought in which people cannot grow enough food.

4. Zalifa and Abida are two children featured in the video. They live in two different villages in Niger, both of which have problems with access to safe water. Ask students to predict the ways Zalifa and Abida and their communities may be affected by lack of access to safe water. Instruct them to write down any effects they see when watching the video. Show the class the Safe Water for All DVD.

**Discussion**

- What did you learn from the video? What surprised you?  
- What questions do you have?  
- Zalifa’s village does not have easy access to safe water. What is the impact on her village?  
- The new well has improved life in Abida’s village. What have been the positive effects of having clean water?  
- How do your predictions compare with the video?  
- At the end of the video, a man says: “Water is everyone’s companion, everyone’s friend”. What does he mean?  
- Finish the discussion on water with the Rainstorm team building game (page 12).

**Cause and Effect Webs for Zalifa and Abida**

1. In partners, ask half the class to fill in a blank cause and effect web for Zalifa, and the other half for Abida. The “cause” for Zalifa will be “Lack of easy access to safe water” and the “cause” for Abida will be “A new borehole well and lots of clean water”. Obviously, the effects for Zalifa will be negative, for Abida positive. See Sample Zalifa and Abida Webs (page 68).

2. Pairs join to make groups of four, with one web for each of Zalifa and Abida between them. In groups discuss the differences between the two webs.

3. Still working in groups of four, create a poster that promotes the importance of water conservation. Create a public poster display for everyone in the school to see. Time this school awareness event with World Water Day on March 22. Consider running a poster contest for the whole school.
Reproducible Master

**Safe Water Cause and Effect Web**

![Diagram of a cause and effect web for safe water]
Sample Safe Water Cause and Effect Web

CAUSE
Not enough clean water

Effects

Bad for environment
Costs a lot of money
Get sick and have to visit a doctor
Get sick and can't go to school

Have to buy bottled water
Might have to drink unsafe water

Effects

Poor harvest for farmers means less local food available
Lawns and gardens would dry out

Effects

Can't water lawns, gardens and farms
Take fewer showers or baths

Effects

Take fewer showers or baths
Might get sick from poor hygiene

Effects

Get sick and can't go to school
Might have to drink unsafe water

Effects

Have to buy bottled water
Might have to drink unsafe water

Effects

No enough clean water
Get sick and have to visit a doctor
Get sick and can't go to school

Effects

Bad for environment
Costs a lot of money

Effects

Get sick and have to visit a doctor
Get sick and can't go to school

Have to buy bottled water
Might have to drink unsafe water

CAUSE
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Effects

Poor harvest for farmers means less local food available
Lawns and gardens would dry out

Effects

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Effects

Get sick and can't go to school
Might have to drink unsafe water

Have to buy bottled water
Might have to drink unsafe water

Effects

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Effects

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Get sick and can't go to school

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Effects

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Get sick and can't go to school

Have to buy bottled water
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Not enough clean water

Effects

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Effects

Can't water lawns, gardens and farms
Take fewer showers or baths

Effects

Get sick and can't go to school
Might have to drink unsafe water


Sample Zalifa and Abida Webs

**CAUSE**
Zalifa’s village lacks easy access to safe water

- No time for school
- Gets tired
- No time for play or other activities
- She walks a long way to get water
- She drinks unsafe water

- Costs money they don’t have
- Misses school
- Gets sick with diarrhea or guinea worm

**Effects**

- Plants and animals die
- Not enough food
- Poor sanitation
- Infection and disease, (e.g. trachoma, an eye disease)

**CAUSE**
Abida’s village has a new borehole well and lots of clean water

- Abida can go to school and has time to do homework
- Women can start businesses
- Abida and other village women walk a short distance to get water
- Village leaders have time and energy to plan other ways to improve the village (e.g. building a medical clinic in the village)

- Time for play and other activities
- Everyone can drink safe water
- Enough water to use for other purposes

**Effects**

- Enough water for animals or crops
- Plants and animals are healthy
- Plenty of food
- Adults and children are healthier
- Can wash properly and stay clean
- Can make bricks to build houses
- Sanitation improves
- Fewer diseases
- People no longer get sick with diarrhea or guinea worm

**Effects**

- Plants and animals are healthy
- Plenty of food
- Adults and children are healthier
- Can wash properly and stay clean
- Can make bricks to build houses
- Sanitation improves
- Fewer diseases
- People no longer get sick with diarrhea or guinea worm
Splitting Images

**Students will**
- understand that some children have limited school resources
- perceive, respond to and reflect on visual images
- use prior knowledge to make inferences
- compare Canadian society with the society of a developing country

**Related International Dates**
- International Literacy Day (September 8); World Teacher’s Day (October 5)

**Preparation**
- Photocopy class sets of the *Splitting Images Photo* (left side) (page 71) and the *Splitting Images Photo* (right side) (page 72).
- Read *About Malawi* (page 70) for background reference.
- Provide coloured pencils and markers.

**Instructions**
1. Give each student a copy of the *Splitting Images Photo* (left side). This photo features a teacher standing at a blackboard. Do not reveal any background information about the photo. Ask students to hypothesize what the missing part of the photo might look like. Instruct them to brainstorm possible responses and questions prompted by the split photo and to write them across the top or on the back of their paper.

2. Ask students to choose one of their ideas and complete the photo by drawing the missing half on the blank part of the paper.

3. When all the drawings are completed, have students form groups of four and share their completed drawings. Look for similarities and differences in their drawn predictions.

4. Distribute a copy of the *Splitting Images Photo* (right side) to each group. Explain that the scene is a typical school classroom in Malawi, Africa. Provide students with information from the *About Malawi* fact sheet.

5. Compare the group drawings with the actual missing piece of the photo. *Option: Cut the missing right side of the photo into puzzle pieces and get the groups to put the puzzle together.*

**Discussion**
- Compare your prediction with the actual picture. What is in the missing photo piece that you did not expect?
- What common elements show up in the drawings of your group members? What assumptions did you make and why?
- In what ways is the schooling experience of these children different from yours?
- What would it be like to go to a school like this one? Can young people learn effectively in such an environment? If yes, explain why. If no, what do they need to improve their learning situation?
About Malawi

Malawi is a beautiful country nicknamed “the warm heart of Africa” because the people are so friendly. Tourists visit Malawi to see its national parks where there are leopards, elephants, zebras and other animals.

The country is home to about 12.8 million people, with 90 per cent of them depending on agriculture to make a living. Most people live in rural areas, growing enough maize to feed their families plus a little extra to sell.

There are two seasons each year—a wet season from November to March and a dry season from April to October. For four months during the dry season there is no rain at all, so farmers can usually only plant and grow their crops during the wet season. Some years there is a drought when the rains hardly come at all, so the maize crops fail.

The country has had a long drought in recent years, with up to 25 per cent of people experiencing food shortages for six to nine months of the year.

Malawi is a very poor country. The main crops are tobacco, sugar cane and tea. There are tobacco, tea, cement and cotton factories in Lilongwe and Blantyre cities.

There are a number of health risks in Malawi. Hunger, protein deficiency and diarrhea cause many problems, especially for young children. Many people get sick because they don’t have clean drinking water. Mosquitoes carry malaria, a disease which causes ongoing chills and fevers. Malawi’s main health problem is HIV and AIDS, which affects 14 per cent of the adult population.\(^1\)


Newspapers are published in the main cities but about 40 per cent of adults cannot read or write. There are more than 2.6 million radios tuning into 15 radio stations. The main language spoken in Malawi is Chichewa but most people who have been to school can speak some English.

Religion is important to people and around 90 per cent of people in Malawi go to a church or a mosque.

Most of the countryside has no electricity so people use firewood for cooking. Mobile phones outnumber telephones, because the telephone system is limited to towns. Offices in the cities use computers.

Malawi was ruled by Britain from 1878 until 1964. In 1964, the country became independent from Britain and was ruled by a dictator, President Hastings Kamuu Banda. In 1994, it became a democracy, with an elected government and elections held every five years.
Is There Enough for Everyone?

Students will
- understand that resources, such as access to education and appropriate school supplies, are not distributed equally
- apply critical thinking skills to a selected problem

Related International Dates
- International Literacy Day (September 8); World Teacher’s Day (October 5); International Development Week (1st week of February); Global Campaign for Education: Global Action Week (4th week of April)

Preparation
- Place two piles of papers and pencils at the front of the class: one pile with four pencils and four pieces of paper (or a number equivalent to 1/8 of your class), and one pile with 28 pencils and 28 pieces of paper (or a number equivalent to 7/8 of your class).
- Preview Education Facts (page 74) for background information.

Instructions
1. Divide the class into two groups: a small group (1/8 of your class) and a large group (7/8 of your class). Tell the larger group to sit in an area that is 1/8 of the classroom area (i.e. approximately four desks). It will be crowded and students cannot move, so they will have to sit on the floor if necessary. The smaller group sits in the remaining (and larger) area of the classroom.

2. Tell the class that they will be taking a spelling test. Explain that this test is important and their marks will be recorded. They will be given six dictation words and must write their individual answers on the paper provided to them.

3. Distribute the large pile of paper and pencils to the smaller group and the small pile of paper and pencils to the larger group. Give students time to divide the supplies. At this point the larger group will realize their disadvantage.

4. Dictate spelling words (e.g. education, resources, share, group, problem, etc.) at a challenging pace but a speed at which students in the small group will do well. Respond to objections from the large group by telling them to do their best with what they have. Do not allow them to leave their places.

5. Collect the papers, keeping those from the small group on top. Scan the papers in front of the class and announce who passed. Congratulate the small group members for passing. Reveal that this was a simulation and not a real spelling test.

Discussion
- How did you feel doing this simulation?
- What words describe the situation that was created? (e.g. unfair, unjust)
- Did you try to do anything to balance the situation? What did you do?
- What does this activity demonstrate?
- How is learning affected when children don’t have access to schools, teachers or enough school supplies? What might be the long-term effects of this on children and communities?
Education Facts

Facts

- About 90 million primary school-aged children worldwide are not in school.
- In many countries, fewer than three out of 10 students complete primary school.
- The amount of money needed to provide education for all primary school-aged children is US$10 billion. The amount Americans spend on ice cream each year is US$20 billion.
- Girls have less access to education than boys: 57% of children not in primary school are girls. Only 2% of disabled children in developing countries receive education.
- In the 1980s, when South Africa was under apartheid, black South Africans made up 7/8 of the population but received only 1/8 of the government’s budget for education. The rest went to white South Africans. (Note: Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has become one of the highest spending countries on education.)


Why can’t all kids go to school?

School is expensive—A child needs school supplies such as pencils, paper and books. In some places, there are fees simply to attend school. Some schools require that students purchase and wear a uniform.

Kids work—Some kids have to work to help their families earn an income or simply survive. Some spend hours each day just collecting water or firewood. Some spend hours each day collecting water or firewood. Some look after younger siblings or do household chores such as cleaning and cooking. They don’t have time to go to school or, if they do, to complete their homework.

War—When there is a war, some kids can’t go to school because it’s unsafe, so they stay at home. Sometimes families have to move because of war, and kids have to leave school to go with their families.

Not enough teachers—In some countries, there are 40, 80 or even 100 students in one classroom with only one teacher! And sometimes that teacher has not had the opportunity to be trained well.