

CYCLE 2 PERSUASIVE WRITING RESOURCE: THE GLOBAL WATER CRISIS

INTRODUCTION TO GLOBAL WATER SCARCITY

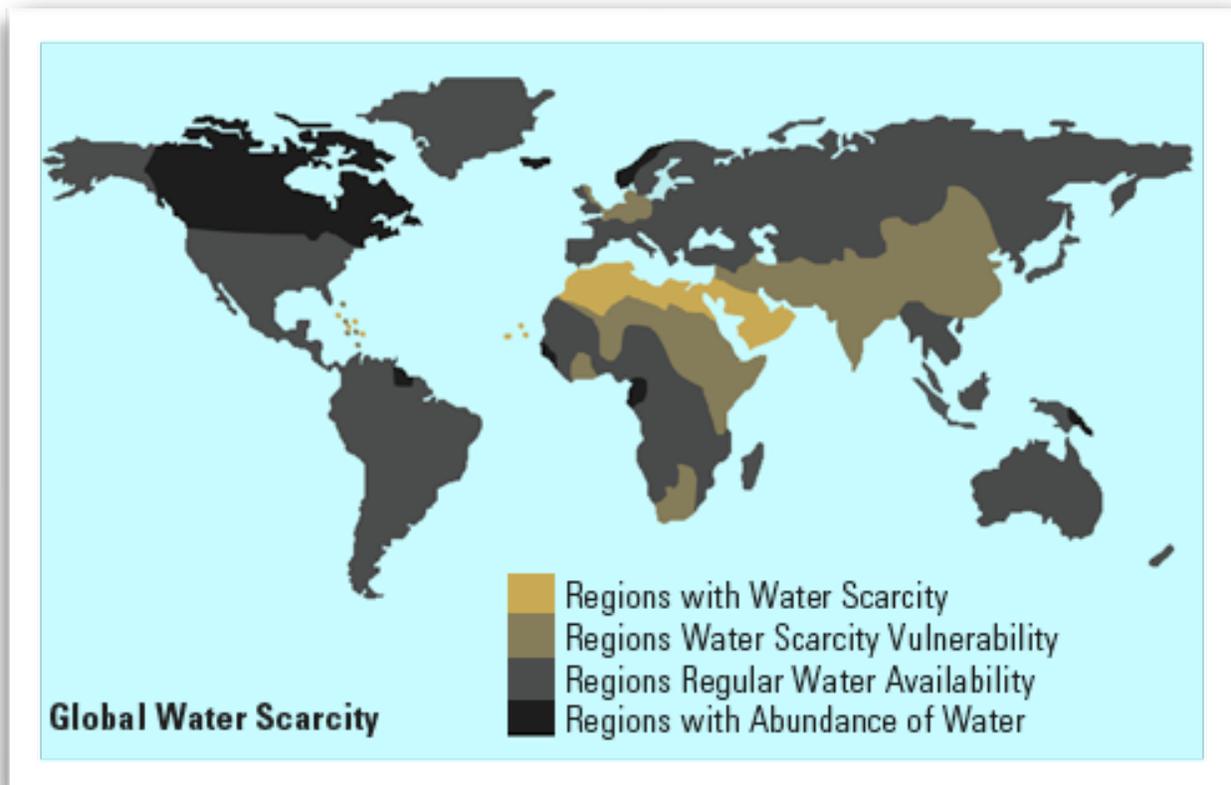
For many people, water has never been a big story in their lives. This is because they live in communities that have good water supply systems. They turn on the tap and clean water flows, everyday of the year. This makes it very difficult for people to appreciate how precious water is.

Water is life. Plants, animals and humans all depend on this invaluable natural resource for life. Besides this, water is used in moving waste, cleaning and sanitation, manufacturing, construction and farming. Almost every human activity you can think of involves some use of water.

Water covers more than 70% of the earth's surface, so how can there ever be scarcity?

Less than 3% of water on earth is fresh water, and the bulk of this is trapped in snowfields and glaciers and not easily accessible. The rest form the seas and oceans and cannot be used in the same way as fresh water. Only a tiny fraction (0.014%) is surface water in the form of rivers, lakes and swamps.

Naturally, the 3% should be enough for all humans and animals on earth, but unfortunately, many factors have caused a major upset in the flow and use of fresh water and has caused massive crisis in many regions of the earth.



But why should you care?

We should care because a lot of the factors that cause water scarcity are broadening and becoming more complex and uncontrollable. This means if we do nothing in terms of preserving and using it wisely, it is only a matter of time that all regions shall begin to experience water crisis and all the repercussions that come with it.

Did you know...

Experts say that a person in a developed country having a five-minute shower uses more water than the average person in a developing country slum uses for an entire day.

CAUSES OF WATER SCARCITY

Here are some important causes of water shortage:

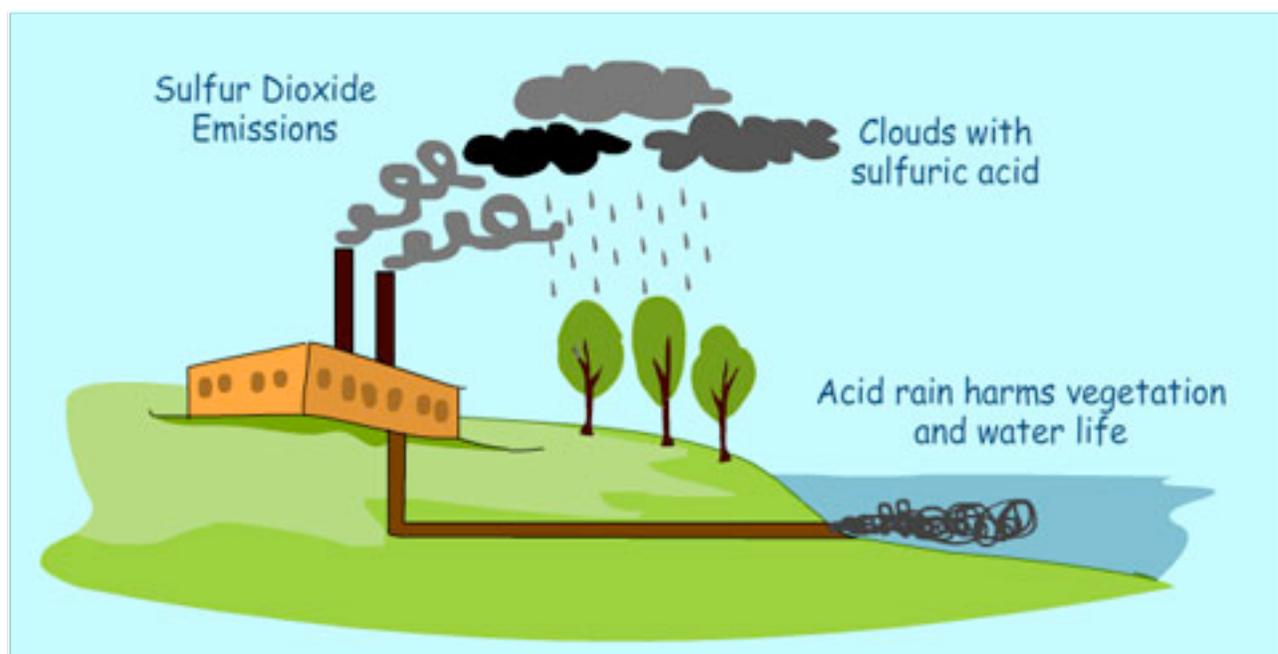
Population expansion

Just 50 years ago, the total number of people on earth has doubled and continues to grow. This is a result of larger family sizes and access to better health care and lifestyles. This means that use of wholesome water for drinking, cleaning, cooking and sewage has tripled. Humans are a lot more careless in recent time, and we waste more water than ever before. This has placed a lot of pressure on the same amount of water that we have.

Urbanization

Cities are growing and expanding more than ever before. Cities also tend to hold more people than towns and villages. This means there an increased need to take care of sewage, cleaning, construction and manufacturing.

Pollution



Water, air and land pollution together contribute to the reduction of water quality. Sewage, oil discharges from industries, waste dumping into water bodies, radioactive waste from mining activities as well as dirty water from sanitation work in hospitals, hotels, oil companies, mining, schools and restaurants all end up polluting our waters. Water contamination and wastage from some mining industries through Hydraulic Fracturing (fracking) has also been a worry for many people.

● **Vegetation destruction and Deforestation**

Trees help prevent excessive evaporation or water bodies. They also enrich and condition the climate. This means the destruction of forests by fire, logging and farming has exposed soil moisture and water bodies to the sun's intense heat, leaving them dried out.

● **Climate change**

All over the world, places that used to have lots of rainfall do not have enough again and dry places suddenly are getting colder and wetter. Both cases result in clean water shortage because less rainfall means less water, and excessive rains cause flooding and which brings all sorts of debris and destroy water treatment installations.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF WATER SHORTAGES?

The effects of water scarcity can be grouped into these 4 broad areas— Health, Hunger, Education and Poverty.

Health

● In many developing countries, people are forced to drink low quality water from flowing streams, many of which are contaminated. There are many water-borne disease that people die of.



● Less water also means sewage does not flow, and mosquitoes or other insects breed on still (stagnant) dirty water. The result is the deadly malaria and other infections.

● Lack of water or quality water causes huge sanitation issues. Clinics, local restaurants, public places of convenience and many other places are forced to use very little water for cleaning. This compromises the health of the staff and people who use the facilities.

Hunger

It takes a lot of water to grow food and care for animals. Experts say that globally we use 70% of our water sources for agriculture and irrigation, and only 10% on domestic uses. Less water means farming and other crops that need water to grow have lower yield. It means farm animals will die and others will not do well without water. The result is constant hunger and thirst and low quality of life.

Education

It is a bit hard to see how water and education is related. For many people in other parts of the world children (and teen girls) have to be up at dawn to collect water for the family. They have to walk for several miles to get water. The children get tired and some have to miss school as a result. Doing this for many years take away school times and the cycle continues. In other places girls and women are not allowed to go to school at all, so that they can serve the family by getting water and and taking care of other family needs.

Poverty

Access to quality water is key to economic prosperity and better living standards. Businesses and schools thrive when people come to work on time and not have to spend all morning looking for water. Restaurants, hotels and shopping places need to keep clean to attract tourists and foreign investments. Manufacturing activities, commercial farms, and mining processes all need a lot of water to thrive. Lack of water means no economic activities will happen and the people will be in constant poverty.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN WATER PRESERVATION?

Sometimes the magnitude of a problem can make one feel that there is nothing that can be done. But there is a lot you can do for water. There is a high chance that people reading this do not live in water deprived areas, and may think it is not their problem. Here is what you can do to help.

● Awareness

Learn about water crisis, just like you are doing. If you understand a problem, you are in a better position to have a solution. Talk about it with family and friends. Look out for news and facts on water shortages and crisis areas.

● Take part

Be part of competitions, organizations and societies that aim to preserve and defend natural resources including water. Speak to you parents about donating or helping out charity grouped to provide water to the most needy places.

● Use water wisely

Never assume that your society is too advanced to experience water shortage. If we do not acquire the right attitude towards water, it is only a matter of time and one day there will be a shortage. Keep the tap off when not in use. Minimize the flushing of toilets and bath times. In effect, anything that you can do to save water, do it.

● Industries and Governments

Join pressure groups that stop individuals, industries and governments from cutting down trees and doing other things that pollute and degrade the environment.

WATER SCARCITY FACT-SHEET

Agriculture

● Agriculture is by far the biggest user of water, accounting for almost 70 percent of all withdrawals, and up to 95 % in developing countries.

● The water needed for crops amounts to 1000-3000 cubic meter per ton of cereal harvested. Put another way, it takes 1—3 tons of water to grown 1kg of cereal.

● The daily drinking-water requirements per person are 2-4 liters. However, it takes 2000—5000 liters of water to produce a person's daily food.

Food Security

● Between now and 2030, the world's population is expected to grow by 2 billion people. Feeding this growing population and reducing hunger will only be possible if agricultural yields can be increased significantly and sustainably.

● With so much of the Earth's water being used for agriculture, it is clear that an improvement in the management of agricultural water becomes key to the achievement of global food security.

Water

● One out of every three people is affected by water scarcity. Water researchers believe that the problem is getting worse with urbanization, population growth, industrialization and competitive commercial activities.

● Almost one fifth of the world's population (about 1.2 billion people) live in areas where the water is physically scarce. One quarter of the global population also live in developing countries that face water shortages due to a lack of infrastructure to fetch water from rivers and aquifers.

● In many poor and rural communities, people use waste-water to water their crops and farms because there is water shortage or scarcity. It is believed that 10% of all the foods we eat come from crops cultivated by wastewater. These can contain chemicals or disease-causing organisms.

