

Exploring the Role of Water in Our Lives

Grades 3-5

Overview

Drinking water and beverages is important to maintain and replenish body fluid levels. Beverages can support children with the nutrients they need to grow, play and learn. This lesson activity encourages students to explore the importance of water for all living things, and to reflect on the role water plays in our food system.

What Students Will Learn

- Students will reflect on and describe the importance of water for their lives and for all living things.
- Students will explore the uses of water in our food system.
- Students will begin to reflect on and describe the challenges faced by some people and communities that do not have regular access to clean, safe drinking water.

Time



40 minutes - 1.5 hours (may vary by grade and if extension activities are included)

Materials

- Pencil/Pen
- Story Writing Activity Sheet
- Eating Water Matching Activity (optional – Grade 5)



Curricular Links

- Physical & Health Education
- Science
- English Language Arts

BC Curriculum Competencies 3-5

- Identify and describe factors that influence health choices
- Make observations about living and non-living things in the local environment
- Identify First Peoples perspectives and knowledge as sources of information
- Use writing to plan, develop, and create texts for a variety of purposes and audiences

TEACHING TIP

Canada's food guide promotes water as the drink of choice and also recognizes other nutrient-rich beverages, such as milk and fortified soy beverage as hydration options. However, it is important to be neutral about drink choices because many factors influence students' access to and preference for different beverages.

Role of Water in Our Lives Activities

1. Discuss as a class where our water comes from, the role of water in our lives, and its importance for all living things.

Just like we need food to grow, learn and play, humans need water to grow and be well. Water is also important for many of our day to day activities.

Educator prompts:

- What do we use water for most days? (e.g. to drink, bathe, wash our hands, brush our teeth, wash our food, cook our food). How does our water use change with the seasons?
- What and how do other living things need water? (e.g. forests, meadows, wild animals, farm plants and animals, birds, water-based plants and animals- to drink, to grow, to cool off, to live in/eat from).

2. Together as a class brainstorm the ways that water can be used in our food system.

Discuss how water can be used to grow, transport, prepare, eat and dispose of food-related waste. For example, we need water to grow plants on farms, for animals to drink, to spray food at the grocery store to keep it fresh, to wash foods to make them safe to eat, for preparing and cooking food, for washing dishes and using the bathroom.

3. Build on the discussion about the importance of water in our lives by having students reflect on the fact that not everyone in Canada has regular access to safe drinking water.

For example, some people and communities do not have access to water, the water is unsafe to drink or there are Boil Water or Do Not Consume Advisories. If there is a Boil Water Advisory, water that has not been boiled cannot be used for drinking, cooking, washing fruits and vegetables, brushing teeth, or giving to animals to drink.

Note for Navigating Water Talk: Be sensitive to and respectful of your students' diverse experiences and their community, family, socioeconomic and cultural contexts, and the influence these factors have on beverage access and choice (including, for example, pop, fruit drinks, and bottled water). For tips to help you navigate issues related to the inherently sensitive topic of food and nutrition, visit teachfoodfirst.ca.

4. Have students write a short story, using the story writing activity sheet, of what a day in their life would look like if they didn't have access to water for drinking or daily activities (e.g. the taps have stopped working).

Get students to consider how they would have to do things differently in their daily lives without easy access to water. Have students reflect on how much water they would typically use throughout the day.

- What type of changes would they have to make?
- What would they find difficult?
- What would they miss the most?

5. After students have completed their story, come back together as a class and provide students with the opportunity to share their stories.

Grade Specific Considerations:

- **Grade 3:** As a class, explore different foods that have been dried to remove water from them (e.g. dried fruit, dried meat). Discuss with students why we dry or dehydrate foods in this way (e.g. to preserve or extend shelf life, to use as ingredients for cooking). Explore students' experiences with these foods (e.g. which have they tried, what is the texture, colour etc. compared to the undried food, do they like the foods – why or why not?)
- **Grade 4:** Expand on the use of water in food system discussion activity by having students, working in pairs or groups, write and/or draw the “water-story” of a specific food (e.g. water use of a root vegetable from field to table, to make pasta).
- **Grade 5:** As a class, discuss the fact that we also get water from other beverages and the foods we eat (e.g. other beverages and many foods we eat contain water and help our body get the fluid it needs). Have students (or as a class) complete the Eating Water Matching Activity, and follow-up with a discussion considering and describing traits common in foods that have higher water content (e.g. texture, storage, preparation for eating).

Extension Activities

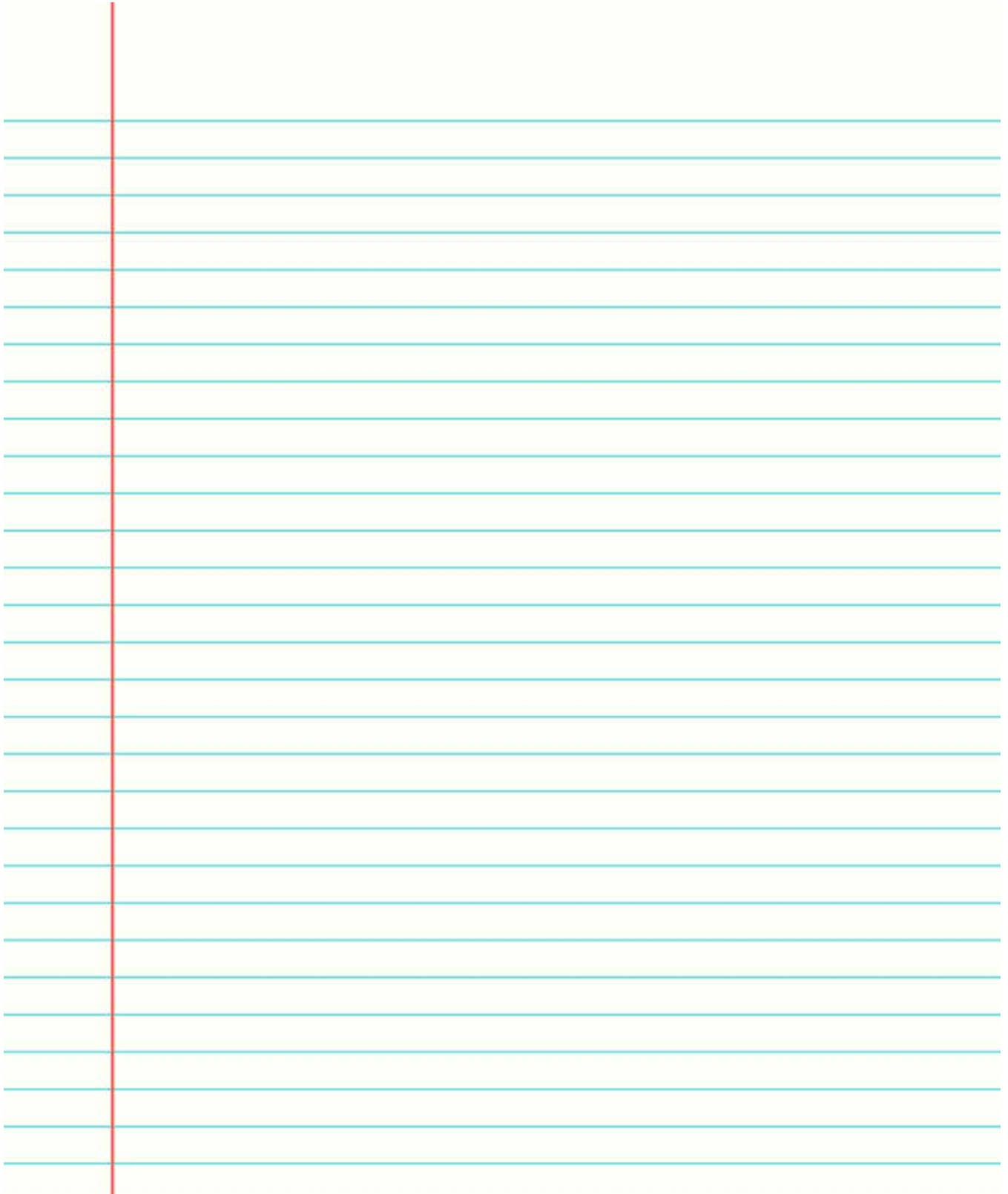
- As a class, grow two plants together from a seed. Water one plant regularly and don't water the other plant. Have students observe and describe the changes in the plants over time (e.g. colour of the leaves, size, rigidity). Discuss further the importance of water for the growth of all living things.

Additional Resources

- [Teach Food First: An Educator's Toolkit for Exploring Canada's Food Guide](#)
- [Drinking Water Advisories; Ending Long-Term Drinking Water Advisories](#)
- Books: [Search for Clean Water](#) ; [Nibi's Water Song](#)

Story Writing Activity

Write a short story of what a day in your life would look like if you did not have access to water.



Eating Water Matching Activity - Answer Key

HIGHEST



LOWEST

Water

Milk/fortified soy beverage

Cooked squash

Fruit Juice

Yogurt

Cooked corn

Cooked rice

Salmon

Ground Beef

Pizza

Bread

Biscuits

Raisins

Nuts
