

Southern Water

WaterWise Teaching Resource



Down the drain

Subjective literature

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1

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Contents

Resources

Resources are downloadable for easy access and ease of use

- Teachers' notes
- Help for pupils
- Preparing for the debate: pupils' tasks
- Newspaper items
- Interest Group statements
- How to be persuasive



Overview

Pupils should be given a selection of subjective newspaper items and headlines that they can use or develop.

They should also be given the statements issued by the Interest Groups during the Introductory Session.

They should use these materials, plus any others of their own, to help present their case.

Citizenship at key stages 3 and 4

Getting involved: extending opportunities for pupil participation

Adapted from QCA Schemes of Work for Citizenship Key Stages 3 & 4)

- **5. Environmental Projects: Campaigning/advocacy**

Pupils identify issues of concern or interest to them within the context of the project.

They undertake research to inform and present their views.

For example, pupils can campaign for measures to protect the safety of residents and the local environment; they can suggest promotional activities on behalf of the Water Company; they may enhance their argument by designing leaflets and T-shirts; they should research local press for articles that support their campaign.

- **6. Involvement in local community forums**

Pupils are working towards establishing a youth forum to discuss real local issues and contribute to decision-making about local priorities. The local authority can be invited to respond to these views. Pupils are able to address issues such as legal and human rights, and to research topical political, as well as, moral and social issues.

Pupils can publish a newsletter on community issues or citizenship curriculum materials.

- **8. International activities**

Pupils can create links with pupils from other European countries to discuss environmental issues in an international context (see also Model United Nations meetings www.una-uk.org; or Model Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings www.commonwealth.org.uk).

School linking

Unit 17 'School linking' provides details of how schools can establish links with other schools in this country or other countries, and outlines learning activities in the context of the citizenship programmes of study.



Preparing for the debate

You need to inform the other groups about your point of view regarding the building of the new wastewater treatment works at Richardford.

You can form partnerships/ alliances with other groups to 'get your message' across.

To strengthen your argument or position you can use local material that you have found during your research or any of the information on this site. Remember that the way you present your message can make a difference and influence others.

Newspaper reports

Newspaper articles are a good way of getting your message across. They can include photos, diagrams, maps, and interviews from people who support you.

Promotional leaflets

Promotional leaflets are also useful to tell people about your opinions. Like newspapers they can include photos, diagrams, maps, and interviews from people who support you.

Getting your views across

How will you persuade others to listen to your point of view?

How will you get your message across?

Look at these hints on how to be persuasive.

Tasks

Task 1

Collect some examples of newspaper headings and written articles about local issues. Look at how the journalists are trying to 'inform' you.

Do you agree with what the journalists have written?

Why?

Were the journalists good at persuading you to agree with them?

How did they do that?

Task 2

Look at the headlines or news items given in this section.

Use them as starting points for newspaper items or promotional leaflets for your group.

You can use items from any of the groups listed to help you support or defend your case, or express your Interest Group's opinions.

Task 3

Look at the statements of the Interest Groups.

Add these to your leaflets or newspaper items to help or defend your case.

Task 4

Photos, images and diagrams are useful tools to add to your work.

Look at the Clip Art section and see if there is anything you can use.



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Examples of Press Releases and Statements put out by the different interest groups.

Water Company

'A Natural Balance'

Water Company promises to safeguard and improve local area

Southern Water has recently applied to the County Council for planning permission for a new wastewater treatment plant.

Its priority is to meet the requirements of the European bathing water legislation and protect the local marine environment.

The new site will make a significant contribution to cleaner seas by using the latest technology. "This multimillion-pound plant will ensure water is cleaner for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors to the area," said the Company's managing director, who was visiting this site with a team of professional engineers, environmental scientists, landscape architects and town planners yesterday. "This new plant will meet European environmental quality standards by providing the most advanced biological treatment facilities within the European Union".

Other headings that you might like to use to strengthen your argument or express your point of view:

Investment by the water industry means that the UK now enjoys the best bathing water ever.

Water turns 'green' as Industry introduces recycling policy

Don't flush it!
Bag it and Bin It!
Help us, help you.

Local Residents

Selling food to the public that has literally been grown on sewage, has to be the marketing challenge of the millennium!

Local residents were today up in arms when they heard that local sewage from the new treatment plant would be recycled as fertiliser for local farms.

"We are not talking of land-fill sites," said local spokesman Geoff Clarke, "the intention is turn the sewage sludge into what is claimed to be a high quality fertiliser. What we want to know is this. Is the product safe to be spread on agricultural and animal grazing land? What are likely to be the long-term effects of eating food crops grown on this land? What are likely to be the long term effects of eating animal produce and meat grazed on this land?"



Other headings that you might like to use to strengthen your argument or express your point of view:

Blot on the landscape

Increased works traffic adds to pollution problem

House prices set to slump as plans for new wastewater treatment plant go ahead

Local Council

Local investment improves job prospects for unemployed.

Southern water is planning to build a new multimillion-pound treatment plant that will provide much needed employment for local people. Commenting on the Water Company's recent application for planning permission, Councillor Barbara Mullins reaffirmed the Council's position. "Local job prospects are our priority at the moment," she said, "and this sort of investment is something we desperately need for local businesses and people."

When asked about the possible effects on local residents, the Councillor gave her assurances that any disruption to local roads or potential nuisances such as construction noise would be queried and dealt with. However, she added that the Council is keen to see wastewater treated as effectively as possible, indicating the Council's positive attitude towards the project.

Other headings that you might like to use to strengthen your argument or express your point of view:

Plans in pipeline for major new development

Council hopes that new wastewater treatment plant will have long term international importance

Tourist Board

Bag it and bin it, please don't flush it!

The careless disposal of personal items like cotton buds, sanitary items and condoms is threatening our local beauty spots and our local tourist industry that depends on it.

So remember -

Bag it and bin it, please don't flush it!



'Blue is the colour'

Every year we welcome thousands of holidaymakers to our coastal towns but each year that number gets less and less. Many with young families have listened to the scare-mongering stories about the dirty beaches around our coastline. If the new wastewater treatment plant goes ahead however, it could be celebrations all round. With the promise of some of the cleanest seas in Europe it is likely that Darton, Saltdown and Gull Sands will be flying their flags - blue of course - with pride, for all to see.

Other headings that you might like to use to strengthen your argument or express your point of view:

Local area dug up for new pipeline network

Boost for tourism through improved water quality

Environmental Pressure Groups

'Protect our beaches - health risks to bathers and surfers'

The issue of sewage contamination of our beaches is an extremely important issue both with the public and the media.

According to the 1996 DoE Survey of Public Attitudes to the Environment "Sewage on beaches and in bathing waters" is the second greatest environmental concern of the public in England and Wales. We want an environment that is safe and enjoyable for the present and for future generations.

'Local countryside under threat yet again'

Plans have been proposed to build a new treatment works for wastewater at Richardford. Where we once had lovely country walks we can now look forward to unsightly buildings, chimneys, air pollution, and damage to the natural habitat of plants and animals. What for? We already have plants at Hartmouth, Darton and Filmore - surely enough is enough. Our local heritage is being eroded and it's time to take a stand.

Other headings that you might like to use to strengthen your argument or express your point of view:

Badger Battle Stations

The local Badger Watch Society is at loggerheads with the Water Company over plans to remove badgers from their natural habitat.

Protect human health and the environment in the 21st Century



DEFRA

Local Water Company meets sustainability requirements with new wastewater treatment works plans

DEFRA confirmed today that the proposed improvements to wastewater treatment around the area of Richardford meet the criteria for environmental, economic and social impacts of new developments. DEFRA have worked with the government office for the South East, GOSE, in assessing the proposals.

A DEFRA spokesperson said, 'We are pleased that the water company has made these efforts to ensure that the development offers a sustainable solution to the problem of treating the increasing volume of wastewater in the area. We now need to be certain that the proposed works meet local planning requirements and will be closely monitoring the planning application process in close association with our colleagues in GOSE.'

Biodiversity is essential to life on earth ... unfortunately biodiversity is disappearing faster now than at any time in the past

At a recent meeting of the European Commission, biodiversity, the variety of plant and animal life - was very much on the agenda. Speaking to the Commission on behalf of DEFRA, Sally Mainwaring said that;

'biodiversity was very much under threat in many areas of the world and that it should be treated as a global problem. We are working closely with other government agencies and UK businesses to ensure that economic development in the UK is not at the expense of our precious land and marine ecosystems.'

Other headings that you might like to use to strengthen your argument or express your point of view:

Water Companies have a legal responsibility to ensure that your controlled waste is being stored, transported, treated and disposed of correctly.

Environmental, economic and social conditions must be met for new developments



Statements from the Interest Groups

Here are comments from the groups who have some interest in the plans.

The Water Company's Position:

'The old wastewater treatment works near the proposed new site dates from Victorian times and needs updating to meet current standards. The improved level of treatment we can now guarantee, also means cleaner seas.'

Managing Director, Water Company

Local Residents' Position:

'Although there may be more jobs, we are worried about the effects on children's health, the noise from construction traffic, and about losing money on our houses.'

Joe Moore, local resident

Environmental Group's Position:

'We want cleaner seas and a clean, safe environment for everyone. We need to safeguard the sea, the air and the land and we will be looking at any possible effects of pollution.'

Susan Brookes, local environmental pressure group

The Tourist Board's Position:

'Visitors expect to have safe bathing waters and clean sands for their children to play on and to have relaxed, trouble free excursions to places of local interest. They enjoy walks along local cliffs and rural footpaths and love to explore local towns and countryside to discover their delights. It is an area that is popular with residents and visitors alike. We want to keep it that way. We need to keep the countryside open.'

Philip Mann, Tourist Officer, Darton & Richardford

DEFRA's Position:

'It is important that we adhere to the high standards set by the European Commission, both for the quality of the water provided and the quality of the treated water that is returned to the environment. In doing so we must also take a balanced view of the impacts of any new developments, ensuring that we do not pay too high an environmental or social price for the improvements needed to meet the new criteria for marine water quality.'

Sam Chapman, DEFRA Spokesperson

Local Council's Position:

'As official representatives of local people, we will treat any planning application made to us as fairly as possible. It is our duty to encourage local businesses such as the Water Company while at the same time taking advice from Government bodies such as the DEFRA and listening to residents' views'

Councillor Barbara Mullins



Hints on being persuasive

When writing a promotional leaflet, newspaper item or preparing a discussion document for the debate, your aim is to persuade your readers to follow a particular course of action willingly.

Planning

You must first win the trust of your audience. These strategies will help you to gain support.

- Show that you are a person who can be trusted so that your listeners are more likely to accept the things you say. Give a little detail about your background and your credentials.
- Emphasise the advantages in your argument. Give advice, interesting "inside" information or helpful tips.
- Anticipate responses by using rhetorical questions, e.g. "You're probably wondering if this is going to affect you....". It is always a good strategy to try to predict what others are going to say. Be prepared. Try to counter any negative thoughts or arguments that could possibly arise. Offer reasonable alternatives.
- Show sound reasoning by presenting reliable evidence. It is not enough to identify the benefits; you need to persuade someone else that the decisions or actions recommended by you will actually bring about benefits. You need to explain why (e.g. the new equipment recommended will reduce costs because ...; the modifications recommended make the environment safer because ...) But remember: if you present evidence, select your facts carefully - choose reliable evidence that supports your point of view. For example, personal observations and anecdotes by knowledgeable individuals may be accepted as reliable evidence, so use quotes from people 'in the know'. In scientific fields, certain experimental procedures are accepted as reliable, so use proven statistics that are easy to understand (e.g. "80% of families use ...") or scientific fact.

Presenting your case

Now you have your planning in place, you need to decide how to present your case:

- People respond to emotional appeals more readily than to intellectual appeals. Often your most powerful tools are words.
First, arouse an emotion - anger, fear, dirty water, unclean seas
Second, give a reason for the emotion - "your children are precious to you, don't risk their future by ..."
Third, give your audience an appropriate course of action to follow - "To move this forward we need to....."
- Choose an appropriate 'voice' (this is important whether you are writing or speaking). You need to appeal to your listener. Be convincing and confident.
- Your audience has to decide if you are a good source of information and ideas. When people believe you are credible, they are more likely to accept the things you say. If people do not find you credible, they may refuse to consider your ideas seriously. So again, you need to show that you are a person who can be trusted by giving a little detail about your background and your credentials.

Note for Teachers: Persuasive writing or speaking is an area in which students should pay particular attention to ethical considerations. Persuasion can be self-serving and manipulative. Students should be reminded to consider the issues and to build a case using facts and logic rather than unethical methods.