

Quick guide

Age range

7+

15 mins



Indoor activity



Covers topics on

Geography
World issues
Measuring
Environment

Group activity



The world in a bucket

Task

An exercise to understand the Earth's water supply.

You will need

- 18 litre container of water or two nine-litre buckets
- Tablespoon and teaspoon
- Dropper
- Three glasses labelled A, B and C

What to do

1. The full buckets of water represent the world's water supply.
2. Measure 25.5 tablespoons into glass A. Glass A represents frozen water in icecaps and glaciers.
3. Measure half a teaspoon into glass B. This represents water held in salt water lakes and inland seas.
4. Measure 8 tablespoons into glass C. This represents ground water (water held in porous rock). Add half a teaspoon to glass C to represent water in lakes and reservoirs. Add a drop of water to glass C to represent rivers and streams. Add two more drops to glass C to represent water in the atmosphere, such as clouds and rain. Only the water in glass C is available for use by living things. This water will need to be processed, cleaned and pumped to our homes before we can use it.

Fun fact

The Sahara Desert covers about 3.5 million square miles or nine million square kilometres – an area roughly equal to that of the United States

Leaders' notes:

Water covers 70% of the Earth's surface but only 1% of the Earth's water is available for use.

Of this 1%, only a tiny fraction of the world's population has access to it and there are 884 million people in the world living without clean safe water.

The average person in the developing world uses less than **10 litres of water** every day for their drinking, washing and cooking

8 out of 10 people **without safe water** live in **rural areas**

The **weight of water** that women in Africa and Asia carry on their heads is commonly 20kg, the same as the average UK airport luggage allowance

The average **European uses 200 litres** of water every day for their drinking, washing and cooking. **North Americans use 400 litres**



On current trends over the next 20 years humans will use **40% more water** than they do now

Agriculture accounts for **over 80%** of the world's water consumption

The effects of climate change could mean that water becomes more precious than oil