

Everyone needs water, and every drop is precious. On 22 March, World Water Day draws attention to the essential role of water in our lives, the difficulties many people have getting clean water, and solutions to these problems.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. hygienic
2. to flush
3. a rural community
4. conflict
5. scarce
6. bacteria
7. diarrhoea
8. fundraising

Definition

- a. a place to live in the countryside, not in a town or a city
- b. not easy to find or get
- c. very small organisms that are found everywhere and are the cause of many diseases
- d. clean, especially in order to prevent disease
- e. the act of collecting money for a particular purpose, especially for a charity
- f. fighting between two or more groups of people or countries
- g. to clean a toilet by making lots of water go through it
- h. an illness in which we have a stomach ache and need to go to the toilet much more often than normal

World Water Day

Why do we need water?

The human body is around 60 per cent water, and we need to drink lots of water to be healthy. As well as needing clean water to drink, we need it for cooking, washing and brushing our teeth. Hygienic toilets require water – *a lot* of water. Each time we flush, we can use up to six litres! We use water indirectly too. Farmers, who produce the food we eat, use water to make the plants grow. A lot of water is used to produce the clothes we wear. Did you know that it takes about 2,700 litres of water to make one T-shirt?

Does everyone have enough water?

We all need water to stay alive, but more than two billion people around the world live without safe water in their homes. That's around a quarter of the world's population! Many of them live

in rural communities or in places where there is war and conflict. In addition to this, climate change is making the little water they have access to more and more scarce.

What are the consequences?

If we drink dirty water or we can't wash our hands when we go to the toilet, we can catch diseases from bacteria and become ill. More than two thousand children worldwide die every day from diarrhoea caused by dirty water. In some countries, people – mainly women and children – walk many kilometres every day to get water, and sometimes the water isn't even clean! If children spend most of their day walking to get water, they can't go to school, so they don't learn how to read or write and don't get an education.

What happens on World Water Day?

In 1992, the United Nations decided to make a special day for water, and World Water Day has been celebrated on 22 March every year since 1993. On this day, many countries hold events to educate people about the problems of dirty water and to try to find solutions to provide everyone around the world with clean water.

What can we do?

A lot of charities organise fundraising events for World Water Day. People do things like sponsored walks, cycles and swims. Some groups organise events like 'Walk for water', where people walk four, eight or 12 kilometres each day in March, to see how it feels when you have to walk a long way to get your drinking water. Others do a 'Water challenge' and drink only water for a whole month. People give them money to do these things, and all this money helps buy taps and toilets and provide clean water to as many people as possible around the world. So, this World Water Day, what will you do?

Tasks

Task 1

Put the sentences (a–j) in the correct group (1–3).

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. We use water to | a. can't wash their hands. b. produce the clothes we wear. c. raise money. |
| 2. When people don't have any clean water, they | d. often have to walk many kilometres to get it. e. brush our teeth. f. flush the toilet. g. try to find solutions. |
| 3. On World Water Day, people | h. can catch diseases like diarrhoea. i. learn about the problems of dirty water. j. make plants grow. |

Task 2

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| two thousand | 60 per cent | 22 March | 12km |
| 2,700 litres | one month | two billion | six litres |

- About of the human body is made up of water.
- When we flush the toilet, we can use as much as of water.
- It takes about of water to make one T-shirt.
- About people around the world don't have safe water in their homes.
- More than children die every day because of dirty water.
- World Water Day is celebrated on every year.
- Some people walk every day in March to raise money for charity.
- Some people do a 'Water challenge' and drink only water for

Discussion

What do you think are the most important things we use water for? What can we do to save water?

Answers

Preparation task

1. d
2. g
3. a
4. f
5. b
6. c
7. h
8. e

Task 1

1. b, e, f, j
2. a, d, h
3. c, g, i

Task 2

1. 60 per cent
2. six litres
3. 2,700 litres
4. two billion
5. two thousand
6. 22 March
7. 12km
8. one month