

# who deserves the water?

A literacy activity addressing key elements of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) while exploring different viewpoints over access and use of water resources

## Relevant elements of the Year 6 NLS Teaching Programme

NLS reference: Year 6 term 2: Non-Fiction

### Writing composition:

•18: to construct effective arguments:  
developing a point logically and effectively;  
tailoring the writing to formal presentation where appropriate

•19: to write a balanced report of a controversial issue:  
summarising fairly the competing views;  
analysing the strengths and weaknesses of different positions

### Vocabulary extension:

8: to build a bank of useful terms and phrases for argument

## Global citizenship aims of the shared text and reading and writing activities

- ✓ To encourage children to think critically and use available evidence to present a reasoned case
- ✓ To develop children's understanding of the causes and effects of social injustice
- ✓ To encourage children to recognise and challenge injustice
- ✓ To enable children to understand the effects of international trade in commodities on producer countries
- ✓ To help children understand the relationship between people and the environment
- ✓ To encourage empathy towards others globally
- ✓ To foster a sense of responsibility for the environment and the use of resources
- ✓ To equip children with the knowledge and understanding to empower them to take positive actions which ensure greater social justice and protect the environment.

Many of these aims are based on the Oxfam Curriculum for Global Citizenship, available from Oxfam Education, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7DZ

## Suggested lesson structures

### Suggested activity focus using the shared text

The aim of this activity is to focus on constructing effective arguments, writing a balanced report using a discussion genre framework, and reaching a conclusion based on available evidence, and the viewpoints expressed. It is envisioned that the activity will be carried out through two separate literacy hour lessons.

The activity assumes some previous work on discussion texts and writing frameworks.

### Writing activity details

The imaginary debate between a tobacco company manager and a Tanzanian mother presents a series of opposing views. The text should be shared with the whole class, perhaps with the teacher reading the views of the tobacco company manager and children responding with the views of the Tanzanian mother.

As a whole class, the views of the tobacco company manager should be explored and written up in bullet point format. These should be written on one side of the board or flip chart. A line should be drawn down the centre of the board/chart and children should then be asked to use the text in pairs to think of and list the main arguments of the Tanzanian mother. They should return in a plenary session to add their main arguments to the other side of the board/chart. The board/chart will now contain the main arguments for both the tobacco company manager and the Tanzanian mother.

### Reading comprehension: suggested questions and activities

The second lesson in this activity should focus on writing a balanced report using a discussion genre.

The lesson should begin by revisiting the main arguments of the two characters who took part in the debate and developing a bank of suitable words and phrases for argument, e.g. *whereas, alternatively, claim, believe, are of the opinion, on the other hand* etc

Children should then write a report using a discussion genre framework. Pupils may already be familiar with such a framework. It could take the following format:

- ◆ An introduction to the theme of the report (*There are different views expressed about whether tobacco farming is good or bad for people living near tobacco farms in African countries. One such country is Tanzania...*)
- ◆ The views expressed by one side (*The tobacco company defend their action by claiming that.... They also argue that...etc.*)
- ◆ The views expressed by the other side (*The Tanzanian mother however believes that.... She also says that...etc.*)
- ◆ A conclusion based on the evidence and the different views expressed (*After looking at the evidence and different view points I think..... because....*)



Water Aid, the UK development charity working to help communities in Africa and Asia provide themselves with a safe water supply close to home, produce WaterLiteracy and WaterNumeracy, resources for the KS2 literacy and numeracy hour

# Shared text: identifying key ideas

## An imaginary debate between a tobacco company manager and a Tanzanian mother

**Tobacco manager:** It is all too easy just to say that growing tobacco is bad. Children in Britain could get the wrong idea about what is going on.

**Mother:** It is bad, that's all there is to it. Look where they've burnt the trees to make room for tobacco fields. That means less water under the ground. Then a load of it gets wasted watering those useless tobacco plants. We end up with no water for drinking and growing our own food.

**Tobacco manager:** I don't think 'useless' is right. What people need is money. That way they can buy food and pay for water pumps in their villages. Growing tobacco gives them that money.

**Mother:** Oh, you make it sound so wonderful. The rubbish wages you pay aren't enough to buy those things. Give us soil and water, then we can grow our own food, and not waste money paying someone else for it.

**Tobacco manager:** What we do makes jobs for people. When people have work they can change their lives. I know that some of the men where you live can now spend their money on new things.



**Mother:** Useless things, like cigarettes, you mean. There are more than enough jobs already - growing the food, fetch the water, make a life for the children. Your jobs don't help. When the soil's no good any more, you'll clear off somewhere else.

**Tobacco manager:** Thousands and thousands of people around the world have jobs because of tobacco. It would be wrong to take those jobs away by not growing it.

**Mother:** I can't help that. All I know is that people here are left without clean water, just so you can make a fortune out of something that kills smokers all over the world. You should be ashamed.

**Tobacco manager:** If people want to smoke they must be allowed to. It is not for you or I to say people cannot smoke. As for water it sounds as if tobacco fields are to blame for everything that goes wrong in your village.

**Mother:** No, not everything, but growing tobacco doesn't help the mess we're in. It's time people here came together to agree on what we really need. They should go for a handpump; clean water, never mind anything else. Children in Britain will know what I mean.

**Tobacco manager:** I hope that children in Britain will look at the arguments for themselves. I wish the village luck, but I ask them to remember that Tanzania needs to make more money to build roads, houses, factories and hospitals. Making more money means selling things like tobacco to rich countries. It's the way things are.

### Further resources

The following is a list of titles which will offer opportunities for further activities on issues of Water for KS2. They should be available through your local Development Education Centre (DEC).

**Clean Water: A right for all** (UNICEF) Activities on water, its supply, control and use, including pollution.

**Water: the Earth Strikes Back** (Belitha Press) A book exploring how water shapes the lives of people, plants and animals worldwide. Looks at global inequalities in water supply and how people can help guard this vital resource.

**Water Performance** (WaterAid) contains suggestions for using drama, dance, music, puppet and mask making to explore water problems and their solutions in developing countries.

**My world** (WWF-UK) A resource pack for primary teachers.

**Eco-Schools** (see back for details) Produce a Water booklet for teachers

**The Green Umbrella** (Jill Brand - WWF) Stories, songs and poems which provide good starting points for classroom discussions and assemblies. The book contains seven sections including water.

**Primary Topic Poster Packs** (Oxfam) A range of colour poster sets focusing on key primary topics including water. Each topic set contains a variety of images and information as well as activity ideas.

**Fresh water** (UNESCO-UNEP) A series of posters, including water resources, supply and pollution.

**The water game** (Christian Aid) A game on water resources and supply in developing countries.

*Feedback on these activity ideas would be much appreciated. Comments can be sent to HEC or your local DEC or made via the Global Footprints website.*

# Further ideas, contacts and information

## The River's story -

by Brian Patten

*I remember when life was good.  
I shilly-shallied across meadows,  
Tumbled down mountains,  
I laughed and gurgled through woods,  
Stretched and yawned in a myriad of floods.  
Insects, weightless as sunbeams,  
Settled upon my skin to drink.  
I wore lily-pads like medals.  
Fish, lazy and battle scarred,  
Gossiped beneath them.  
The damselflies were my ballerinas,  
The pike my ambassadors.  
Kingfishers, disguised as rainbows,  
Were my secret agents.  
It was a sweet time, a gone-time,  
A time before factories grew,  
Brick by greedy brick,  
And left me cowering,  
In monstrous shadows.  
Like drunken giants,  
They vomited their poisons into me.  
Tonight a scattering of vagrant bluebells,  
Dwarfed by those same poisons,  
Toll my ending.*

*Children, come and find me if you wish,  
I am your inheritance.*

*Behind the derelict housing-estates,  
You will discover my remnants.  
Clogged with garbage and junk,  
To an open sewer I've shrunk.  
I, who have flowed through history,  
Who have seen hamlets become villages,  
Villages become towns, towns become cities,  
Am reduced to a trickle of filth,  
Beneath the still, burning stars*

*Taken from WaterLiterate, a resource for the literacy hour,  
produced by WaterAid*

## Activity ideas based on the poem

This poem would be an appropriate text for exploring the use of figurative language in poetry and analysing how messages, moods, feelings and attitudes are conveyed in poetry. It provides a powerful text for discussion and interpretation. (NLS year 6 term 2).

Questions which might be discussed using this poem:

- What is the author's intention?
- What is his message and attitude?
- What words or phrases has the author chosen to create mood and feeling?
- Analyse some phrases and discuss how they might be interpreted.

## Further information about water

The following organisations will be able to provide details of their work on water

**Oxfam** 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ Tel:01865 313600  
Produce a range of global citizenship education packs. Education catalogue contains extensive range of resources across the curriculum. To order phone 01202 712933. Also have a website dedicated to teachers and children which contains information and activities: [www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet)

**WaterAid** 27 - 29 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UB Tel: 020 7793 4500 e-mail: [wateraid@wateraid.org.uk](mailto:wateraid@wateraid.org.uk). Website contains excellent interactive quiz for children: [www.wateraid.org.uk](http://www.wateraid.org.uk) Also produce *WaterLiterate* and *WaterNumerate*, resources for the KS2 literacy and numeracy hour.

**Friends of the Earth** 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ  
Tel: 020 7490 1555 [www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk) Produce information sheets and other resources suitable for young people on all environmental issues including water supply and pollution.

**Eco-Schools** Elizabeth House, The Pier, Wigan WN3 4EX  
Tel: 01942 824620 [www.tidybritain.org.uk](http://www.tidybritain.org.uk) The European wide programme and award scheme aiming to increase environmental awareness and encourage pupil participation in managing their surroundings in schools.

## Development Education Centres (DECs)

This resource has been produced by the Humanities Education Centre, a DEC in Tower Hamlets, with contributions from other DECs. Your local DEC will be able to provide a range of exciting resource ideas for the teaching of Global Citizenship. To find your nearest DEC contact:

Development Education Association,  
29-31 Cowper Street, London, EC2A 4AP

☎ 020 7490 8108 e-mail [devedeassoc@gn.apc.org](mailto:devedeassoc@gn.apc.org)

## Your local DEC: