

IS ACCESS TO WATER A HUMAN RIGHT?

THIS ACTIVITY SHOULD TAKE ABOUT 90 MINUTES. IF LEARNERS ARE ABLE TO REVIEW MEDIA PRIOR TO THE LESSON, ACTIVITY TIME SHOULD BE 45 TO 60 MINUTES.

INVESTIGATE

Read, watch, and listen to the three media resources on the Thinkalong module. Learners can use the Investigate graphic organizer to summarize each piece of media and record new information. Below are summaries of the three pieces of media curated in the Thinkalong module.

IS EARTH RUNNING OUT OF WATER? (FEAT. LIFE NOGGIN)

Above the Noise | September 7, 2018 | Video
6:00 minutes

Host Myles Bess takes us around the world to investigate headlines about water scarcity and droughts to find out more about the Earth's water supply.

- Myles acknowledges that a lack of clean water is an issue for many parts of the world, and over 2 billion people drink contaminated water. One of the United Nations' major goals is to ensure access to clean water and sanitation.
- Water is used in our everyday lives, but also in industrial manufacturing and power plants.
- According to the World Health Organization, by 2025 half of the world's population will be living in "water-stressed areas."
- While the Earth is covered in water, only about 4.4% is freshwater – and less than two thirds of freshwater is drinkable. Most drinking water comes from lakes, rivers, and groundwater and water availability varies by region. Places that pump out groundwater are often using it too fast for rain and snow to refill the water sources.
- As the Earth's population grows, demand for water will increase. According to the UN, water scarcity may displace as many as 700 million people by 2030.
- Other issues that can cause water shortages are poor water management, bad infrastructure, and climate change.

MANY NATIVE AMERICANS CAN'T GET CLEAN WATER, REPORT FINDS

NPR | November 19, 2019 | Audio
3:57 minutes

A report from Dig Deep and the U.S. Water Alliance found that more than 2 million people in the United States live without access to safe, clean water and that Native Americans are more likely to have trouble accessing water than any other group.

- Darlene Yazzie lives on the Navajo Nation and accesses drinking water from a well where she pays \$1.10 to fill two 50-gallon barrels. She gets water for her animals from a windmill, which she says isn't safe for humans.
- Yazzie says that many people who live in the area have died or have been diagnosed with cancer, which she believes to be a result of water contaminated with uranium from abandoned mines. The EPA says that unregulated drinking water is the greatest public health risk on the Navajo Nation.
- The report found that 58 out of every 1000 Native Americans don't have household plumbing, compared with 3 out of 1000 white households. Native Americans experience more deaths, poverty, and higher unemployment rates. While the U.S. government was able to build modern infrastructure and sanitation systems, indigenous nations in remote parts of the country couldn't afford to fund major water pipeline projects.
- Results from the report found that race is the strongest predictor of water and sanitation access.
- Across the U.S., 44 million people are served by water systems that had Safe Drinking Water Act violations.

Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help learners to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.

WHY MANY IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION CAN'T AFFORD BASIC DRINKING WATER

NPR | February 7, 2019 | Audio

8:15 minutes

While the Great Lakes are one of the largest sources of freshwater in the world, people who live in the region struggle to afford water and sanitation.

- In six cities around the Great Lakes, water costs have been rising – in the last 10 years, water rates have doubled, even tripled. One couple in Cleveland says their water and sewer bill is \$2,500, most of which comes from unpaid bills from family and tenants who lived in their home before them.
- An investigation found that over 40,000 homes and businesses had their water shut off in Cleveland from 2010-2017.
- In Detroit, one resident says even though his water is shut off, his bills keep going up.
- One reason for water rates going up is the costs it takes to maintain and repair aging pipes and infrastructure. Almost half of what Cleveland residents pay for water goes to infrastructure improvements. While water systems were initially built with federal funds, that assistance isn't around now to help municipalities and local regions fix problems.

KEY WORDS

Look out for these important keywords in the news stories. Discuss the definitions with your learners and see how they affect the understanding of the story.

- Contamination
- Infrastructure
- Groundwater

CONTEMPLATE

Learners will use media literacy questions to critically engage with news by thinking about its purpose, searching for bias and discussing missing perspectives. They will answer the 5 Key Questions of Media Literacy created by the Center for Media Literacy, which are:

1. Who created this message?
2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message differently than me?
4. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Why is this message being sent?

A graphic organizer is included in this guide and the Thinkalong website to help learners answer these five questions about each piece of media.

DEBATE

Use the debate tool on the module webpage to help form evidence-based responses to the debate question.

Thinkalong is designed to help learners engage with real issues that are relevant to their lives. [Structured discussions](#) allow learners to practice their critical thinking skills through evidence-based debate with their peers. Discussions are designed to take about 30 minutes. Educators are encouraged to modify aspects that work best for their learners.

To encourage civil discourse, please review the [Code of Conduct](#) with your learners.

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