



Maggie's Activity Pack

Name _____

Date _____

Bountiful Buckets? H2O for Life



Give up your backpack? Carry your books in a bucket? Why do this?

It shows YOUR power to change the world.

A group named H2O for Life is helping children understand the important role of water to life on Earth. It started with a question. How can we help a school in Kenya whose water source dried up? One teacher wanted to help. Mrs. Hall and a group of eighth grade students got together. Their group took on the name, H2O for Life. The twenty students and Mrs. Hall wanted to raise \$7000 to help the Kenyan village. But they did more than that. The students ended up with \$13,000 to send to Africa. Their fundraising helped them to learn more about the need for clean water. They found out about problems people had in getting clean water. Then they taught others about this important issue. Everyone learned more about this global problem.

The students wanted to continue their efforts. Their teacher realized that clean water could be the bridge to helping students from around the world connect with one another. Local students would raise money and learn. Their projects helped specific villages. This connection was important. They would be changing the world, one person at a time.

Mrs. Hall wanted to bring this message and all the benefits of working for clean water to others. She started a foundation, H2O for Life. Now more students can help specific schools and villages in the developing world. They can learn about the needs of the village or school and teach others in their community about the need. After money for clean water is raised, the students get a picture of how the money was used in the local community. This is an important student-to-student connection.

One of the important goals of H2O for Life is to encourage everyone to think about their own water use. What is your water footprint? As you brush your teeth do you turn off the faucet? Do you encourage your family to buy fruits and vegetables grown in your area? Do you refill a water container rather than buying throw away plastic water bottles? Simple choices can make a difference. When someone asks, "Why are carrying a pail?" You can let them know you are helping people learn about the problems millions of children have getting clean water. Often when children must carry water for drinking and washing, they can't go to school. Your bucket can help with the water or books question. How? Your answer can teach others and they may even throw some money into your bucket. This can make a difference for a child in need.

Think about the H2O for Life project. Why is H2O for Life important? Complete the ideas in the boxes. These will help you write a complete answer to the question.

A. It started with a question -

B. The students wanted to -

C. The students learned -

D. Mrs. Hall started a foundation to -

E. An important goal of H2O For Life is -

F. You can carry a bucket to -

Now take your ideas from the boxes. Put them together to write about H2O for Life. Share your writing with a teacher, your principal, family, or another adult. Maybe you will become a school that makes a difference in the world!

Dear Colleague,

Our friends at H2O for Life encourage you and your students to become passionate about the importance of clean water in our world. And what a wonderful opportunity to take action, not just talk about problems. Many students in the developed world take water for granted; help them to appreciate the role this necessary resource plays in the life of many around the world. One of my most successful projects as an elementary school teacher was the partnership between children in my first grade class and those from a school in Malawi. We satisfied our curriculum by having children write letters, construct informational posters, read about Africa, etc. Even math got in on the act with story problems about our friends in Malawi. This is a good example that education does not start and end with these “standards.” To be thoughtful citizens, we need to understand others and develop relationships. At Maggie’s Earth Adventures, we believe our students can reach national standards and develop critical thinking skills along with developing those all-important relationships needed to succeed in our global society.

One of the required curricular areas is writing. Many of you prepare your children to write essays or answer multi-faceted questions on standardized tests. Some term these answers, Brief Constructed Responses (BCRs). Whatever the terminology, we suggest helping children to break the question into manageable parts. The question, “Why is H2O for Life important?” is a complex idea. While many children could identify specific facts from the article to accurately respond to the question, I know some of your students would either write a quick answer to be done with it or may not be able to understand the inferential components of the article well enough to write a thoughtful response. Helping children understand the benefit of breaking a question into smaller questions shows them how a response can be more specific, descriptive, and accurate. We need to model this by showing children what questions could be asked. This is what our activity does this week. It may be helpful to have children first answer the big idea question, “Why is H2O for Life important?” and then compare their answer to the “essay” they arrive at after answering the six “sub” questions.

Two books come to mind again this week as we think about infusing water issues into our curriculum. I like *Water Dance* by Thomas Locker. This seemingly easy read may at first glance appear to be solely for primary children, but what a wonderful companion for intermediate level writing or science units. To enhance your language arts, use the literary style as a model to write about a specific aspect of water in the first person. The “story” helps synthesize a science unit to illustrate the interconnectedness water brings to our planet.

Newbery medalist, Linda Sue Park brings us the difficult story of two young people from Sudan and their struggles in *A Long Walk to Water*. Not a story for young children, mature students in the upper grades will read how Nya must walk for eight hours each day to supply her family with water. You may also want to share these books in your latest parent newsletter. Families can explore what they can do to understand and support clean water advocacy.

Happy teaching,
Kathy

Goals:

Students read a nonfiction article about the organization, H2O for Life which partners schools from around the world to educate and encourage clean water use. Students consider their own use of water and how they might help others who need clean water. A step-by-step writing activity helps students improve their response to questions about nonfiction articles (BCRs). The activity is available on the primary and intermediate levels. A companion Emergent Reader activity is also available. All correlate with the IRA/NCTE Standard, “Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.”