

THE WATER NEWS



KEY CONCEPTS

- RESPONSIBILITY FOR WATER IS EVERYONE'S CONCERN.
- SUSTAINABILITY OF WATERSHED ECOSYSTEMS IN GREATER VICTORIA IS INFLUENCED BY ACTIONS WE TAKE IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES.
- A VARIETY OF FACTORS WILL INFLUENCE WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY TRENDS INTO THE FUTURE.

METHOD

In small groups, students will produce a student magazine or other media on local water issues.

ACTIVITY INFORMATION BOX:

TIME REQUIRED: 150 minutes in class plus student research time

GRADE LEVEL: Grades 8-10

KEY WORDS: *water related issues*

MATERIALS:

- a variety of local and regional newspapers, media, Internet and other information resources
- computer lab time

SETTING: indoors

SKILLS: gathering information, analysis, presenting information

SUBJECTS: Science 8-10
Social Studies 8-10

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE STUDENT WILL:

- Describe a variety of water-related issues in their local or regional area;
- Apply skills to research, write, present information on local water issues.



BACKGROUND

Water is in the news through print, television, Internet and other media on an ongoing basis. We watch and read media about storms, droughts, water supply and conservation issues – to name a few. Students are often exposed in the major media to world-wide campaigns for various causes or stories about issues far away. This can give students the impression that active, committed people or important stories cannot be found near their homes and schools. In fact, there are many people working on water related issues in Greater Victoria and these stories can be found locally.

Media such as a magazine or other news source is a collective effort of many people – each with a role and skill set. Assembling a magazine or other media pulls together a diverse number of tasks including research, interviewing, writing, photography, graphic design, editing and production. Magazines, for example, are usually divided into sections such as Cover stories/Key features, Arts and Life, Commentary, News Briefs, or other relevant sections.

In this activity, you can choose to focus on one or more aspects of pulling together a “*Water News*” while tapping into student strengths. Students can create:

- Magazine articles
- PowerPoint® presentations
- Visual collages
- Drawings
- Comic strips
- Posters
- Games
- Video.

All “*Water News*” projects must demonstrate appropriate research, knowledge of the issue(s), and have the message conveyed successfully. By creating a magazine or other media on local water topics, students can describe important local water issues and apply their skills to share that information with others.

PROCEDURE

1. Have students read several magazines or newspapers with short articles on a water topic.
2. Tell students that they are going to develop a project on local water-related issues.
3. Discuss with students what they think makes a good presentation of “news.”
4. Brainstorm topics related to local water issues and select five or more topics that interest students the most. Use the sections listed above in the Background to ensure that water issues are covered from a variety of perspectives.
5. Divide students into groups for each of the topics selected. Each group should decide on the type of media (article, PowerPoint, collage, etc.) that they wish to use.
6. Discuss with students how to research a topic. Remind students that the approach will be to seek and gather information using the traditional “who, what, where, why, when, and how” style. This research will then be used to create their media presentation.
7. Some students may wish to interview “sources.” Review interview techniques with students. See side bar on the following page for some interviewing tips.
8. Allow 3-5 (or more) classes for researching and developing articles. Remind students that magazines are always produced to deadline!



9. Reserve computer time to put articles or other media in good copy and incorporate graphics. Each group is responsible for their own graphics – stress the use of digital cameras and original photographs.
10. Publish the “Water News” and distribute to school and community. Consider publishing an “e-zine” to minimize paper waste. Visual media can be scanned together with written work.
11. Have a class discussion on how it felt to pull together the Water News - what were the challenges and successes?

EVALUATION

Have students:

- List at least four water-related local or regional topics;
- Act collaboratively within their group;
- Participate in the creation of a “Water News”.

EXTENSIONS

Invite a local TV or newspaper reporter into the classroom to speak to the students. The reporter should discuss the techniques he/she uses to gather information and the process of putting together a news article.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Send your Water News to the CRD Water Services Department or local politicians and invite them to provide comments.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Interview Techniques

<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/specials/weblines/411.html>

Project WILD – activity “Aquatic Times” page 310

INTERVIEWING TIPS:

- Prepare for your interview:
 - *Call ahead to schedule interview.*
 - *Do background research on your interviewee.*
 - *Plan your interview – come up with a set of questions you want to ask focusing on who, what, where, why, when, and how.*
 - *Practice asking questions prior to the interview.*
 - *Dress with respect for your interviewee.*
- Gather information for your article using your questions and take careful notes and/or ask permission to tape record the interview.
- Thank the person for taking the time to share his/her story.



NAME: _____

BLOCK: _____

WATER NEWS ASSIGNMENT EVALUATION

CATEGORY	Exceptional	Admirable	Acceptable	Amateur
Organization	Extremely well organized; logical format that was easy to follow; flowed smoothly from one idea to another and cleverly conveyed; the organization enhanced the effectiveness of the project.	Presented in a thoughtful manner; there were signs of organization and most transitions were easy to follow, but at times ideas were unclear.	Somewhat organized; ideas were not presented coherently and transitions were not always smooth, which at times distracted the audience.	Choppy and confusing; format was difficult to follow; transitions of ideas were abrupt and seriously distracted the audience.
Content Accuracy	Completely accurate; all facts were precise and explicit.	Mostly accurate; a few inconsistencies or errors in information.	Somewhat accurate; more than a few inconsistencies or errors in information.	Completely inaccurate; the facts in this project were misleading to the audience.
Research	Went above and beyond to research information; solicited material in addition to what was provided; brought in personal ideas and information to enhance project.	Did a very good job of researching; utilized materials provided to their full potential; at times took the initiative to find information outside of school.	Used the material provided in an acceptable manner, but did not consult any additional resources.	Did not utilize resources effectively; did little or no fact gathering on the topic.
Creativity	Was extremely clever and presented with originality; a unique approach that truly enhanced the project.	Was clever at times; thoughtfully and uniquely presented.	Added a few original touches to enhance the project but did not incorporate it throughout.	Little creative energy used during this project; was bland, predictable, and lacked "zip."

Mark: _____

