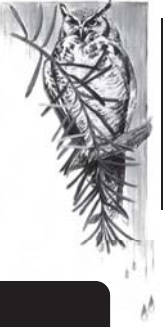


# THE WAYS OF WATER



## KEY CONCEPTS

- RESPONSIBILITY FOR WATER IS EVERYONE'S CONCERN.
- WATER IS IMPORTANT TO ALL PEOPLE.

## METHOD

Students read poems and verses about water, listen to music and write or create artwork that demonstrates their personal views of water.

### ACTIVITY INFORMATION BOX:

**TIME REQUIRED:** 60 minutes

**GRADE LEVEL:** Grades 8-10

**KEY WORDS:** *Water, appreciation*

**MATERIALS:**

- poems
- verses
- music
- posters
- artwork about water and life (see resources)

**SETTING:** indoors or outdoors

**SKILLS:** participating, discussing, recalling, gathering information

**SUBJECTS:** Science 8-10

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

**IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE STUDENT WILL:**

- Be able to express an appreciation for the importance of water to the maintenance of life, cultures, and global balance;
- As a post activity, to reflect on what they have learned about water and will take with them into the future.



## BACKGROUND

Water plays a role in our lives for many reasons. It can be important in religious or cultural customs or may just be part of a fun way to spend the afternoon on a hot summer day. It plays a major role in maintaining healthy bodies – our bodies need clean water for all our bodily functions. The water cycle impacts ecosystems around the world and the way we live within those ecosystems. No matter where we live, water is a part of many facets of our daily lives.

## PROCEDURE

1. Play the Holly Arntzen's music "*Take me to the water*" or other music that reflects the importance of water for our culture and life on earth.
2. Have several water related posters, prints, and other media around the room, on the bulletin board, or for displaying in other ways. Use the media as a tool to lead the students in a discussion regarding the importance of water.
3. Reflect on water's importance to First Nations culture. Read the poem: *Water Drinker* by Philip Kevin Paul (local First Nations poet) or another poem about water.
4. If possible, show video or portion depicting water conditions in Third World countries. Use the video as a discussion tool to have students reflect on the richness of their position in terms of water and their need to protect the resource.
5. Have students write or produce a poem, verse, song, artwork, dance, play, PowerPoint® presentation or other media to show their understandings, feelings, and attitudes towards the importance of water in their life.
6. Bring out student work at the end of the unit for students to reflect on and discuss how their outlook about water may have changed.

## EVALUATION

Have students:

- Complete a verse, poem, etc. to be submitted or performed.

## EXTENSIONS

1. Produce a class, hallway or community venue display of art and written work.
2. Host a performance night for parents and others.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Holly Arntzen's *water music* CD available from Wild BC <http://www.hctf.ca/wild>  
or contact Holly at [artistresponseteam@shaw.ca](mailto:artistresponseteam@shaw.ca)

*Water Drinker* by Phillip Kevin Paul in *Reading the Peninsula: Stories of the Saanich Peninsula* produced by Community Arts Council of the Saanich Peninsula. 2003

*Two Houses Half-Buried in Sand: Oral Traditions of the Hul'Q'Umi'Num' Coast Salish*. Chris Arnett, Ed. Talon Books. 2007

"Pretend you are a river" a poem by Derrick Jensen. <http://www.derrickjensen.org>

"Lost Streams of Victoria" poster - a full colour map on side one; and side two features ways to take part in stewardship activities; including stories of streams and creeks that need stewardship today; available from: **Fisheries and Oceans Canada; 200 - 401 Burrard Street; Vancouver, BC V6C 3S4; tel (604) 666-8171**



## WATER DRINKER

By Phillip Kevin Paul

The music in trees  
is water. The only way  
of learning that still counts:  
I learned this summer  
how a tree is a reflection  
of a river or a stream.

A tree is like ancient love:  
the love my parents gave me  
came from a long ways away,  
was divided over and over. *The oldest river  
will have the most branches.  
it is the only thing  
that remains uncomplicated,  
grows outward and remains  
uncomplicated.*

*How do you know these things?*

The man, sick of the story and of his life, says:  
*I spent twelve years with the same river  
measuring everything to learn  
measuring is irrelevant.*

*There is only time  
and looking.*

*After twelve years you can finally imagine  
how a river grows old  
and how the trees around it grow old.*

They grow outward and remain uncomplicated.

I sat by a fishless stream for days  
this summer, the place I fished  
when I was small  
as I remember being.  
I felt in the heat the hope in me  
being washed over and diluted.  
I felt this way without knowing  
the fish had all disappeared –

I'd imagined them all summer  
swaying lazily in the dark,  
murky water at the bottom of the stream  
and the flash of their white bellies  
as they twisted into the terrible light,  
fighting at one end  
of a handline.

Here - I bring you to the place  
of maples, where on this steep hill  
there is only one arbutus, the way  
the blood from a fish looks  
resting in the stones.

You can feel the stream  
on that hill like a small animal  
shaking in your hand. Its rhythm  
comes up through the ground  
just where the water is  
about to roll over the edge.

Imagine what the Old People thought  
when they saw one small red tree  
growing between the grey-  
white bodies of the maples.  
imagine what their thought  
when they realized  
every stream has its own song  
from the shape made by the trees around it,  
the sound of the water  
turning in the hollow,  
returning to them from the leaves.

How long did they sit here  
on this perfect flat rock beside  
this single arbutus  
to finally see  
the trees around it were dying  
because they weren't as deeply rooted?

When I tell you the word  
is still old, I say that  
because the first time  
a man said *KÓ, KÓ, IłC,*  
said, *water drinker,*  
it was because the generations  
before him had sat on the rock  
and looked at the tree.  
They sat in name of the tree,  
as in a song too familiar  
to hear, and finally  
recognized it. And when  
I say the word now, *KÓ, KÓ, IłC,*  
It is the same word,  
but said in an alien light.