

SCIENCE EDUCATION

facilitator's notes

Precious Water

Did you know?

- South Africa has passed new legislation on its water usage.
- Approximately 12-14 million South Africans do not have access to safe drinking water and about 21 million South Africans do not have adequate sanitation.

The World and its Water

About 97.5% of the earth's surface is covered by salt water. Across the globe, this vast interconnecting body of water is sub-divided into the Atlantic, Arctic, Indian and Pacific Oceans. Within these oceans, a wide variety of habitats supports different species. The earth's oceans provide a rich, but delicate ecosystem - one that is currently under threat from pollution, over fishing and global warming.

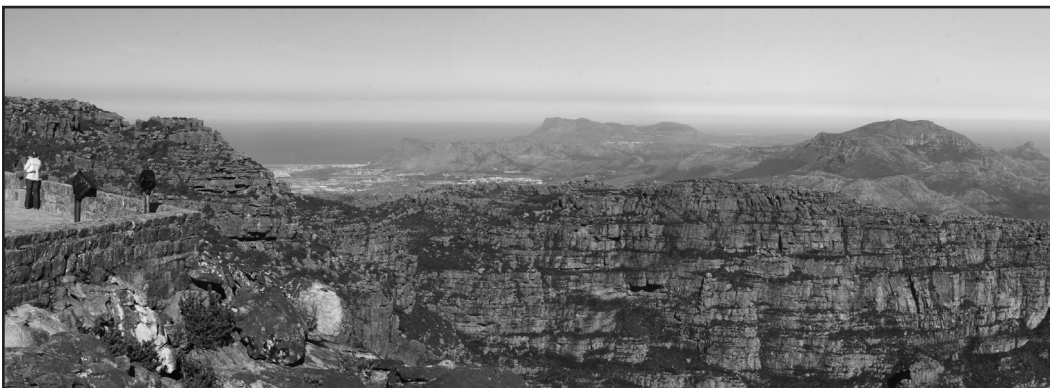
South Africa is rich in natural resources, but not in water. Water is a scarce resource, especially for our poor. Our rainfall is less than 500mm a year with the driest part of the country receiving less than 200mm and the wettest receiving more than 2500mm a year.

There are a few natural rivers and lakes in our country and we largely depend on them for our water. The largest river in our country is the Orange River which flows from the east to the west. Its water comes from sources in the Drakensberg and Maluti mountains.

About half of all South Africa's rainfall is stored in dams and we have about 550 government dams with a total capacity of more than 37,000 million m³.

Marine Life

The Cape Peninsula, as you already know, is the meeting place for the two ocean currents, the cold Benguela and warm Agulhas currents. On top of the mountain we look from viewpoints and we can see False Bay from viewpoint 2. Watching the sharks and whales from this viewpoint is a popular tourist attraction.



Viewpoint 2: looking towards False Bay



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Water Pollution

Water is an integral part of the mountain. Imagine people were allowed to throw down their rubbish everywhere they walked?

Some common pollutants in our water include fertilizers, metal, sand, silt, toxic waste, litter, hot water and pesticides. You can probably guess that these pollutants affect the natural ecosystems and human health.

Water Saving

Water is life! Water is very important to us because we cannot live without it. Because we have so many people in our country, we need more water. In order for us to save on water, we need to look at how we are using water and how we can save water.

We use water for various reasons. Some of these reasons are:

- drinking water
- bathing
- diluting juice water
- making cold drinks
- using the toilet

We can save or recycle by:

1. Switching off taps as soon as you've used them.
2. Taking a shower instead of a bath.
3. Using a watering can in the garden instead of watering with a hose or a sprinkler.
4. Wash dishes in a dish of water instead of under a running tap.
5. Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth or washing your hair.

Can you add some more water saving tips?

