

## ETWINNING PROJECT : TAKE ACTION for your ENVIRONMENT

# Water – the most precious resource

### WRITING SKILLS IN FOCUS (W1 AND W3)

In this section you will learn to:

- ✓ use details to develop ideas when writing descriptions
- ✓ make descriptive writing convincing using the five senses.

### GETTING STARTED

*Fresh water is liquid silver,  
More precious than a king's palaces,  
More dazzling than a sultan's jewels.  
Thousands tread dust for days to seek it,  
Yet others waste and lose it.  
'Our planet's full of water!' they say.  
I say, 'Try to drink it then.'*

Mike Gould



Read this short poem on your own.

- 1 Think about these questions. Make notes and then share your ideas with a partner.
  - a) Are there any words or phrases you don't understand? Have a guess at their meaning. If your partner does not know either, use a dictionary to help.
  - b) What do you think the **message** or the point of the poem is?
  - c) In the first line, what is water compared to? Why do you think the poet chose this comparison? This kind of 'picture in words' is called an **image**.
  - d) Find two more examples of where the writer creates vivid pictures to make his point. Explain why he makes these comparisons.
  - e) Be really honest and describe *your own* attitude to water and how much you use/waste?
  - f) With a partner, discuss which of the five senses the poet uses in his poem.

TOP TIP

When you describe a personal experience, use the five senses of *sight, touch, sound, smell* and *taste* to help the reader enter your world.

### EXPLORING THE SKILLS

To describe experiences or issues well, you need to use details to develop your descriptions. Adding **examples, facts** and **images** can really make your writing come to life and engage the reader. For example:

*We have a problem with water. **We have plenty of it, but it's the wrong sort.***

— develops and builds on opening sentence

Did you know that **about 70% of our planet is covered in water, but only about 3% is fresh water**? Just consider that as you let **sparkling, clear water escape** from your tap as you clean your teeth.

facts add detail and make comparisons

well-chosen verb makes us sound careless

vivid picture in words (an 'image') that brings facts to life

2 Now look at this sentence about water usage.

*We need huge amounts of water for all our everyday needs.*

You are going to take this **topic sentence** and develop it into a full paragraph.

a) First, add an example or explanation that develops what is said here. It could be about what our everyday needs are.

*We need huge amounts of water for all our everyday needs. Just think about...*

b) Now build the paragraph by adding new sentences, using the facts below. You may need to use **connectives** ('and', 'or', 'but', 'in addition', 'because') to turn these facts into sentences and join ideas together.

- Recommended daily requirement for sanitation, bathing, cooking, consumption = approx. 50 litres per person.
- 1 billion+ people have to use less than 6 litres per day.

c) Finally, make your writing come to life. For example, add a vivid image (a 'picture in words') which gives an idea of what it is like searching for water each day. You could start:

*For many, the best sight in the world is...*

### DEVELOPING THE SKILLS

Adding more detail also means thinking how you can add content or ideas.

A student is writing an article about his childhood memories. He is describing his first swimming lesson.

*I remember going to the pool. I stood by it with all the other kids until the teacher told us to go in. I sat down on the edge. Suddenly, someone splashed me. It was horrible.*

There is much more information the student could have added here. For example:

- more detail on how he behaved (did he sit down 'quickly', 'happily'?) and what he did
- what the pool was like (indoor, outdoor, modern, old)
- descriptions of the other students/teacher.

3 With a partner, think about the five senses. Write down what you think the child above could see, touch, smell, hear and even taste.

See	
Hear	children laughing, water slapping the sides of the pool
Smell	
Touch	
Taste	

- 4 Now rewrite the text, adding further detail.
- You can change or alter the text but it must still be about a boy's first swim.
  - Write a minimum of 75 words.

- 5 A student was given a task in which she had to imagine life in the future in a world which is short of water. Beforehand, she was given some basic information on:

- the effects of lack of fresh water on health
- our overuse and waste of water
- the contamination of fresh water supplies, such as industrial waste in rivers.

As you read, identify where in the text she has used:

- facts and examples but also added her own original details or extra content
- vivid imagery or powerful verbs to reveal her feelings or views about the situation.

Today, in 2065, I live in a world without water. I am 15 years old, but I look 50, my skin is starting to crack and look parched like a desert road. My muscles are weak and I lack energy. My family's life revolves around water: finding or buying it, conserving it or storing it, dreaming and thinking about it. My father's job? He is lucky – he works in a desalination plant, converting salt water to fresh, but he doesn't get any extra favours or water rations.

I interrogate my father about the past – a time when everyone had water. He tells me about lush trees in the city parks, swollen with emerald leaves, and how he could enjoy soothing, warm baths, or cool, refreshing showers, whenever he wanted them. Back then, he was told that drinking about 8–10 glasses of water a day was ideal for a healthy lifestyle. Now, we're lucky if we get one glass, which I treat as if it were the finest meal on Earth. But he also tells me how companies and countries allowed poisonous chemicals to pollute rivers and lakes. When he was a boy, 2 million tons of sewage and human waste was dumped into water.

I often plead with him to tell me why he and his friends didn't do more if they knew this? Why they left us with this dreadful legacy? He has no answer.

verb suggests strong questioning

adjectives

factual info backs up statement about companies

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