

Water & Nourishment

Length	75 or 90 min
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on where your local water is sourced and treated. See, for example, City of Fort Collins Information about global water sourcing and treatment See for example: Charity:Water Information on and photos of xeriscaping, such as demonstration gardens, plants, yards, etc. (Example: Plant Talk Colorado) “Fresh Water” and “Student of Clouds” excerpts (following) [SEE LINKS AT END OF LESSON PLAN]
Lesson Focus	Water as nourishment in urban and suburban settings
Learning Goals - Writing	Practice writing poetry, blackout poetry, and application of key words discussed as a group to individualized poetry.
Learning Goals - Water	Inform writers about sources of water and water treatment in a local setting. Apply this knowledge to the importance of fresh water on a global scale. Share information on conservation methods and local involvement.
Target Audience	High School and College-aged writers and beyond
Warm-Up Writing (10 mins)	Have writers free write for 5 mins on how they see a link between water and nourishment in their local setting. Have writers share their thoughts.
Writing Prompt #1 (30 mins)	<p>Where does the water in your town come from and how is it treated? Share the answers of these questions with the writers (5 min) and have a discussion on what they knew and what they learned (5 min).</p> <p>Consider local water source/treatment as contrasted with the global water crisis. Use information from Charity: Water to illustrate (5 min).</p> <p>Brainstorm at least five examples of how writers benefit from having easy access to treated water. Share as a group and make a group list on the board (5 min). Have writers choose five words from the group’s list and compose a poem that may reflect a new view on the importance of clean water (10 mins).</p>

<p>Writing Prompt #2 (20 mins)</p>	<p>Share information and photos of xeriscaping in your region and explain why urban water conservation is important (5 min).</p> <p>Define ‘metaphor’ (a thing regarded as symbolic of something else, especially something abstract). Discuss examples (5 min).</p> <p>What metaphors can be found in considering xeriscape plants? Words/ideas around dryness, conservation, innovation, adaptation, preservation? (10 minutes)</p>
<p>Writing Prompt #3 (15 mins)</p>	<p>Use the excerpt from “Fresh Water” in Our Planet by Alastair Fothergill and Keith Scholey to conduct black out poetry (10 min). Share a few results with the group. Discuss how this excerpt made you think about the importance of freshwater globally (5 min).</p>
<p>Writing Prompt #4 (15 mins, if a 90 min session)</p>	<p>Read “Student of Clouds” by Billy Collins and watch the short video compilation of clouds by John Constable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider the visual aspect of clouds, and write a sensory memory of clouds, or see clouds in your imagination. ● Compose a concrete poem that is shaped like a cloud.
<p>Wrap- up</p>	<p>Ask writers to share one or two things they learned and what they might take away from this lesson.</p>

This lesson plan is free to download and use. The Writing Water Curriculum Project (WWCP) was developed in 2021-2022 with support from The Colorado Water Center at Colorado State University and in collaboration with interns at the Community Literacy Center. Special thanks to Emily Iskin, our graduate research assistant and expert in fluvial geomorphology, who provided essential consultation in water science and created original water-inspired art for the WWCP webpage.

Our Planet Excerpt “Fresh Water”

Source: Fothergill & Scholey, 2019, pg 71-73

The world's greatest rivers are our planet's arteries. Their flows maintain the water cycle, carrying rain falling on the land back to the oceans, where it evaporates into the air to create more rain. They are also breeding grounds and thoroughfares for nature, linking the planet's ecosystems. Rivers bring water from mountains to deserts. They bring migratory fish from the oceans to their spawning grounds far inland. And they bring rich silt that keeps flood plains fertile and protects estuarine cities from rising seas.

Above all they bring life. Nearly half of all the world's fish species live in rivers. It is no coincidence that the world's largest and most biodiverse rainforest occupies the drainage basin of the world's largest river, the Amazon.

The great rivers also sustain humanity. Hundreds of millions of people depend on the flow of rivers for their food, either directly from catching fish or indirectly when flooding rivers water their fields and pastures. That is why almost all civilizations began on major rivers, including ancient Egypt on the Nile, Mesopotamia on the Tigris and Euphrates, and China on the Yellow River.

“Student of Clouds” by Billy Collins

Source: [Poetry Foundation](#)

The emotion is to be found in clouds,
not in the green solids of the sloping hills
or even in the gray signatures of rivers,
according to Constable, who was a student of clouds
and filled shelves of notebooks with their motion,
their lofty gesturing and sudden implication of weather.

Outdoor, he must have looked up thousands of times,
his pencil trying to keep pace with their high voyaging
and the silent commotion of the eddying and flow.
Clouds would move beyond the outlines he would draw
as they moved within themselves, tumbling into their centers
and swirling off at the burning edges in vapors
to dissipate into the universal blue of the sky.

In photographs we can stop all this movement now
long enough to tag them with their Latin names.
Cirrus, nimbus, stratocumulus -
dizzying, romantic, authoritarian -

they bear their titles over the schoolhouses below
where their shapes and meanings are memorized.

High on the soft blue canvases of Constable
they are stuck in pigment but his clouds appear
to be moving still in the wind of his brush,
inching out of England and the nineteenth century
and sailing over these meadows where I am walking,
bareheaded beneath the cupola of motion,
my thoughts arranged like paint on a high blue ceiling.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?contentId=37259>

OTHER LINKS EMBEDDED ABOVE:

City of Fort Collins Water: <https://www.fcgov.com/utilities/water-sources>

Charity: water: <https://www.charitywater.org>

Xeriscape: <https://planttalk.colostate.edu/topics/water-wise-xeriscape/1901-xeriscape-basics>

Concrete poetry: <https://www.theartstory.org/movement/concrete-poetry>