



Water

Recommended year group: Year 7

Subject focus: English, Geography, RE, PD

Driving Question - Does water always 'win'?

Introduction

The Water theme explores how water works, why it matters, and how it shapes both the Earth and human life. Students begin by learning about water as a chemical, investigating its molecular structure, solubility and states of matter within the hydrological cycle. They then study water as a physical force, describing how rivers and glaciers shape landscapes and affect ecosystems such as coral reefs.

Students also examine the impact of water on human communities by analysing weather and climate, the causes and effects of water pollution, and the challenges faced by places with limited access to clean water. They explore water as a symbol in religion and culture, and use persuasive writing to respond to humanitarian questions linked to water scarcity.

Throughout the theme, students consider whether water or the life it supports holds the most power, returning to the Driving Question: **Does water always 'win'?**



Learning Checks

Lesson 3: Rivers: How are rivers formed? *SE.GE.03 – Understanding physical geography concepts and their interrelationships with places, environments and processes*

Lesson 7: Big Read: *Blessing* by Imtiaz Dharker: How does Imtiaz use language to describe *how precious water is*? *RL.ID.04 – Interpreting Words and Phrases (Reading)*

Lesson 9: Big Write - is water the most important item in history? : *CL.WP.02 – Produce clear and coherent writing (Voice)*

Cultural Capital suggestions

 Watch BBC Earth: Blue Planet – shows the power and beauty of oceans, waves and marine ecosystems

 Listen

WaterAid Stories of Change podcast – real stories of access to clean water
[WaterAid - YouTube](#)

 Look NASA Earth Observatory – Water Cycle Gallery - [The Water Cycle - NASA Science](#)

Key vocabulary

Amplitude, Baptism, Believer's baptism, Climate, Compound, Confluence, Context, Contamination, Ecosystem, Element, Emotive language, Forecast, Glacier, Glacier snout, Godparents, Humidity, Imagery, Impermeable surfaces, Infiltration, Insoluble, Interception, Marine life, Meander, Meltwater, Metaphor, Molecule, Oxbow lake, Original sin, Oscillation, Particle, Persuasive, Plucking, Poetic device, Polarity, Pollution, Precious, Precipitation, Prolonged rainfall, Rhetorical question, Saturated, Sewage, Solubility, Soluble, Solution, Solvent, Source, Statistics, Surface run off, Symbol, Temperature, Transverse wave, Tributary, U shaped valley, Variable, Wastewater, Wavelength, Weather

Extended learning opportunities

Careers

These ideas can be used alongside the lessons in order to discover career pathways associated with key elements of learning from this theme.

Explore careers linked to water: hydrologist, marine biologist, civil engineer, plumber, water quality scientist, environmental journalist.
[Plumber - Youth Employment UK](#)

[Careers Advice for Young People - Youth Employment UK](#)

Places to visit

This section offers a selection of virtual trips which support knowledge of key areas and attractions from the lessons.

[Virtual escapes: Britain's most peaceful rivers and streams | Countryfile.com](#)

Clubs

WaterAid Charity Fundraisers: [Clean Water, Decent Toilets and Good Hygiene | WaterAid UK](#)



People, Place and Time

The 'People, Place and Time' resources provide support to key knowledge throughout the theme. More specifically:

- **People:** famous individuals connected with water
- **Place:** places in the world where water has won – flooding around the world
- **Time:** Major droughts in history

Family learning opportunities

Science / STEM

- Create a home solubility experiment using sugar, salt and sand to investigate saturation (links to *Water Solutions*).
- Build a mini-water cycle in a jar to model evaporation, condensation, and precipitation.
- Investigate how sound travels through solids/liquids using tuning forks or homemade instruments (links to *Waves*).

Geography

- **Map a real UK river** from source to mouth using OS Maps (e.g. River Severn).
- **Track a glacier** using Google Earth's historical imagery (Mendenhall Glacier or Moiry Glacier).
- **Investigate your local catchment area** and how rainfall becomes run-off, groundwater or river water.

RE / Culture

- **Compare water rituals** across Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam.
- **Interview a family member** about the meaning of water in their culture or childhood.

Books that link to this theme:

1. *A Long Walk to Water* – Linda Sue Park

Explores water scarcity and humanitarian challenges (links to *Blessing*, *pollution*, *WaterAid tasks*).

2. *The Girl Who Stole an Elephant* – Nizrana Farook

Adventure across rivers and tropical landscapes; strong geography links.

3. *Floodland* – Marcus Sedgwick

A dystopian story centred on rising sea levels (links to *Storm Dennis*, erosion, flooding).

4. *Song of the Dolphin Boy* – Elizabeth Laird

Explores plastic pollution and responsibility for oceans.

5. *The Explorer* – Katherine Rundell

Set in the Amazon basin; rich river and ecosystem imagery.

6. *Running on the Roof of the World* – Jess Butterworth

Set in the Himalayas; includes glacier landscapes and meltwater links.

7. *Where the River Runs Gold* – Sita Brahmachari

Environmental themes with rivers, scarcity and activism.

8. *Tarka the Otter* – Henry Williamson

A classic that explores British rivers and ecosystems.

9. *The Water Book* – Alok Jha

Non-fiction guide to the science of water (molecules, states, oceans, weather).

10. *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind (Young Readers Edition)* – William Kamkwamba

Links to the power of water, weather, climate and problem-solving.

Lessons

Lesson title	Subject	Essential knowledge/concepts	Competencies	National curriculum coverage
Lesson 1: What is water?	Science	Identify the chemical structure of a water molecule. Describe properties of a water molecule. Explain how water is used around the world to support human life.	SC.CS.01: Using scientific ideas: Develop scientific knowledge and understanding through the specific areas of biology, chemistry, and physics to understand the uses and implications of science, today and for the future.	Science – Chemistry: Students should be taught the particle nature of matter, changes of state in terms of the particle model. Students should be taught the differences between atoms, elements, and compounds.
Lesson 2: Water solutions	Science	Use scientific terminology: solvent, solute, solution. Describe how temperature and other factors affect solubility. Explain saturated solutions using particle model.	SC.ES.01: Planning scientific enquiries: Develop understanding of the nature, processes, and methods of science through different types of science enquiries that help you to answer scientific questions about the world around you. SC.PE.01: Presenting data: Develop data analysis and statistics skills through presenting and interpreting observations to make and evaluate reasoned conclusions that may lead to further investigation.	Science: Working scientifically: Experimental skills and investigations. Students should be taught to make predictions using scientific knowledge and understanding. Chemistry: Pure and impure substances. Physics: Matter: Physical changes.
Lesson 3: Rivers	Geography	Identify key features of a river.	SE.GE.03: Demonstrate understanding of physical geography concepts and their	KS3 Geography: Understand how geographical processes interact to create distinctive human and physical landscapes that change over time. Human and physical geography:

		Discuss cause/effect in physical geography (rivers). Explain processes occurring at river features.	interrelationships with places, environments and processes.	Physical geography relating to geographical timescales and hydrology.
Lesson 4: Weather and Climate	Geography	Define the concepts of weather and climate. Explain purpose/importance of a weather report. Apply key words to a weather report and climate graph.	SE.GE.03: Demonstrate understanding of physical geography concepts and their interrelationships with places, environments and processes.	KS3 Geography - "Understand how human and physical processes interact to influence and change landscapes, environments and the climate." KS3 Science "Understand the key processes in weather and climate"
Lesson 5: Flooding – Storm Dennis	Geography	Identify the causes of flooding. Analyse the aftermaths of floods on local communities. Evaluate flood prevention methods.	SE.GE.03 Demonstrate understanding of physical geography concepts and their interrelationships with places, environments and processes.	KS3 Geography: Understand the processes that give rise to key physical and human geographical features of the world, how these are interdependent and how they bring about spatial variation and change over time.
Lesson 6: Glacial environments	Geography	Describe the formation of a glacier. Explain how glaciers cause erosion. Examine how glaciers shape the landscape.	SE.GE.03 Demonstrate understanding of physical geography concepts and their interrelationships with places, environments, and processes.	KS3 Geography: The processes that give rise to key physical and human geographical features of the world, how these are interdependent and how they bring about spatial variation and change over time.
Lesson 7: Holy water and Baptism	R.E.	Describe how baptism is celebrated.	SE.RE.03: Make connections between religious beliefs and practices (learning about religion).	RE SACRE: B3 Consider and evaluate the question: what is religion? Analyse the nature of religion using the main disciplines by which religion is studied.

		Explain the symbolism of baptism.		
Lesson 8: Big Read: Blessing by Imtiaz Dharker	English	Identify and describe the key poetic devices present in Imtiaz Dharker's poem, Blessing. Explain the importance of water for the community of Dharavi.	RL.ID.03: Identify and interpret language devices, sentence forms, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings and analyse how they affect meaning or tone.	KS3 English: Develop an appreciation and a love of reading, read increasingly challenging material independently through contemporary poetry. Read critically through knowing how language, including figurative language, vocabulary choice, grammar, text structure and organisational features, presents meaning.
Lesson 9: Water pollution	Science	Describe water pollution. Identify the causes of water pollution. Examine the effects of water pollution on human and animal life.	SE.GE.02: Human Geography Demonstrate understanding of human geography concepts and their interrelationships with places, environments, and processes. SC.SL.03: Develop and adapt speaking skills and strategies in formal and informal contexts (speeches and presentations).	KS3 Geography: Human and physical geography: understand how human and physical processes interact to influence and change landscapes, environments, and the climate.
Lesson 10: Does water always win Big Write	English	Understand key features of persuasive writing. Use and develop AFOREST. Apply persuasive techniques in a speech.	CL.WP.02: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organisation, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (Voice)	KS3 English "Pupils should write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences." "Pupils should refine their drafting skills and develop resilience to write at length." "Pupils should acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language."
Lesson 11: Waves	Science	Identify the difference between transverse and longitudinal waves.	SC.CS.01: Using Scientific Ideas: Develop scientific knowledge and understanding	Science KS3 "Pupils should describe associated processes and key characteristics in common language, and use technical

		Describe energy transfer through waves. Explain behaviours of sound and water waves in different media.	through the specific areas of biology, chemistry and physics to understand the uses and implications of science, today and for the future.	terminology accurately and precisely.”
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