

WATER AND POWER

Activity 1: What is power?

Step 1

Arrange the students into small groups. Print and give out a set of power quotes (Appendix One) to each group and ask the students to rank them in order of which quotes they think best represents their idea of power. Some of the quotes are slightly abstract, so encourage the students to discuss what they think the quotes mean. These quotes are also contained on slide 24 for use with the whole class.

- The power to question is the basis of all human progress – **Indira Gandhi**
- Character is power – **Booker T Washington**
- When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful – **Malala Yousafzai**
- The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any – **Alice Walker**
- Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely – **John Dalberg-Acton**
- Knowledge is power – **Francis Bacon**

Step 2

Ask the students to come up with examples of people who have power at the following levels (Appendix Two and Slide 25 if using as a whole class activity):

- School
- Community
- Nationally
- Internationally

Ask the students to consider what gives their chosen examples their power? How would they describe this type of power? How did these people get their power? Are they using their power in a mostly positive or negative way?

Step 3

Diamond ranking (Appendix Three and Slide 26): Rank the following Irish people in order of how powerful you believe them to be, from the most powerful at the top, to the least powerful at the bottom. Only nine names can be chosen for the diamond ranking activity, so think through each person and be able to justify your choices.

Step 4

Sources of power: Max Weber, a famous German sociologist, describes legitimate power, or authority, as having three sources:

Charismatic (based on personality and charisma); **Traditional** (based on customs, beliefs, traditions); and **Legal** (based on position, rules, system). Which type(s) of legitimate power, if any, would you attribute to each of the people in your diamond ranking?

Step 5

Your Power Ranking: Ask the students to create their own power Diamond Ranking Diagram, using the nine people they feel from their perspective have the most power. Ask each student to do this individually, as each power ranking should be from the young person's perspective. Ensure they consider all four levels: School; Community; National; International.

Activity 2: Power in Society

Step 1

The most common manifestation of power in society is through the government of the day, which can take many forms. Split the students up into pairs and ask them to match the definition to the type of government (Appendix Four and slide 27).

Step 2

In the third column, give an example of a country that has this type of government, either from the past or the present.

Step 3: Agree or disagree.

Choose one side of the room for agree, and one side for disagree. Explain to the students that they will hear a series of statements ((below and slide 28), and they must choose if they agree with the statement, disagree, or are somewhere in between. Read out each statement in turn, giving students time to consider where they stand. Ask 2/3 students to explain why they have chosen to stand where they are.

- **Statement one** – Democracy is the fairest form of government.
- **Statement two** – Having one person in charge is bad for a country.
- **Statement three** – Anarchy is better than having an oppressive government.

- **Statement four** – Religion and government are a bad mix.
- **Statement five** – Democratic governments are always fair to all people.

Step 4

Many people often do not feel represented by the people in power in their country. Perhaps they did not vote for them, or they live in a country where they do not agree with the person or people in control. This can often lead to unrest, and violence, and can happen for many reasons.

In times of conflict, countries and territories are sometimes occupied by external forces who are not recognised as legitimate holders of power. Occupying forces will use different means to exert control over the population of a country. Ask the students if they can think of any examples of this situation, either from today or from the past (e.g. Northern Ireland, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Ukraine, Afghanistan). Who was the occupying power? How, if at all, was the situation resolved?

Sometimes focusing on one key resource, like land or water for example, can help to illustrate this feeling in a tangible way.

Teachers note – for the next two activities, students will be required to watch the Palestine section of the water justice video again. Also ensure they have gone through the Palestine PowerPoint up to slide 23.

Activity 3: Water Justice Power Map

Step 1

To complete this activity, students must firstly go through the Palestine PowerPoint, noting down the names of the different actors in this situation (e.g. Palestinians living in Gaza, Israeli Army, Palestinian Authority), and what their role/position is in relation to the others. They must also watch the Water Justice video contained in the trunk of the tree, and do the same. If you have already watched the video, then revisit the Palestine section.

Step 2

As a class, discuss and position each actor on the water power map, in relation to how powerful you think they are, and also whether their actions indicate a commitment to water justice for the many, or the few. See slide 29 of the Palestine presentation.

Step 3 – Discussion questions:

- What else do we need to know about this situation?
- Which actor(s) bears the most responsibility towards others in this situation?
- Are they demonstrating that they are taking this responsibility seriously?
- Who benefits the most from this situation?
- Who benefits the least?
- What needs to change and how?
- Do opportunities exist for change? How can change happen here?
- What would be an ethical solution here?
- How can we influence change here?
- How can our government influence change? Has it tried before? Successful?

Step 4

Discuss as a class what other actors could be introduced on to the map that might tip the balance of power towards those trying to achieve water justice for all?

Activity 4: Barriers to water justice in Palestine**Step 1**

Split the students into four groups and give each group a different set of coloured post it notes, one colour per group. Explain to the students that you are going to read out a series of statements (see appendix six), and they must decide which barrier to water justice is being described. Once they have decided, they go up to the board and put their post it notes in that square (See slide 30). The group that gets the most correct post it notes in the correct description wins.

Step 2

Extension – Ask the students to consider the situation in Palestine and compare it to the situation in Malawi. What do they see as common factors in both contexts? How are the barriers in each context similar? How are they different? Who holds the power in the situation in Malawi? Is it different? How so? Are the possible solutions in each context the same or different?

The Israeli Blockade of Gaza	Deliberate destruction of water infrastructure	Seawater intrusion	Destroyed or damaged water pipes by rockets
Contamination of ground water supply	High financial cost of water	Harsh/slow permit process for Palestinians	Population growth
Israeli Settlements	Unequal distribution of water supply	Extraction pressures on water supply	Water agreements ignored

Appendix One:

“The power to question is the basis of all human progress”
Indira Gandhi

“Character is power”
Booker T Washington

“When the whole world is silent,
even one voice becomes powerful”
Malala Yousafzai

“The most common way people give up their power
is by thinking they don’t have any”
Alice Walker

“Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely”
John Dalberg-Acton

“Knowledge is power “
Francis Bacon

Appendix Two:

Nationally

School

Internationally

Community



Appendix Three:

Source of Power:

Source of Power:

Source of Power:

Source of Power:

Source of Power:

Source of Power:

Source of Power:

Source of Power:

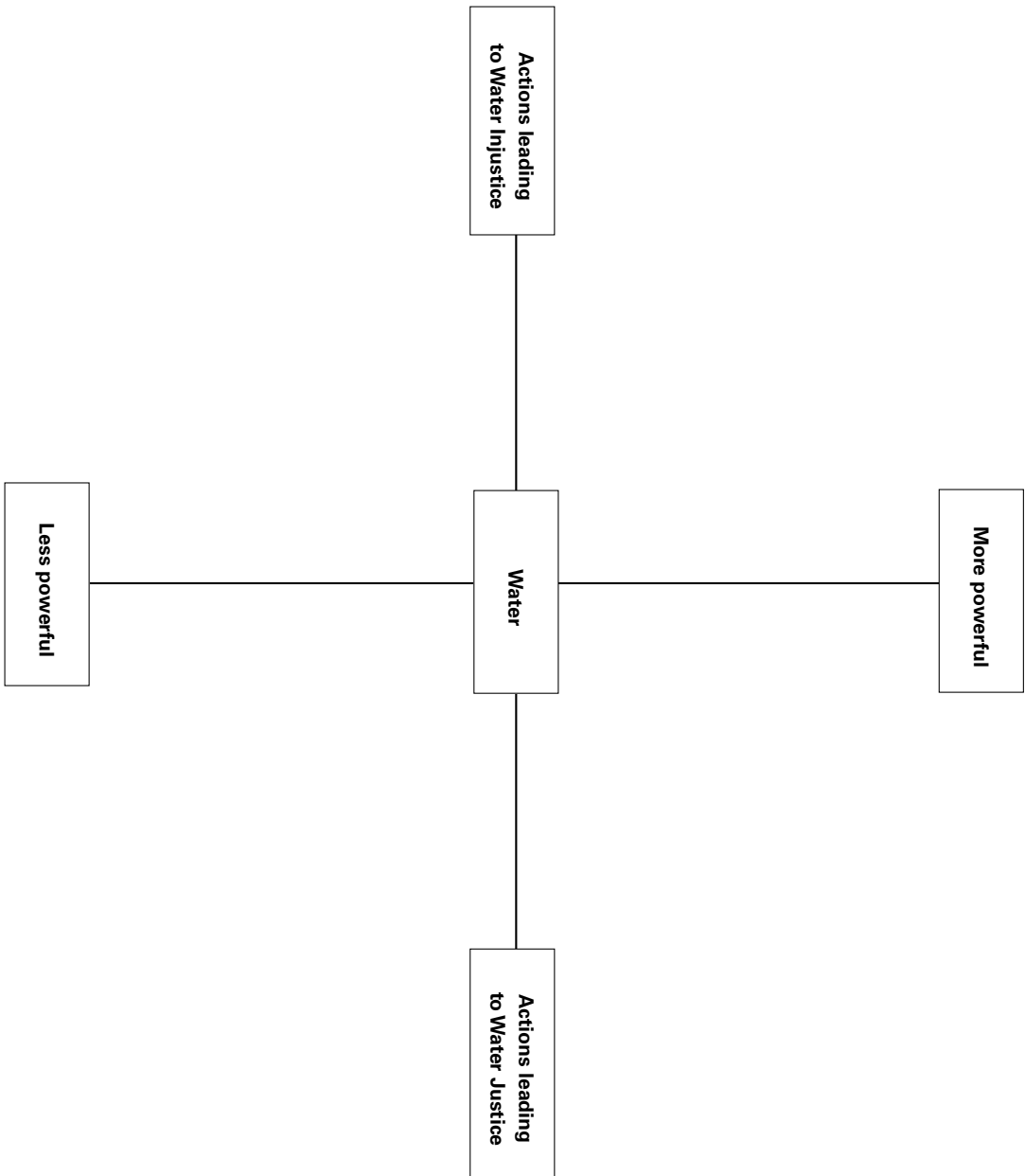
Source of Power:

Appendix Four:

Autocracy	A king or queen usually rules the country. This can be absolute, or constitutional	
Oligarchy	Power lies with all citizens of the country	
Monarchy	God is the ultimate source of power, and religious law is in control	
Dictatorship	A government in which one person has all the power	
Democracy	No government exists in the country	
Anarchy	One leader has absolute control over everything	
Theocracy	The government is controlled by a few people	

Appendix Five: Water and Power Map

Watch the water justice video, in particular the section on Palestine. Using the information contained in the video, consider where you would position the following on the Water justice power map.



- Palestinian Authority
- Israeli Water Company
- Israeli military
- Palestinian residents of The West Bank
- Palestinian residents of Gaza
- Israeli settlers

Appendix Six: Barriers to Water Justice Statements:

Deliberate destruction of water infrastructure – The water system is often targeted for damage or destruction during conflict.

Israeli Blockade of Gaza – Israel restricts the import of materials needed for water infrastructure, making it challenging to address water supply and sanitation issues. Israel also controls most of the water resources in the area, limiting Palestinians ability to access and manage these resources.

Harsh/slow permit process for Palestinians – Palestinians struggle to get permission from Israelis authorities to build or repair water infrastructure, causing delays and complications in addressing water needs.

Destroyed, damaged or failing water pipes – Water supply is often disrupted which affects the distribution of water from its source to Palestinian homes and communities. This disruption can occur due to conflicts, natural disasters, or aging infrastructure. When pipes are broken or disconnected, water cannot reach its intended destination, leading to water shortages and the inability to access clean water for drinking, cooking, and hygiene.

Extraction pressures on water supply – Palestine, particularly Gaza, faces water scarcity due to its arid climate and limited water sources during the summer months. Over-extraction of groundwater exacerbates this problem.

Seawater intrusion - In Gaza, the over-pumping of groundwater has led to the intrusion of salty seawater into underground aquifers, rendering the water undrinkable and harmful for agricultural use.

High financial cost of water – Palestinians do not have access to enough water, so must buy extra water from Israeli water companies. The cost can be very high, and it is a challenge to afford this essential resource.

Water Agreements Ignored – Israelis and Palestinians do not share water resources, and despite a plan for both to have access, this is now being disregarded by the Israelis, negatively affecting access to water for Palestinians.

Israeli Settlements – Settlers use up a disproportionate amount of the water resources in The West Bank, leading to shortages for Palestinian communities.

Unequal distribution of water supply – Israeli settlements in the West Bank often receive better access to water sources, including a higher volume of water compared to Palestinian communities. Also, large amounts of water are pumped from Palestinian land for use in Israel.

Contamination of ground water supply – Occurs when pollutants, such as sewage, chemicals, or bacteria, enter the water sources, and can lead to serious health issues when consumed or used for personal hygiene. This restricts access to safe and clean water but also poses significant health risks to Palestinians who come into contact with it.

Population growth - Increasing population in Palestinian territories puts additional pressure on already limited water resources.