PART 1: PALESTINE READING COMPREHENSION

Objectives

- Students will read and comprehend a passage about water justice in Palestine.
- Students will develop their vocabulary by familiarising themselves with key words and phrases from the text.
- Students will develop empathy with children in Palestine in the context of water justice.

Class level: Senior primary students.

Time 60 minutes

Materials

- Printed copies of the “Water Justice in Palestine” reading comprehension (one per student).
- Pencils.

Procedure

Introduction (10 minutes):

1. Remind the class of the importance of water and why it is essential for everyone to have access to clean water (the activities in the trunk of the tree provide a good introduction to this). Remind the class that, for many people around the world, having access to enough clean, safe water to meet their basic needs is a big challenge.

2. Refer to the ‘Introduction to Palestine’ppt that the class previously worked through. Ask the class to think about what kind of things might get in the way of people in the West Bank and Gaza having access to enough clean, safe water.

3. Provide a brief overview of the reading comprehension on water justice in Palestine and its main points.

Reading Comprehension (25 minutes):

1. Distribute printed copies of the reading comprehension on page 2 to each student.

2. Ask students to choose their preferred level of challenge and to select their level for the reading comprehension.

3. Students read the passage silently or aloud, depending on their preference.

4. Encourage them to underline or circle words and phrases that stand out to them or that they find interesting.

5. Students complete the tasks for each comprehension with varying levels of support as needed.

Sharing and Discussion (10 minutes):

1. Invite students to share their comprehension answers in small groups and to peer assess their work.

2. Discuss the different interpretations and perspectives reflected in their answers and address any misconceptions.

3. Encourage empathy and awareness of the water justice issues in Palestine.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

Summarise the importance of water justice and equitable access to water resources.

Assessment:

Evaluate students based on their ability to interpret their reading comprehension; in their participation in group discussion; and their understanding of the water justice issue as demonstrated in their comprehension answers. Students can self-assess after completing the reading comprehension using ‘2 stars and a wish’.

Notes for teachers:

Please complete the Introduction to Palestine PowerPoint before beginning this activity. It can be found on the Palestine branch of the tree.
Everyone deserves access to enough clean, safe water to meet their daily needs, such as drinking, washing, sanitation and agriculture. Yet millions of Palestinians face significant challenges when it comes to accessing enough clean safe water.

**Barriers to Water Access**

**Control of water sources:**
Because of the occupation of the West Bank, Israel controls the main water resources in the region, including the Mountain Aquifer beneath the West Bank. Palestinians have limited access to these shared water sources.

The blockade of Gaza that was put in place in 2007 meant that it was very difficult to get supplies into Gaza that were needed for the maintenance of water treatment plants and water pipes. In the recent conflict, Israel closed off the water supply to Gaza meaning that many people, including those who had left their homes looking for safety, did not have access to enough clean water to meet their basic needs.

**Unequal Distribution:**
Within the West Bank, water distribution is unequal. Israeli settlements receive a consistent water supply, while Palestinian communities face water shortages. Some Palestinian communities are not connected to the main water system. This means that many Palestinians must buy water and store it in big containers, and this can be very expensive. Before the recent conflict, 90% of people in Gaza did not have access to safe drinking water. The conflict means that access to safe water has become even more challenging to people in Gaza.

**Water Contamination:**
Pollution from sewage, chemicals, and agricultural runoff can contaminate natural water sources, posing health risks to those who rely on them.

Because Gaza is beside the sea, seawater can contaminate water sources and the facilities needed to make that water safe to drink have been damaged. Damage to water treatment facilities also means that the water gets contaminated with sewage that makes it unsafe to drink.

**Conflict-Related Issues:**
During times of conflict, water infrastructure like pipes, tanks and water treatment facilities can be badly damaged. Access to clean and safe water is essential for everyone, and especially when people have had to leave their homes due to conflict, as happened recently in Gaza.

**Access Restrictions:**
Israeli checkpoints and barriers in the West Bank can make it difficult for people to reach water sources, and can also make it difficult to get water-related supplies and equipment.

**Conclusion:**
Access to clean and safe water is a pressing issue for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Challenges in accessing sufficient, clean water impacts on farming, sanitation and health and is therefore pushing people further into poverty. Water is a basic human need that should be accessible to everyone.
Comprehension Questions:
1. What are some essential uses of water mentioned in the introduction?
2. What are the primary sources of water in the West Bank?
3. How can water sources become contaminated, and what are the risks associated with this?
4. How do ongoing conflicts in the region impact water access?
5. What actions can you take to improve water justice?

Post-comprehension activities:
• Ask the class what they have learned about access to water in the West Bank and Gaza?
• After completing the activity, what kind of barriers do they now think that people in the West Bank and Gaza face in accessing water?

Glossary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aquifers</th>
<th>An underground layer of water-bearing rock.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settlements</td>
<td>In the case of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, settlements are built by Israel for its citizens on Palestinian territories it has occupied since 1967. These settlements are illegal under international law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contaminate</td>
<td>To make dirty, polluted, or not usable by touching or by adding something to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Physical and organisational structures and facilities like buildings, roads, and power supplies needed for the operation of a society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blockade</td>
<td>The situation in which a country or place is surrounded by soldiers or ships to stop people or goods from moving in or out.</td>
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PART 2: BLACKOUT POETRY ACTIVITY

Objectives
• Students will read and comprehend a passage about water justice in Palestine.
• Students will create blackout poetry by selecting and emphasising key words and phrases from the text.

Class level:
Senior Primary School.

Time
60 minutes

Materials
• Printed copies of the “Water Justice in Palestine” reading comprehension (one per student).
• Black markers or pens.
• White sheets of paper (one per student).
• Pencils.

Lesson Plan: Creating Blackout Poetry from “Water Justice in Palestine”

Procedure

Introduction (10 minutes):
1. Begin by discussing the importance of water and why it is essential for everyone to have access to clean water.
2. Introduce the concept of blackout poetry and explain that it involves selecting and highlighting words from a text to create a new poem.
3. Provide a brief overview of the reading comprehension on water justice in Palestine and its main points.

Reading Comprehension (15 minutes):
1. Distribute printed copies of the reading comprehension to each student.
2. Ask students to read the passage silently or aloud, depending on their preference.
3. Encourage them to underline or circle words and phrases that stand out to them or that they find interesting.
Creating Blackout Poetry (25 minutes):
1. Provide each student with a white sheet of paper and a black marker or pen.
2. Instruct students to reread the passage and select words or short phrases that capture the essence of the text or convey a message related to water justice in Palestine.
3. Explain that they should use their black markers to completely cover the rest of the text, leaving only the selected words or phrases visible. The result will be a blackout poem.
4. Encourage creativity and self-expression in the process.
5. Walk around the classroom to offer guidance and support as needed.
6. Differentiation: If students are grasping the concept of creating blackout poetry by finding powerful words that flow to create an impactful poem, they can be encouraged to attempt to make artwork from the blackout marks on their page and/or to use a join-the-dots process for extending their poems [see examples below].

Sharing and Discussion (10 minutes):
1. Invite students to share their blackout poems with the class, explaining the words they chose and the message or feeling they aimed to convey. [Optional: Completed poems could form a Literacy/Art display in school classrooms and corridors and/or be performed in school assemblies.]
2. Discuss the different interpretations and perspectives reflected in the poems.
3. Encourage empathy and awareness of the water justice issue in Palestine.

Conclusion (5 minutes):
1. Summarise the importance of water justice and equitable access to water resources.
2. Reiterate that creative forms of expression, like blackout poetry, can help raise awareness about important global issues.

Homework (Optional):
Assign students to research further about water justice issues in their own region or another part of the world and create a blackout poem or artwork to reflect their findings. [Optional: Students can be directed to Trocaire’s Tree of Water Justice and focus on Malawi.]

Assessment
Evaluate students based on their participation in the discussion, the creativity and thoughtfulness of their blackout poems, and their understanding of the water justice issue as demonstrated in their selections of words and phrases.