Anchor Text Guidance: Grade 3, Module 4

Water Around the World

Texts and authors

One Well: The Story of Water on Earth by Rochelle Strauss
Lexile®: 960

Water Dance by Thomas Locker
Lexile®: 310

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind by Bryan Mealer and William Kamkwamba
Lexile®: 850

Text Overview

One Well: The Story of Water on Earth introduces students to the scientific concept that all water is connected. This informational text describes the role that water plays in the lives of every species on our planet, provides details on the demands for water, and emphasizes the need to protect and conserve water for future generations. *One Well* also provides students with scientific facts detailing the effects of global warming and climate change and offers a call to action for students to become well aware that all of us have the power to conserve and protect our planet's water. Written by environmental consultant Rochelle Straus and illustrated by Rosemary Woods, *One Well* is part of CitizenKid, a collection of books that informs children about the world and inspires them to be better global citizens.

Water Dance by Thomas Locker is a lyrical illustrated story that combines art, poetry, nature, and science into a dance about the water cycle. The text personifies nature through prose and consists primarily of illustrations of nature. Be mindful of students who may not have been out of a city environment and may not be able to connect a personal experience to the illustrations.

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind describes the scientific achievements of a Malawian boy named William Kamkwamba. While the text celebrates and uplifts William's empathy, perseverance, and successes, it also features descriptions of the hardships surrounding William and his community, namely, drought and famine. This topic may be upsetting for students, so it is important to foster inclusive action by creating space for students to express their feelings

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about the text. Be aware that these discussions can help create equity and amplify student voices, but may also unearth trauma.

In addition, be mindful that *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* might present as being representative of African life overall. Although William's intention is to recount his experiences as he lived them, his descriptions of Africa may unintentionally reinforce stereotypes of the continent as homogeneous, composed only of poor countries and communities. EL Education recommends that teachers begin by introducing the book and explaining where Malawi is, asking students to locate the country using maps, globes, and/or online resources. Consider showing students current pictures of Malawi and Lilongwe, the capital city on the Lilongwe River. Highlight for students that Lilongwe is not so different from cities in the United States (it is an important economic and transportation hub, people live in houses and high-rise apartment buildings similar to those found in the United States, etc.). Refer to the teacher notes throughout the module for ideas on how to help students construct a truer and more dynamic understanding of Africa.

EL Education's Grade 3, Module 4 is designed to prompt consideration of these compelling questions:

- Why are the world's freshwater sources threatened?
- Due to rainfall, freshwater is not distributed equally around the world. How do people persuade others to take action to contribute to a better world?

By reading the module texts, students build scientific context around water conservation and historical context around the experiences and perspectives of others. Students develop a deep and critical understanding of the impact and issues of water conservation and focus on working to contribute to a better world by taking care of and improving the environment. Finally, students apply their learning about helping the environment by planning and writing opinion essays and creating Public Service Announcements (PSAs).

Text Rationale

EL Education is committed to promoting students' work to become ethical people through the study of the importance of clean freshwater around the world. Students begin the module with the text *Water Dance*. Here, they engage with the module topic through poetry and illustrations and begin to practice making inferences (RI.3.1) and determining the central message of a text (RL.3.2).

One Well: The Story of Water on Earth builds students' background knowledge about freshwater around the world and introduces the three issues they will study throughout the module: access to water, demands on water, and water pollution. Students use *One Well* to analyze how illustrations help the reader better understand the text, determine main ideas and supporting details (SL.3.2), and ask and answer text-dependent questions.

Students continue their study of the three issues related to water as they read and analyze the point of view of *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*. They first listen to the story for the gist and think about what the authors are trying to tell the reader about water (RI.3.4, L.3.4). Students then determine the authors' points of view about challenges related to clean water, comparing this point of view to experiences of their own (RI.3.1, RI.3.6).

Additional Considerations

In the process of designing this module, EL Education accessed research about water conservation, water demand and access, and water use around the world. Investigate the routines, practices, rituals, beliefs, norms, and experiences that are important to your students and their families, and integrate this background into the classroom as students explore and discuss the topics of water access, water pollution, and demands on water. Be sensitive to students' experiences and perspectives, and foster inclusive action by creating space for students to express their feelings, while being aware that these discussions may unearth trauma or social stigma. Teaching notes throughout the module identify potentially troubling content and provide suggestions for teachers to guide students through this content with sensitivity.

EL Education recommends that school leaders and teachers read the texts in advance, with their specific school community in mind, to become familiar with the issues presented so that they can discuss them with students and families as needed.

Examples of sensitive topics that teachers should be prepared to address are detailed below.

1. Single Narrative

One Well: The Story of Water on Earth may suggest a single narrative to students as they analyze the text and the illustrations that support it. Consider the statement on page 4: "So whether you are turning on a faucet in North America, pulling water from a well in Kenya, or bathing in a river in India..." This wording might imply that everyone has faucets in North America, everyone in Kenya drinks water from a well, and everyone in India bathes in a river. Additionally, illustrations depict Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) near a well (page 9), tending crops (page 10), surrounded by African animals (page 13), and with a bucket of water next to them (page 20). Students will need a counter narrative to avoid leaning into stereotyping. Finally, when reading page 17, it is important to point out that some people do not have running water in North America. Be particularly sensitive to the illustrations in the text, and encourage students to use Conversation Cues to promote productive and equitable conversation.

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind may also represent a single narrative or single story. This text's intention is to present William Kamkwamba's experiences in Africa as he lived them, but his story may unintentionally reinforce stereotypes or existing views students might hold of the African continent as homogeneous, composed only of poor countries and communities. The text may also oversimplify the other causes of famine beyond drought, e.g., deforestation, international and American political interests, and the policies of the Malawi government. Be particularly sensitive to international students or immigrant students from African regions, and be intentional in honoring the pride that they feel for their home continent and countries.

Supplemental Texts

There are several supplemental informational texts used in the module for students' research reading, including "Access to Freshwater" and "Real Lives: Angola, Africa." Each of these texts represent a single story written at a specific time. Help students understand how it is in our nature as humans to group people into categories, which can unintentionally lead to a simplistic or incomplete understanding of people, places, and events. A single story can result in stereotyping.

In "Access to Freshwater," the text states, "Residents in the UK can turn on a tap and access safe drinking water whenever they like, but the situation is very different for the people of Africa." This article was written by an organization in the United Kingdom (UK) called Plan International UK, which aims to develop a community of sponsors that supports children all over the world. This is why the article talks about UK residents (people who live in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales). In fact, not all people in the UK can turn on a tap and access safe drinking water, nor does the phrase "the people of Africa" include all of the people of the continent of Africa. The purpose of the text is likely to appeal to people's emotions by highlighting the privilege of most of the people in the UK in comparison with many people in other regions. It is important to call this out for students, as they use this text to determine the main idea and compare and contrast it to *One Well*.

"Real Lives: Angola, Africa" is an informational article from UNICEF that students use to analyze point of view and compare and contrast with *One Well*. The article depicts a moment in time near the end of the Angolan civil war (1975–2002), which is estimated to have killed about a half million people. That death toll was exacerbated by famine and disease. Consider researching a modern view of Angola in the years since the civil war and sharing the progress the country has made in its infrastructure and access to water. Refer to the teacher notes throughout the lessons for ideas on how to help students construct a truer and more dynamic understanding of Angola in their minds. Also consider preteaching vocabulary from the article, paying particular attention to student engagement strategies in the lessons (Conversation Cues, discussion protocols, anchor charts, concept mapping, exit tickets).

As with the anchor texts, be particularly sensitive to international students and English language learners (ELLs) from African regions whose experiences may reflect or diverge from what is represented in these supplemental texts. Investigate the routines, practices, rituals, beliefs, norms, and experiences that are important to your students and their families. Integrate this background into the classroom as students continue to explore and discuss the topics of water access, water pollution, and demands on water.

Tasks

Throughout the module, there are tasks that intentionally or incidentally serve to mitigate possible concerns and support students' enthusiastic, informed, and safe reading.

Unit 1

Lesson 1: In this lesson, students are introduced to the module guiding questions, which include why the world's freshwater supply is threatened. Be aware that some students may connect with this topic personally and deeply; there are many people in the United States who do not have access to running or clean/safe water for a variety of reasons. Monitor students and determine whether there are any issues surfacing that need to be discussed in more detail as a whole group, in smaller groups, independently, or with families. Students' feelings may be personal, and they are not required to share them. Use Conversation Cues to promote productive and equitable discussion and be sensitive to students' and families' feelings and experiences regarding access to water.

Lesson 8: In this lesson, students are introduced to the complex text "Access to Freshwater," which they hear read aloud, read closely and determine the main idea of, and compare and contrast with a section of *One Well*. Follow the Close Reading Guide: "Access to Freshwater" to guide students through reading the text closely. Tell students that this article was written by an organization in the UK called Plan International UK, which aims to develop a community of sponsors that supports children all over the world. This is why the text talks about UK residents—people who live in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Note for students that not all people in the UK can turn on a tap and access safe drinking water, nor does the phrase from the article "the people of Africa" include all of the people of the continent of Africa. Emphasize that the purpose of the text is likely to appeal to people's emotions by highlighting the privilege of most of the people in the UK compared to a lot of other parts of the world. Again, be sensitive to combat against the "single story" as students work to deepen their understanding of water access, demand, and conservation.

Unit 2

ALL Block: During Additional Work with Complex Text work time in this unit, students reread "Real Lives: Angola, Africa." They also work on identifying and/or distinguishing the author's point of view from their own. During Reading and Speaking Fluency/GUM work time, students reread the article for fluency and accuracy. Recall that this article represents a single story written at a specific time. Help students understand how it is in our nature as humans to group people into categories, which can lead to a simplistic or incomplete understanding of people, places, and events, and that a "single story" can result in stereotyping. Be particularly sensitive to international students and ELLs from African regions, and be sensitive to students' experiences and perspectives on these topics. Foster inclusive action by creating space for students to express their feelings about issues embedded in the text, while being aware that these discussions may unearth trauma or social stigma.

Lesson 2: In Lesson 1, students reviewed three main issues related to water. In this lesson, they learn more about one person's experience with one of these issues: access to water. Continue to use Conversation Cues to promote productive and equitable conversation.

Lesson 4: Here, students complete the Mid-Unit 2 Assessment using the text "Dry Days in Australia" (RI.3.1, RI.3.4, RI.3.6, L.3.5a). Students focus on working to become effective learners by reading and answering questions independently. They also focus on working to contribute to a better world by discussing how people in Australia take care of the environment by conserving water.

Unit 3

In this unit, students can participate in optional Language Dives in Lessons 3, 5, and 6. These Language Dives support ELLs and all students in deconstructing, reconstructing, and practicing the meaning and structures of sentences from a model PSA script and a model invitational letter. Refer to the Module 1 Teacher Guide Appendix or the EL Education Tools page (https://curriculum.eleducation.org/tools/k-8) for additional information on Language Dives.

Unit 3 focuses on engaging students in acts of service around issues related to water. Consider the following options to deepen student learning:

- Invite a local Department of Water representative to visit your classroom (or join you on a virtual platform) to discuss efforts being made to keep your community or state's water accessible, clean, and conserved.
- Invite members of a water conservation group to visit your classroom (or join you on a virtual platform) and share their work on preserving local water sources.
- Visit (in person or virtually) a water treatment plant to investigate how water is cleaned.
- Visit a stream or river with an expert naturalist to explore how pollution has affected the site.
- Measure and monitor pollution at a local water resource.
- "Adopt" a local stream.
- Create water issue flyers about each challenge to water for students to distribute at various local sites: grocery stores, gas stations, libraries, etc.
- Participate in water pollution cleanup opportunities around a local water resource.
- Fundraise for an access-to-water project.

Including Families

Families of students working through this module are invited to discuss any concerns they have about the texts with their children and the teacher. Teaching notes throughout the module recommend that teachers speak to families of students who may be particularly affected by the topics encountered. Notes in the homework materials distributed to families recommend that they reach out to teachers with questions or concerns about the texts. These materials also encourage families to talk with their children about the texts they are reading, particularly if any of the topics raised might be sensitive to a particular student.