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Activity

Quiz: Water and water security

This short quiz could be used as a brief introductory activity to begin discussion about water and water resources. It partners the ‘Water security and the impacts of desalination in Chile’ and other articles in GEOGRAPHY REVIEW Vol. 39, No. 3. The correct answers are given below, along with some additional information.

- 1 The correct answer is C, 71%. The volume of water is 1.38 billion cubic kilometres. 97% of this is saltwater in seas and oceans.
- 2 The correct answer is B, Brazil. Brazil’s annual renewable water resources (freshwater sources naturally replenished by the hydrological cycle i.e. rain, rivers and groundwater) are 8.6 billion cubic metres per year. Russia, the USA, Canada and China make up the rest of the top 5.
- 3 The correct answer is D, the UAE. Annual precipitation is about 80 mm per year. Despite this the UAE has very high water use per person at 500–600 litres per person per day. Almost all of this comes from desalination.
- 4 The correct answer is A, 50 litres. The UN states that water is a human right and recognises that 50–100 litres are needed per person per day. See <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/water> for more details.
- 5 The correct answer is B, Denmark. Water costs Danish households around €9 per cubic metre. This compares with €3.50 in the UK and €2 in Italy. Water pricing can be used as way of encouraging lower water consumption, although this may risk lower-income groups not having access to enough water.
- 6 The correct answer is D, farming and food production. Agriculture accounts for about 70% of world water use. Domestic consumption accounts for about 10%. The figures do vary considerably by country. See: <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/agricultural-water-as-a-share-of-total-water-withdrawals?tab=map>
- 7 The correct answer is B, 1 in 4 people or 2.1 billion people. See: <https://www.who.int/news/item/26-08-2025-1-in-4-people-globally-still-lack-access-to-safe-drinking-water---who--unicef>
- 8 The correct answer is C, number 6. The Goal has three targets: universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all, access to sanitation and hygiene and improving water quality by reducing pollution. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- 9 The correct answer is D, the Rivers Ganges in India. Some 600 million people (similar to the population of North America) depend on the Ganges for their primary water supply. Around 300 million depend on the River Nile..
- 10 The correct answer is B, about 1%. There are over 20,000 desalination plants in the world producing about 100 million cubic metres of water per day. This a tiny fraction of overall demand. Some countries, like the UAE, Isreal and Saudi Arabia are heavily dependent on it however.