

# WHAT IS YOUR WATER FOOTPRINT?



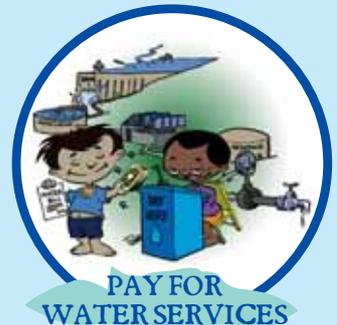
RESPECT WATER  
RESPECT LIFE



DON'T WASTE  
WATER



DON'T POLLUTE  
WATER



PAY FOR  
WATER SERVICES



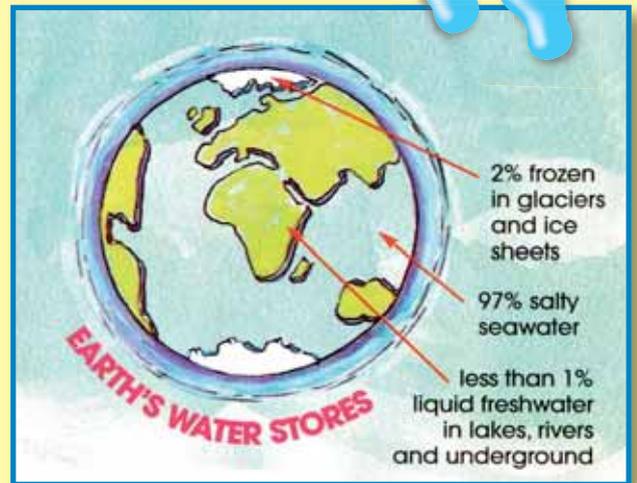
ENVIRONMENTAL  
ACTION



CONSERVE WATER  
CONSERVE THE ENVIRONMENT

## Water on our planet

Most people today have heard about Ecological Footprints. They are a measure of the Earth's natural resources needed to support each person's lifestyle. But, have you ever thought that you might have a water footprint? What effect do you have on the Earth's water resources? The amount of freshwater on Earth is actually very small, as most of the water is either salty ocean water or frozen in the polar ice caps. Less than one percent of the Earth's water is available for sustaining people and life on land.



Most of Earth's water is salty or frozen and is not available as fresh drinking water. See the activity on page 22 to demonstrate this.

## Water is getting dirty

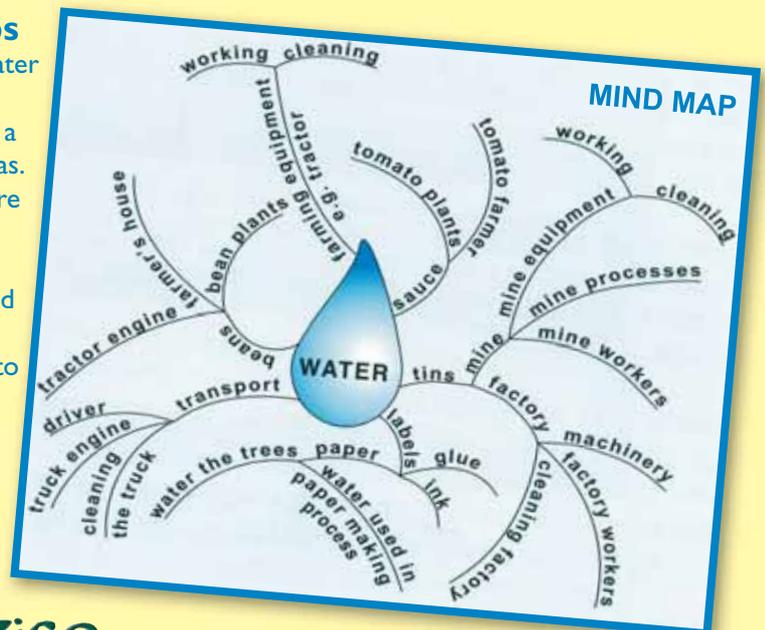
With the world's increasing number of people, some countries are experiencing water shortages, and South Africa is one of them. To make matters worse, we are polluting our water at a rapid rate. This means that our freshwater supplies are getting dirtier and more difficult to clean. So what can we do?

## Using Water Wisely

To be 'Water Wise' means that you live according to the 6 actions on the left. Do you know how to use water wisely at home and at school? Actions like turning the tap off while brushing your teeth, taking short showers instead of bathing, and fixing leaking taps can all help. But, wait a minute, we use water for many more things than just washing, cleaning and cooking – called your **direct** water use! What about the **'hidden'** or **'virtual water'** used to produce the milk that you use on your breakfast cereal? Or the burger you eat for lunch? Or even the T-shirt you wear? We need water to make everything we use in our daily lives. So, how much water goes into producing all of these items, and how does this affect your water footprint?

## Making mind maps

First, let's look at where water is used to make an item. Below is a mind map – it is a neat way to summarise ideas. It shows all the places where water is used to make and transport a can of baked beans to the shop. You could try this by drawing a mind map of how water is used to make a glass of apple juice – think about growing the fruit, producing petrol to transport the fruit and the juice, making and packaging the juice and the glass.



## Virtual water and your water footprint

What is the difference between your 'water footprint' and 'virtual water'?

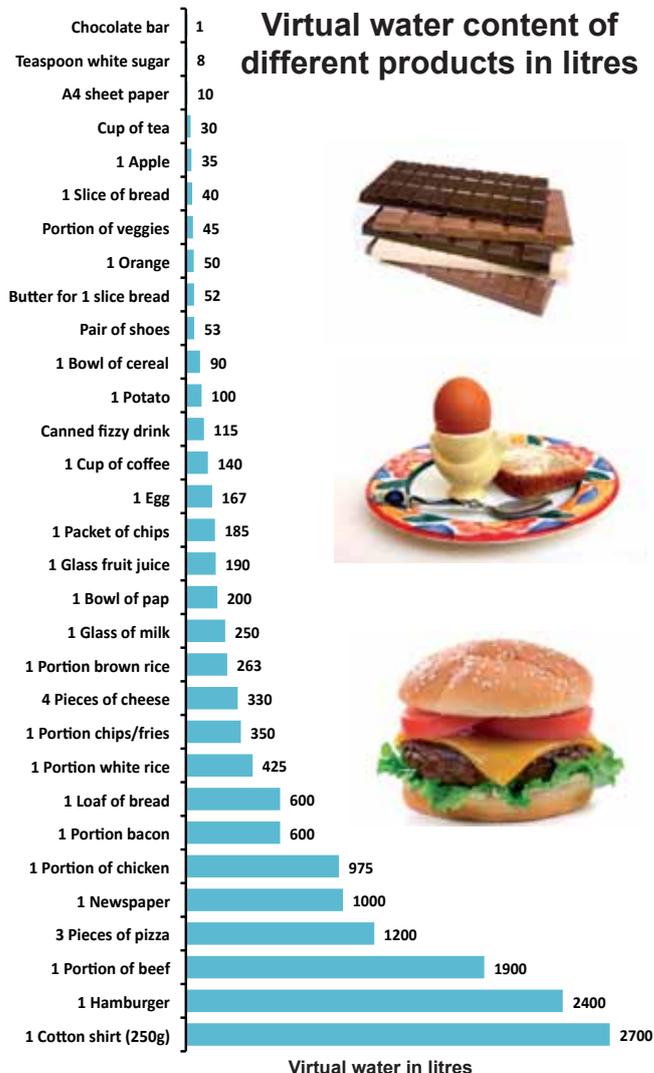
### Water Footprint

This is the total amount of water that you use in your daily life. It is the 'direct' water use in your home + the 'hidden' water used to produce your goods and services.

### Virtual Water

This is the amount of 'hidden' water used to produce a product (e.g. a chocolate bar) or a service from start to finish – see the graph on the right.

How can we use water wisely and decrease our water footprints so that there is enough water for people and nature? Besides taking direct action to save water in our homes, we can know how much virtual water goes into making the things that we use and the food that we eat, each day. We can make Water Wise decisions and choose food that has a smaller virtual water content.



### BREAKFAST MENU

Fill in the virtual water needed to make the items that you choose to have for Sunday breakfast.

1 glass fruit juice = \_\_\_\_\_ litres

A bowl of pap = \_\_\_\_\_ litres

1 egg = \_\_\_\_\_ litres

1 portion of bacon = \_\_\_\_\_ litres

A slice of bread = \_\_\_\_\_ litres

Butter for 1 slice = \_\_\_\_\_ litres

A cup of coffee = \_\_\_\_\_ litres

TOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_ litres

### Making Water Wise choices

1. What do you eat for Sunday breakfast? Use the graph to enter the virtual water content of your meal on the breakfast menu on the left.
2. Compare the virtual water content of your whole Sunday breakfast to that of one hamburger.
3. How much virtual water goes into making one cotton shirt weighing 250g? \_\_\_\_\_ litres
4. What if you had to add up the amount of virtual water of all the products and services that you use in one day, i.e. the food that you eat; the clothes you wear; the things you use – and the direct water that you use for drinking, washing, etc.? All this water added together would be your water footprint for one day. The world average is about 3 400 litres of water per person per day!
5. How could you reduce your water footprint? Can you change your eating habits? Is it better to eat more healthy, less processed food, or fast food? How does this affect your health and your water footprint? What about the items that you buy in the shops – do you really need them, and so many?

By eating healthy food and buying fewer products, you are being **WATER WISE!!!**