

2010 DALLAS WATER UTILITIES ESSAY CONTEST GRAND PRIZE WINNER

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The Effects of Water Conservation

Have you ever been puzzled by the fact that many people around the world struggle to obtain water while the Earth is covered with 70% of it? Well the truth is, this percentage is salt water—not meant for human intake—and only 1% of the entire Earth is made up of consumable water. With our population levels rapidly booming and our water sources gradually declining, water conservation is certainly a thing of consideration.

The saying: “You can’t go green without going blue” is indeed very true. When it comes to saving our planet, saving water comes before saving trees. If all U.S. households installed water-efficient appliances, the country would save more than 3 trillion gallons of water and more than \$18 billion dollars per year!¹ Even though water is a unique renewable resource, water that is used for daily human consumption—that is to say freshwater from glaciers or streams—is quickly being threatened to scarcity. We are all familiar with the basic methods on how to conserve water, but do we know what the advantages are of doing so?

Saving water could be one of the things that grant the best outcomes in the world! If everyone were to put their small part in conserving water, our planet could live longer and we could live longer as well. The advantages of water conservation range from a better quality of life, to a more sustainable future, to massive savings in money—not to mention, that saving water also saves a great deal of energy. Water maintenance is something that should be practiced by all and incorporated into each and every one of our lives. If we all follow water conservation techniques, there is a great possibility that most of our threatened and endangered species will live longer lives. A great amount of water comes from ground water and if it is lacking, it can affect both plants and animals. However, the more water that one saves at home, at school, or at work, can greatly determine our biodiversity and wildlife for many years.

The amount of water that one wastes daily is almost equivalent to the energy that is being exhausted as well. Now it is truly impossible for one to not waste a drop of water each day, in that brushing one’s teeth, taking showers, flushing toilets, and washing dishes are part of everyday life. But even though these crucial tasks are to be performed daily, one can definitely measure out the way one does them. Some abuse the availability of water while others take it for granted. Some actually put in effort into conserving it, but the vast majority remains indifferent towards it. When one conserves water, one saves energy at the same time since electric power is derived from water. What can be better than minimizing the use of water and energy and at the same time lowering the cost of monthly bills? Simple little things such as closing the faucet when brushing teeth, taking shorter showers and using hot water only when truly necessary, can make a massive difference if we all put into practice these minor duties.

One of the most important and beneficial results towards saving water is the well-keeping of our planet as a whole. If one out of every 100 American homes retrofitted with water-efficient fixtures, we could save about 100 million kWh of electricity per year—avoiding 80,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions. That is equivalent to removing nearly 15,000 automobiles from the road for one year!² Global warming is another factor that involves great concern, but this ‘climate change’ can worsen without the conservation of water. Where local communities are currently dependent on river runoff from glacier melt, the loss of glaciers over the next century will lead to a “peak water” effect: the diminishment of water supply over time.³

The foundation in which everything is built is somehow, in one way or another, fixed around water. Water has absolutely no substitutions—when it's gone, it's gone! That is why we need to all get together and save this precious substance from depletion. As citizens of this Earth, it should not be an obligation but rather a moral *duty* to conserve water. Doing so would save our plants and animals, it would decrease the use of energy hence, minimize global warming, it would save large amounts of money for people, but most importantly, it would save us... and the lives of our future generations.

1. "Benefits of Water Efficiency." *http://www.epa.gov*. N.p., N.d. Web. 16 Feb. 2010. <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water_efficiency/benefits_of_water_efficiency.html>.
2. "Benefits of Water Efficiency." *http://www.epa.gov*. N.p., N.d. Web. 16 Feb. 2010. <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water_efficiency/benefits_of_water_efficiency.html>.
3. Palaniappan, Meena, and Peter H. Gleick. "Peak Water." *World's Water 2008-2009* (2008): 1-16. Web. 16 Feb 2010. <<http://www.worldwater.org/data20082009/ch01.pdf>>.