



Exploring the story of water

Follow the journey of water through the environment, from the mountains to the sea. What are the changes in the land over time? What happens to the quality of the water on this journey?

Set up instructions:

Add the following items into separate small jars or containers with lids labelled 1 to 15.

1. A tablespoon of soil/dirt
2. 5 – 10 broken pieces of twigs or sticks
3. A teaspoon of clay in water
4. A teaspoon of chocolate drink powder
5. 3 drops yellow food colouring and 1 square of toilet paper
6. 10 sultanas
7. Tablespoon of detergent
8. 10 small rocks
9. 5 small pieces of aluminium foil scrunched in balls
10. ¼ piece of A4 paper ripped in strips
11. Small plastic bag cut into pieces
12. Tablespoon of vegetable oil
13. Tablespoon of charcoal
14. 20cm of plastic string or fishing line
15. Tablespoon of sand

Pre-fill all the jars or containers with one ingredient in each. Fill up a large clear bucket or plastic aquarium with 2 litres of water and place it in the middle of your room or space. Arrange your students in a circle around the water container, and hand out the jars or containers. Remind them to keep the lids on. Explain that we are going on a journey following a water through the environment over time.

Read the following story of water or make up your own and ask the children to add the item in their jar to the container of water. There are 15 items to add during the story during 11 steps. At some steps you will add the contents of more than one jar.

If you have a small group, you can remove some of suggested items. This works best in the story when the contents of more than one jar is being added to the container of water e.g. at Stage 1, 4, 6, or 7. If you have a larger class, you can do multiple jars using the same contents.





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	Item	Purpose	Issue	Step
1.	Soil	Soil erosion	Land clearing	1
2.	Plant	Land clearing		1
3.	Clay	Erosion	Agriculture	2
4.	Chocolate drink powder	Fertiliser		3
5.	Yellow water / tissue	Sewerage	Urbanisation	4
6.	Sultanas	Poo		4
7.	Detergent	Car washing		5
8.	Rocks	Building material	Construction	6
9.	Foil	Industry	Mining	6
10.	Paper	Rubbish	Waste	7
11.	Plastic	Rubbish		7
12.	Vegetable oil	Petrol	Industry	8
13.	Charcoal	Bushfire	Climate change	9
14.	Plastic line	Fishing line	Recreation	10
15.	Sand	Beach erosion		11

The story of water

Think about a time in Australia when there weren't any cities or towns. Australia's First Peoples lived on the land in a sustainable way; the waterways were healthy, in pristine environments. The water was crystal clear and good to drink. The waterways meant life for people, plants and animals. But with time, new people settled here from all over the world, and the waterways began to change.

Thriving towns and farms of all sizes sprang up across the country, always sticking close to the waterways because for them – water was life too.

Trees were cut down to make room for more towns. The ground was bare and when it rained dirt and plant material was washed into the rivers.

1. ADD content from jars 1 & 2 into the container of water to represent erosion and land clearing.

The cleared land was used for livestock and to grow food. The animals made tracks in the dirt when they went to the river to drink

2. ADD content from jars 3 into the container of water to represent erosion.





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To help the plants grow, fertiliser is used.

3. **ADD** content from jars 4 into the container of water to represent fertiliser running into the river.

Some houses and towns didn't have proper toilets and pipes, and the waste water went straight into the river.

4. **ADD** content from jars 5 & 6 into the container of water to represent sewerage.

All the cleaning materials we use in our home and garden were also washing into the river.

5. **ADD** content from jars 7 into the container of water to represent detergents.

Use the large wooden or plastic spoon or tongs to stir up the water. Look at what is happening to the water! Just imagine what your local river would have looked like – and it probably smelled too.

As the number of people continued to grow across Australia, there was need for more and more houses and building.

6. **ADD** content from jars 8 & 9 into the container of water to represent mining material.

People were not always putting their rubbish in the bin and more and more rubbish ended up in our rivers and oceans.

7. **ADD** content from jars 10 & 11 into the container of water to represent rubbish.

Waste from towns, factories, cars and trucks washes into our rivers too.

8. **ADD** content from jars 12 into the container of water to represent oil and chemicals.

Many areas across Australia were impacted by bushfire. The rain helped put out the fires but also washed ash, charcoal and plant material into the river.

9. **ADD** content from jars 13 into the container of water to represent burnt bushland.

People love visiting their local rivers and beaches. These areas are used for fun and enjoyment, like swimming, picnicking and fishing. Sometimes not everything is taken home again.

10. **ADD** content from jars 14 into the container of water to represent recreation.





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Many people want to live near the coast and lots of trees and plants are removed to make room for more houses. This can change the way the sand and beaches move.

11. **ADD** content from jars 15 into the container of water to represent beach erosion.

What do you think happens next? Join the discussion: What can we do to stop these things getting in the waterways and the ocean?

**We can work together to help keep
our waterways healthy**

