

The Water Princess - Questions

Think about the story *The Water Princess*. Then answer the questions below. Discuss in small groups or with your class.

1. What does Gie Gie do during her day? What types of things do you do during your day?

2. What did you learn about how Gie Gie and her mother collect water?

3. Who else was at the well collecting water?

4. How does this compare to the way you get water?

5. Was the water that Gie Gie and her mother collected clean or dirty? What clues tell you this?

6. How is this different to the water that you use?

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7. What might happen if you drink dirty water?

8. Do you think you might use water differently if you had to carry it a long way on your head? Explain why.

9. Gie Gie spends much of her day collecting water. What types of activities do you think she might miss out on?

The Water Princess - Answers to questions

Suggested answers and topics for discussion are below.

<p>1. What does Gie Gie do during her day? What do you do during your day?</p>	
<p>Gie Gie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gets up early to collect water from a well with her mother which they carry home. • She finds time to play with some friends while they wait their turn at the well. • She dances and sings with her mum. 	<p>Children in Australia spend their time doing things like:</p> <p>learning at school, playing with friends, playing sport, riding bikes, playing games, reading books, watching TV, shopping.</p>
<p>2. What did you learn about how Gie Gie and her mother collect water?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They walk a long way to collect the water from a well. (Note: 6km is the average distance travelled in Africa). • They need to line up at the well and wait their turn because many others have also travelled to collect water for their families. • They use pots to collect and carry the water on their heads. • The water is heavy (Note: 1L of water weighs about 1kg) 	
<p>3. Who else was at the well collecting water?</p>	
<p>In Africa, it is mostly women and children (particularly girls) that collect water for their family. This adds to the poverty cycle as the women are too busy to do other things like have a job that earns money. Children are either unable to attend school or are often too tired to concentrate at school because of the long journey they must take each day to collect water.</p>	
<p>4. How does this compare do the way we get water?</p>	
<p>We get water from our taps. Taps are located in many places within our homes and schools. Including kitchens, bathrooms, laundries and classrooms. We don't have to walk far to get our water and we tend to carry it in small containers like drink bottles and cups.</p>	
<p>5. Was the water that Gie Gie and her mother collected clean or dirty? What clues tell you this?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was dirty. • Gie Gie describes the water as "dusty, earth-coloured liquid." (Note: The dirtier water is, the more likely it is to contain harmful germs). • Gie Gie's mother boils the water. (Note: According to the World Health Organisation untreated water should be brought to the boil and remain at a rolling boil for at least one minute). 	

The Water Princess - Answers to questions cont.

Suggested answers and topics for discussion are below.

6. How is this different to the water that you use?

The water that we use is clear and clean. We know it is safe to drink and can drink it straight from the tap. We know there is more available whenever we need it. We sometimes tend to take our water for granted.

For most of us, our water travels to our homes and schools in underground pipes (water mains). Before it reaches us, the water is treated (cleaned) for us at a water treatment plant to remove debris, dirt, colour and germs.

Some of us may get our water from rainwater tanks. It is recommended that these have a filtration and sanitation system to clean the water of germs that may be on the roof (where the water falls before entering the tank) and within the tank itself.

7. What might happen if you drink dirty water?

The water might contain germs (bacteria and viruses) that could make us sick.

Children in countries like Africa often get very ill due to germs that live in water. These germs can cause diseases like diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid and hepatitis A.

Note: 1 in 6 people around the world don't have access to clean, safe water.

8. Do you think you might use water differently if you had to carry it a long way on your head? Explain why.

- We would use water to meet our basic needs - e.g. drinking, washing, cooking.
- Water is heavy, so we would only collect and carry what we needed.
- It's likely that we'd value water more and be much more careful with the way we use water and what we use it for to ensure we're not being wasteful (e.g. no water fights).
- It would be unlikely that we'd have running showers or toilets to flush.
- There probably wouldn't be enough water to spare for gardens.

9. Gie Gie spends much of her day collecting water. What types of activities do you think she might miss out on?

Education - Gie Gie, like many other girls in Africa, would not have time or would be too tired to attend school. She might also miss school due to being sick caused by germs in the water. These factors contribute significantly to the poverty cycle.

Leisure activities - e.g. reading books, playing games, playing sport, watching TV.