

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT
TEST OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY
READING 3**

WATER SCARCITY AND INSECURITY

If one assumed - based on the fact that water covers 70% of the planet - that drinking water was plentiful, their assumption would be false, as only 2.5% of all water is freshwater. This limited resource will need to support a projected population of 9.7 billion in 2050; and by that date, an estimated 3.9 billion – or over 40% of the world’s population - will live in severely water-stressed river basins.

It is not just population that is pressuring water resources. Excessive use is also evident: the global population tripled in the 20th century, but the use of water increased six-fold. Between now and 2050, water demands are expected to increase by 400% from manufacturing, and by 130% from household use.

As water availability decreases, competition for access to this limited resource will increase. 60% of all surface fresh water comes from internationally shared river basins and there are an estimated 592 transboundary aquifers. Continuing cooperation and coordination between nations is crucial to ensuring water is available for human, economic, and environmental needs. Although hundreds of international water agreements have been signed over time, how countries will cooperatively manage growing resource pressures so that they do not lead to more conflicts over water is not often clear.

Water insecurity can be exacerbated by drought. More people are affected by drought than any other disaster type. In 2016, 411 million people in total were affected by disasters and 94% of those were drought affected. Droughts are also the costliest disasters, with significant impacts on agriculture in particular; droughts cause an average US\$6–8 billion worth of losses in agriculture in the USA annually. In China, drought has resulted in an annual grain production loss of more than 27 million tons over the last two decades; and from the 1950s to the beginning of this century, the annual average crop area suffering from drought has expanded from 11.6 million hectares to 25.1 million hectares, an increase of 116%.

Although progress has been made in supplying drinking water to more people year on year, 663 million people still lack ‘improved’ drinking water sources- and for many people, this ‘improved’ water is not always safe, reliable, affordable or accessible with equity. For example, around 45 million people in Bangladesh drink water that contains arsenic concentrations greater than WHO standards allow.

Sanitation and hygiene have made less progress, with 2.4 billion people lacking improved sanitation facilities. Equity in sanitation and hygiene access is of particular concern. Seven out of ten people without improved sanitation facilities live in rural areas; and a lack of these services often disproportionately affect women, who can not only suffer health repercussions but personal danger when services are not available and not secure. Diarrheal diseases, long associated with poor water and sanitation, account for 1 in 9 child deaths worldwide, making diarrhea the third leading cause of death among children under the age of 5.

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READING 3: WATER SCARCITY AND INSECURITY

Below is a summary of the text. Fill in the summary with words from the text. Write only 1 word in each blank.

Limited freshwater resources of the world are being drained at an unsustainable rate mainly due to the _____ boom and excessive water consumption. Although this means there will be more demand, and thus more _____ for water, international cooperation and coordination can help mitigate the problem. Another factor that contributes to water shortage is drought, which has been threatening the _____ sector around the world. With water becoming a scarce resource, equity in access to safe water has emerged as a further issue. For example, millions of people in Bangladesh drink water that has too much _____ in it. Similarly, unequal access to sanitation and hygiene exposes _____ in particular to a higher health and safety risk and children to an increased risk of diarrhea.

ANSWER KEY

Below is a summary of the text. Fill in the summary with words from the text. Write only 1 word in each blank.

Limited freshwater resources of the world are being drained at an unsustainable rate mainly due to the **population** boom and excessive water consumption. Although this means there will be more demand, and thus more **competition** for water, international cooperation and coordination can help mitigate the problem. Another factor that contributes to water shortage is drought, which has been threatening the **agriculture** sector around the world. With water becoming a scarce resource, equity in access to safe water has emerged as a further issue. For example, millions of people in Bangladesh drink water that has too much **arsenic** in it. Similarly, unequal access to sanitation and hygiene exposes **women** in particular to a higher health and safety risk and children to an increased risk of diarrhea.