

## 'Tastes like water': how a US facility is recycling sewage to drink

### Level 3: Advanced

**Article summary:** This article describes the process of turning wastewater into drinking water which is currently being used in Orange County, California.

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Skills:** Reading, Speaking, Writing

**Language focus:** Present simple passive

**Materials needed:** One copy of the worksheet per student

#### 1. Warmer

- This activity aims to get students thinking about issues connected to water, water scarcity and ways to conserve water. Ask students to work in pairs to discuss the questions. Get feedback from one or two pairs on what they discussed.

#### 2. Key words

- Ask students to work individually or in pairs find the words in the wordpool in the article and then complete the definitions. Allow a few minutes for students to check answers in pairs or groups before checking answers with the whole class. Explain to students that the verb and noun *whirr* are spelled *whir* in American English.

**Key:**

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. vats           | 10. whirr     |
| 2. leftovers      | 11. blueprint |
| 3. membranes      | 12. conserve  |
| 4. plant          | 13. bacteria  |
| 5. disinfect      | 14. undergo   |
| 6. replenish      | 15. portfolio |
| 7. scarcity       | 16. blasted   |
| 8. discharge      | 17. sewage    |
| 9. cost-effective | 18. aquifers  |

- Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences using words from the previous activity in the correct form. To extend the activity, explain the slight difference in meaning between *conserve* and *preserve*. *Conserve* means to use something wisely, so it's not wasted, e.g. water or electricity. It can also mean to protect something so it doesn't change or become damaged or disappear, e.g. a habitat. *Preserve* means to protect something so that it stays in its original state and doesn't decay or disappear, e.g. food or cultural traditions.

**Key:**

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. membranes   | 10. blast          |
| 2. disinfected | 11. discharging    |
| 3. scarcity    | 12. cost-effective |
| 4. vats        | 13. blueprint      |
| 5. whirr       | 14. conserve       |
| 6. Leftovers   | 15. bacteria       |
| 7. aquifers    | 16. undergoes      |
| 8. plant       | 17. portfolio      |
| 9. replenish   | 18. Sewage         |

#### 3. Comprehension check

- Students can work individually or in pairs to do this activity. Encourage students to rewrite the false statements using their own words.

**Key:**

- F – It is not safe to drink until after all three stages.
- T
- NM
- T
- F – The UV light system is artificial.
- F – He says people often comment that it just tastes like water.
- T
- F – There are fewer salts in wastewater than sea water, so the energy costs of cleaning sewage water would be about half of what it would be to remove the salt.
- T
- F – Public support is described as one of the strongest endorsements.

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#### 4. Key language

- a. Students work individually to put the steps in the correct order based on information from the article.

**Key:**

*Step 3 – They use UV light and chemicals to clean the water.*

*Step 2 – Pipes carry the water to a different building.*

*Step 4 – People can safely drink the water.*

*Step 1 – They push the water through fibres to remove bacteria.*

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to read the examples and then choose the correct options to complete the rules for the present simple passive. Allow a few minutes for students to check answers in pairs or groups before checking answers with the whole class.

**Key:**

1. b
2. c
3. a

- c. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to rewrite and order the sentences from task a using the present simple passive. You may want to do a quick revision of the verb changes when changing sentences from active to passive voice.

**Key:**

1. *The water is pushed through fibres to remove bacteria.*
2. *The water is carried to a different building by pipes.*
3. *UV light and chemicals are used to clean the water.*
4. *The water can be safely drunk.*

#### 5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions in pairs or groups. Ask them to justify their opinions, referring to their own experiences whenever possible.

#### 6. In your own words

- a. The aim of this task is to get students to summarise the process of turning wastewater into drinking water. Encourage students to underline the different steps in the process in the article and to refer to the steps in the Key Language activity if they need help.
- b. Students can share their summaries with the class.