

Investigation Booklet

Exploring: Water in Our Lives

1. How far does water travel to reach NYC in order to get into your homes?
200 miles away
2. Where does New York City's water come from and where is it stored?
Mountain streams and rivers that cover almost 2000 sq/m of land, and it is stored in 19 reservoirs.
3. How does drinking water travel to New York City?
Flows into the city through aqueducts and 2 water tunnels (a third is being worked on)
4. How is New York City's water kept clean? Is New York City's water checked for salt levels?
Chlorine and other chemicals are added to kill disease causing organisms, and the water is checked for impurities, but salt is not mentioned.
5. How can you conserve water?
Be conscious of using water, turn off sinks while you are brushing your teeth, fix leaking faucets, repair running toilets, install low flow faucets and showerheads, take shorter showers, etc.
6. After you flush a toilet or water flows into a drain, where does it go first? Why?
To water treatment plants around the city that remove the contaminants and waste from the water before being pumped into surrounding water sources.
7. Why do heavy rains in New York City lead to polluted rivers and bays?
Heavy rains wash trash, pollutants, and waste into storm drains/sewers, which overwhelm water treatment plants, so that not only the pollution from the streets, but also raw sewage flows into NYC's water supply.
8. What can you do to limit the pollution of NYC's water supply?
Don't litter, pour anything down the drain that you wouldn't want to drink, pour out chemicals or other pollutants outside of your house, etc.

Post New York Water Story Discussion Questions

1. How does a piece of litter thrown on NYC streets end up in rivers and on beaches?
Litter and trash get picked up by water runoff that then drains into stormwater drains that empty into rivers and bays. The trash then washes up on beaches from the Bay.

2. Describe the movement of water from the tiniest raindrop that falls Upstate to when it leaves your house through the drain, and where it ends up.

Answers will vary, but they should incorporate information from the NYC: Water Story Interactive like the fact that NYC's water supply come from mountain streams and waterway's that are up to 125 miles away from the City. There are five channels (3 aqueducts and 2 city tunnels) from which water flows into the City. The water then travels through intricate plumbing into NYC homes. When the water goes down the drain it goes to wastewater treatment plants, unless there are big storms, which flush the water (including sewage) directly into the waterways around NYC. This sewer overflow can lead to polluted water and beaches.