



**Global
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WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF DALLAS/FORT WORTH

JWAC Lesson Plan Cape Town's Crisis

By: Josh Meaders, March 2018

Warm up: *Do you know what desalinization is? How much water do you use in a day? Do you think you waste water often?*

Fast Facts:

- The Cape Town's most renowned attraction is Robben Island, the prison that housed Nelson Mandela
- Cape Town is the legislative capital of South Africa
- The waters to the west of Cape Peninsula is one of the best places to go Great White Shark and whale watching
- In 1967, the first heart transplant was completed in Cape Town

Discussion: Like many cities in developing countries, Cape Town's population is expanding rapidly. Since 2001, the population of the Cape Town metropolitan area increased by approximately 1.1 million people. Although the population increased greatly, there have been very few efforts to increase the capacity of the Western Cape Water Supply System, the system that provides water to the city of Cape Town.

Case Study: Day Zero

Background: Since 1995, the Western Cape Water Supply System (WCWSS) has seen an increase in capacity of only 19% compared to a population increase of approximately 79%. This stark difference in growth has led to a great strain on the water system in times of drought. Over the past 3 years, Cape Town experienced its worst drought in history with the rainfall totals reaching a record low in 2017. Over this time, residents continued to waste water by watering lawns, draining pools, etc. The WCWSS is currently planning several desalination plants and groundwater drilling sites as part of an Augmentation Plan, but the majority of these projects are behind schedule with only one project nearing completion.

Activity: Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0G7SlyMP4E>
Please note: There is brief swearing in this video (part of a clip of a speech).



Minute Write:

Following the video, have students write for 2-3 minutes about what they learned about the Cape Town water crisis and how this relates to water issues we face in the United States. Once the time is up, have the students exchange papers and share their ideas. When sharing, try to have students focus on the issues we have in the United States with water shortages and the future repercussions of these shortages both political and economic.

Discussion: *Do you think water systems should be controlled publicly (government) or privately (companies)? How might water further strain the racial and ethnic tensions in South Africa? Should agriculture or the citizens take priority when water is scarce? How can the average citizen advocate for change in the water supply system?*

Recap and Reaching Further: According to the UN, water and sanitation are both seen as basic human rights. Additionally, the Constitution of South Africa has placed a legal obligation on the government to realize people's right to sufficient water. *In order to meet these rights and obligations, how might the government strengthen their strategic planning in the international water crisis?*

Although many people believe the next wars will be fought over water, many analysts believe that the threat of war is low. Countries historically worked together to overcome stress on water resources but this does not mean we should become careless about water. There is still a real threat that water could stir up old rivalries. For example, India and China share the Brahmaputra River, a major waterway in India. While China controls the headwaters, India controls the majority of the river. If China were to cut India's access to the river through diversion and damming the river, a conflict may ensue due to the historical rivalry between China and India. *How might we plan for a world with water conflict?*

Call to Action: Understand how much water you use! The average American uses 80 to 100 gallons a day. You can calculate your family's average daily water usage [here](#). The results may surprise you!



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You can stay up to date on the water situation in Cape Town and Day Zero [here](#). The City of Cape Town also has some great, easy ways to save water [here](#), many of which are just a change to daily habits. Stay knowledgeable about your local water systems! Know where your water comes from, both the source and the supply system. Much of the water in the area is supplied from area lakes like Lake Texoma, Lake Lavon, Lake Ray Hubbard, and Lake Bridgeport, among others. Some of the largest supply systems in the area are the North Texas Municipal Water District, Tarrant Regional Water District, Upper Trinity Regional Water District, and Dallas Water Utilities. Find out which system your water is sourced from and understand the background of your system.

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