NAME: _____ DATE: _____ CLASS: _____

School Water Audit: Virtual Water Use

One way to reduce a water footprint on a large scale is to take a close look at the operations of a large business, identify areas that can be made more sustainable, and then take action. What's the closest business to you? Your school, of course! Auditing your school gives you an opportunity to gather concrete data on school operations that impact the environment, and then use that data to inform strategies that promote more sustainable practices. For this activity, you will work in the same marketing teams that you used to create your How to Save Water Awareness Campaign. This worksheet is for the three Virtual Water Audit groups. A separate worksheet is available for groups doing the Indoor and Outdoor Water Audits.

If your team researched …	You will now be auditing …
Indoor water	School Water Audit: Indoor Water Use
Outdoor water	School Water Audit: Outdoor Water Use
Diet	School Virtual Water Audit: Food Purchasing
Electricity	School Virtual Water Audit: Energy Use
Buying habits	School Virtual Water Audit: Electronics Purchasing

Instructions

Your mission is to work with your team to find out how either food purchasing, energy use, or electronics purchasing impacts your school's water footprint. (Note: Because the school has mawny purchases, we are suggesting that the Buying Habits team select just one, manageable category—electronics—for the purposes of this audit. The Electricity team can adapt the category as necessary; for example, they can focus on school laptops/computers or light bulb purchases.) Your mission is to estimate how much virtual water is needed in your category to support your campus. To do this, you'll need to learn more about where food, electricity, and electronics used at or by the school come from, how much they cost, how often they are purchased, what alternatives are available to reduce virtual water consumption, etc.

WaterCalculator.org

Materials

- Clipboard
- Interviewing questions (see sample questions)
- Pencil or pen
- Timekeeping device
- Recording device
- Relevant administrative data, such as food purchasing reports, school energy bills, or electronics purchasing data

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School Water Audit: Virtual Water Use, continued

Conduct the Audit

1. Assign each member of your group a role, such as timekeeper, recorder/transcriber, interviewer, presenter, etc.

2. Come up with a strategy for conducting your audit. This step should not be underestimated! It is vital that you put together a detailed plan to guide you through your audit. You might begin by determining who you will interview to find out more about your category (food, energy, or electronics purchasing) on campus.

3. Then come up with a detailed list of questions you could ask these staff members to learn more about your school's operational patterns.

4. You may wish to retake the calculator at watercalculator.org to help you consider the right kinds of questions to ask and data to collect. Just remember that the water calculator provides a personal water footprint whereas this activity is a much larger audit, so consider how to expand those types of questions to inform a business audit. The Water Footprint Network site (waterfootprint.org) offers a business water footprint assessment tool that may also be useful in informing what you do. In that case, you may want to simplify the questions. Be sure to ask your instructor for assistance if you need guidance or feel stuck.

5. You could also review the information about virtual water use for food, energy, or shopping on the watercalculator.org/intro website to help you come up with the right kinds of questions to ask and data to collect.

6. Set up interviews in advance.

7. Conduct your interviews. Note: As you gather data, be sure to record units along with your data so it is clear what type of measurements you are taking (e.g., gallons or liters, grams or ounces, kilograms or pounds, etc.). Be consistent! If you start out using metric units, continue to use metric throughout the audit.

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School Water Audit: Virtual Water Use, continued

Synthesize Results

Transcribe the interview recordings and organize the information you gathered from your audit. Then synthesize and make sense of what you learned. You can use the following questions to help you reflect on your results.

1. What information was easy to locate?

   ____

   ____

   ____

2. What information was difficult to locate?

   ____

   ____

   ____

3. What information from the audit surprised you? Explain.

   ____

   ____

   ____

4. What information do you still need in order to complete your virtual water audit?

   ____

   ____

5. How will you get the information listed in #4 above?

   ____

   ____

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6. How does the data you gathered for the school compare to your personal virtual water-use habits? What factors might account for any differences you note?

_____

_____

_____

7. What is sustainable about the school's virtual water use. Name some STRENGTHS that you observed.

_____

_____

_____

8. What is unsustainable about the school's virtual water use? Name some WEAKNESSES that you observed.

_____

_____

_____

9. How do you think the school's virtual water use (in the category you analyzed) might be improved?

_____

_____

_____

10. What observations stand out to you as the most interesting so far?

_____

_____

_____

