

Planet water

1 Blue planet, blue gold

- a) *Before you read: We don't just drink water, what else do we use it for? Work in a group and make lists of all the uses you can think of for water: at home, at school, in your free time, in industry.*
- b) *Look at the photo and read the introduction. Explain the title "Blue Gold" to a partner. Agree in your group on the best answer.*

Our non-fiction 'Book of the month'

Our Earth is often called the 'blue planet' because that's what it looks like from space. It looks blue because it has lots of water. But, of course, most of this water is salt water – it's in the oceans of the earth and because it's salty, we can't drink it. Only half of one percent (0.5%) of water is fresh and suitable for drinking, but climate change, pollution and a growing world population mean that there is less drinking water for everybody. Water may soon be more valuable than gold! Large companies around the world are already involved in the 'water trade'. Their goal, so the writers of this book tell us, is to own and control global water resources.

Blue Gold, by Maude Barlow and Toby Clarke, looks at different aspects of this important topic. The book tells us that some governments and big businesses see water as something that can be bought and sold. This is not about water in bottles but water as a natural resource and it points to a lot of questions about water. Barlow and Clarke ask, for example, "Who owns water? Should anyone own it? If it's all owned by businesses and governments, who will buy water for Nature? Will poor people have access to water?"

The writers believe that fresh water is not just a need – it is a human right – a right which everyone should protect. If we don't, there will be a high price to pay.

Jamilla Khan



- c) *Now read the short text about the book 'Blue Gold'. What other information do you get from it about water?*

2 Salt water or fresh water?

- a) *Look at a map of Germany. Where is there salt water? What are the names of the salt water areas?*
- b) *Find large areas of fresh water. What are they called?*
- c) *Use the Internet and find out what people use the salt water and fresh water areas for.*

3 Let's listen: The Murray-Darling



- a) Look at the photo. Do you think that this river is in Germany? Why/Why not? If not, where do you think it is?
- b) Now read some facts and find the answer to the questions in part a).

	1-6
Farmers in the Murray-Darling river area are worried about water shortages ¹ .	
Lakes in the area are threatened, too.	
Some farmers have had no water for three years.	
They should use 53% less water from the river – then it will be healthy.	
This area produces 41% of Australia's food.	
This is a clear sign of climate change.	

¹ shortage ['ʃɔ:tɪdʒ] – not having much or enough of something

- c) Listen carefully to a radio report. What order do you hear the facts in? Put the numbers 1-6 in the correct box.
- d) Find this area on a map of Australia. Is it bigger or smaller than Germany? Could Germany have this problem? What do you think? Give reasons for your answer.

Listening text

3 Let's listen: The Murray-Darling

- c) Jim Barnes: G'day to all listeners out there. Our topic for the week is water. We Australians all know about the problems we have with it. Farmers in the Murray-Darling river valley are especially worried about water shortages as climate change hits them with the worst dry period in a century.
- Our Climate Change Minister said on Tuesday that this area, the size of France and Germany, produces 41 percent of Australia's food and A\$21 billion in food exports. We can and must change for a future where there is likely to be less water. The problem is how?
- The minister also said that some farmers, particularly rice growers in New South Wales, have had no water from the river system for the past three years. This is a clear sign of climate change. For them this dry period is not a future issue. The problem is here and now.
- There is a big threat to lakes in the area, too. The government is trying to find enough water to save them and some groups say they should flood them with sea water – but green groups say this would be an environmental disaster.
- Scientists say we need to use 53 percent less water from the river to keep it healthy. Well, that's one big problem. Before we discuss it with experts here in the studio let's ((fade)) have a song, "It's raining again" by S

Lösungen

Lösungsvorschläge Seite 1

Ex. 1

- a) (at home) cooking, cleaning, brushing teeth, washing clothes, washing the car, in the shower, in the toilet, making drinks, washing the dog, for plants and flowers
- b) The Earth looks blue from outer space because it has so much water on it. Water is becoming very valuable, as valuable even as gold, because there is less drinking water for people on it. + *Individuelle Schülerlösung*
- c) Governments as well as companies are involved in the water trade. Water is a natural resource but there are a lot of questions about it, for example about who owns it and what will happen if big companies and governments try to buy it. Fresh water is a human right and everyone should protect this right.

Ex. 2

- a) In the north-east and the north-west. The areas are called the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.
- b) Large areas of fresh water are called Lake Constance, Lake Tegel, Lake Starnberg, and the Rhine and the Danube.
- c) *Individuelle Schülerlösung.*

Lösungsvorschläge Seite 3

Ex 3

- a) I don't think that it is in Germany because I can't see any boats on it or buildings near it. The landscape doesn't look like Germany. I think it is maybe in Africa or Australia
- b) It's the Murray-Darling river area in Australia.
- c) 1, 5, 3, 6, 2, 4
- d) It's much bigger than Germany. At the moment I don't think Germany could have this problem. We don't take water for vegetables from our rivers and we have more rain here than they have in Australia. We don't have periods of three years without rain.