

## Assessment Answer Key

# Caretaking Our World's Water

*Note to teachers: The assessment should be used not as a pass-or-fail unit test but as an opportunity to diagnose students' language arts and science comprehension, knowledge, and skills. We have designed it for students to have their copies of "Caretaking Our World's Water" available for reference as they work on answering the questions. Please use the assessment diagnostically. With struggling readers, take the opportunity to review their answers individually. We hope that the answer key provides suggestions that will help you improve students' reading. The assessment also can be given aloud as part of a class discussion. Most of all, we hope the assessment—and the entire Audubon Adventures program—will develop students' appreciation for and enjoyment of the environment we share.*

**1. Correct answer:** d. This is a reading comprehension question that challenges students to properly interpret the question as well as what they read in the student magazine. All of these statements relate to information found in the student magazine but do not accurately reflect the facts. That answer *a* is not true can be found on page 2 in the second paragraph of "Wise, Not Wasteful." The graphic and text in "Not Much to Drink" on page 2 show that answer *b* is false. The rationale for conserving water—indicating that answer *c* is false—is presented in several places, most explicitly in paragraphs 1 and 3 of "Wise, Not Wasteful" on page 2 and in "Native Plants Save Water, and Help Birds and Other Wildlife" on page 3. The correct answer, *d*, is stated in the first paragraph of the story on page 1. It may be difficult for students to understand why it's important to conserve water if it is constantly being recycled. This is a perfect subject for further research about why water supplies can be depleted and how that affects humans as well as wildlife.

**2. Correct answer:** b. The answer is found in the second paragraph of "Native Plants Save Water, and Help Birds and Other Wildlife" on page 3 of the student magazine. The other statements may or may not be true for some plants, but they are not found anywhere in the student magazine and do not relate to the topic of conserving water resources. This article gives an example of how individuals can reduce their use of water resources. You can also use this question as a springboard for discussing and reinforcing the difference between native and nonnative plants and animals. This is an important concept because of the interdependence of elements in a healthy ecosystem and the disruptions that can occur when nonnative species—plants or animals—are introduced. Native plants have evolved to survive in a particular place with a particular combination of natural elements (water, weather, soil type, etc.) as well as with a particular combination of other plants and animals.

**3. Correct answer:** d. This is a challenging question that requires students to comprehend mathematical information presented in both written and graphical ways and to do some mathematical reasoning. All of the figures in the answer options appear in the text of "Thirsty Americans," so a student who chooses a wrong answer may simply be scanning and hastily making a choice. To choose the correct answer, students must understand approximation, signaled by the use of the word "about." The comparison of water use among Africa, Europe, and America paints a startling picture and could lead to a worthwhile discussion about how and why we use more of this natural resource than others.

**4. Correct answer:** c. The definition of *runoff* is found in the second paragraph of "Helpful or Harmful?" on page 4 of the student magazine. Answer *a* tempts students to interpret the term "runoff" quite literally. Students who choose it might be having fun or, more seriously, might be missing not only the meaning of text they've read but the overall context (the importance of water conservation) in which this question is asked. Answers *b* and *d* sound vaguely plausible, and students who choose them are likely guessing rather than comprehending what they've read. This question challenges students to understand that waterways become polluted not only by directly dumping polluting materials into the water, but also by activities that can happen far away from the waterway. The take-away message is, "If we act irresponsibly here, it can cause a problem there." You might follow up by asking students to make the connection between runoff and the concept of a watershed, introduced in "What's a Watershed?"

**5. Answers will vary,** but the key to look for is that students realize that they and their families—in other words, ordinary people—can take action to protect Earth's supply of fresh water both for drinking and other human uses and as habitat for wildlife and plants. Examples from the student magazine include: preventing or reducing runoff ("Helpful or Harmful?"); planting native (rather than nonnative) plants in our yards to reduce the need for extra watering ("Native Plants Save Water, and Help Birds and Other Wildlife," "Helpful or Harmful?"); turning off the tap when brushing teeth and otherwise reducing water use in the home ("Wise, Not Wasteful" and "Thirsty Americans"); not littering, cleaning up pet waste ("Helpful or Harmful?"). For a class discussion, challenge students to think of the responsibilities of individual citizens, young and old alike, to care for our natural resources, including water, and extend the discussion to how being responsible in this way helps not only the natural world, but the entire community of people as well—a key civics concept.