GREEN-SCHOOLS
STAY HOME - WATER

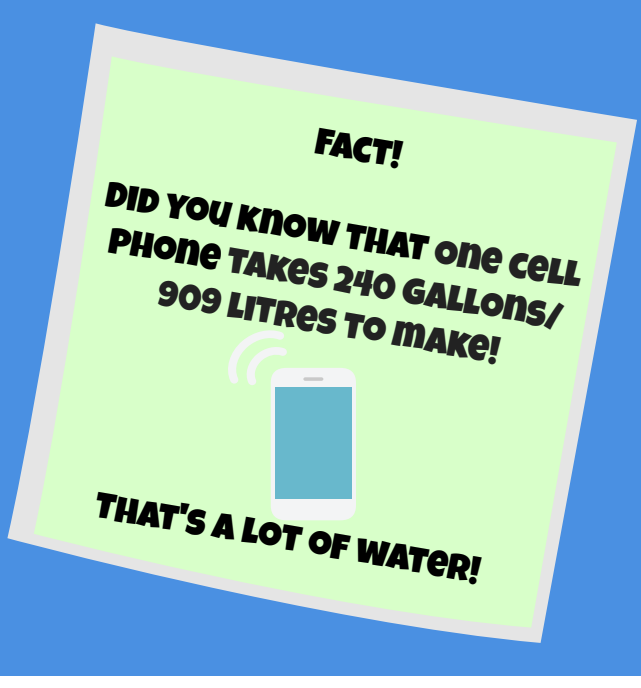
Idea - Virtual Water

Virtual Water (Hidden Water/Secret Water), is all the water needed to produce a product from start to finish that you don't see!

The water footprint is a measure of the amount of water used directly e.g. for drinking, washing, cooking etc. or indirectly to produce what you eat wear and use in your everyday life.

It can be calculated for an individual person, a process, a product's entire value chain or for a business, a river basin or a nation!

Why is this useful?
-Virtual Water indicates the pressure we exert on our freshwater resources.
-This information helps drive strategic action toward sustainable, efficient and equitable water use.



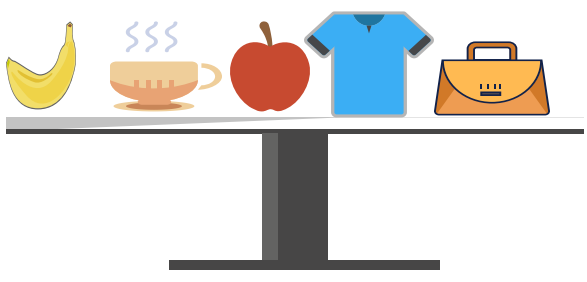
Virtual Water Hunt

Guess the virtual water content of everyday products in your home.

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Hunt for some of the products below in your house (you do not need to find them all):

- Jeans, paper (1 A4 Sheet), sugar, rice, milk, potato, beef, tea (one cup of tea), beer, apple, banana, coffee, t-shirt, pasta, pizza (margarita), pork, chocolate, egg, bread (1 slice) and butter. (Note: think about the size of the product you are investigating in kilograms/kg's/a bag of sugar)
- Get a pen/pencil (rubber, if you want to use the sheet again) and paper.



Product	Virtual Water Content (Litres)	Point
Total Points:		

WHAT TO DO...

- Draw a table with 3 columns (product, virtual water in litres/kg, point) and rows for the number of products you are looking at.
- Think about how much virtual/hidden/secret water is in each product.
- When you're ready:
  i) put them in order, starting with the products you think have the most water involved in making them, down to the products with the least water involved and
  ii) guess the total number of litres you think are involved.
- For answers you can check the below and/or go to waterfootprint.org for more information!

TIP!

- YOU COULD TURN IT INTO A BIT OF A COMPETITION AND GIVE POINTS E.G. IF YOU GET A PRODUCT IN THE CORRECT ORDER AND/OR TO THE PERSON WHO GUESSES CLOSEST TO THE VIRTUAL WATER CONTENT.
- YOU COULD ALSO ADD DIFFERENT PRODUCTS AND DO A SEARCH ONLINE FOR THEIR VIRTUAL WATER CONTENT.

ANSWERS (NO PEEKING!)...

- The answers* are put in order of litres per kg of a product with some examples of single servings provided to help understand scale. See below and the Green-Schools Virtual Water Infographic (click here):
  Coffee (132L for 125ml cup), chocolate (1,700L for a 3.5oz bar), beef (15,415 forlkg), Cotton Jeans (8,000L), t-shirt (2,500 – 2,700 approx. 30 bathtubs), tea (27L for 250ml cup), pork (5,988L per 1kg), butter (5,553L per kg/84L for 1tbsp), egg (3,267L per kg/196L for one large egg), cheese (3,178L for 1kg bag), rice (2,500L for 1kg), sugar (1,800 for 1kg bag), pasta (1,850L for 1kg bag), paper (average 1,788L per kg/2-13L for one A4 Sheet), beer (1,420L per kg/74L for 250ml glass), milk (1,020 per kg/225L for a 250ml glass), pizza (940L per kg in Italy/per margarita pizza), apple (822L per kg/125L for one), banana (790L per kg/160L for one), potato (290L per kg/large bag of frozen chips)

- Some ways to reduce your indirect water footprint:
  - Buy food/drink with lower virtual water content when possible
  - Don't buy what you don't need
  - Buy second hand
  - Print double sided/use both sides of your page
  - Buy clothing that's made from organic or recycled materials

  *Answers taken from https://waterfootprint.org/en/

CONCLUSION...

Did you get close with your guesses? Did any of the answers surprise you? If so, why did they surprise you? Can you think of ways to reduce your direct and indirect water footprint?

Thanks for taking part, keep checking back for more tips, experiments & activities with #GreenSchoolsStayHome