WHICH TASTES BETTER? BLIND WATER TASTE TEST: TAP VS BOTTLED WATER

CLASSROOM LESSON PLAN

GRADE LEVELS: K-12

TEACHERS: With children grades K-5, the students should taste the water but the teachers will conduct the test. With children grades 6-12, teachers should place the water in the cups to ensure control over water sources, but encourage the students to conduct the test using the elements of the lesson plan below. On the resources page, feel free to download any creative assets you can fill in and use for the test; all materials are standard print paper sizes.

NOTES PRIOR TO CONDUCTING THE LESSON: If this program is done in a larger setting (e.g. several combined classes, whole school), adjust the amount of materials to work for all participants.

Please make sure to ask the students if they drink bottled water or tap water prior to conducting the test and record their answers (because you will need to fill these in into the survey after the program is completed).

The blind water taste test should be conducted after the preliminary water discussion/quiz portion of the program is completed. A discussion on the taste differences between tap and bottled water should follow the test. If more students chose tap water, a discussion regarding why it’s better for you, better for the environment, and much cheaper than bottled water should also take place.

** PLEASE FILL OUT A QUICK SURVEY ON THE ORIGINAL GREEN SCHOOL ALLIANCE/I LOVE NY WATER PROGRAM RESOURCE PAGE THREE WEEKS AFTER THE PROGRAM IS COMPLETE.**

The reason we are asking for your responses three weeks after the test is complete is because it takes 21 days to create a new habit and we want to see if the students continued to drink tap or returned to drinking bottled water.

PROGRAM CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
BACKGROUND: Bottled water and tap water are not that different. Both are tested (bottled water by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and tap water by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)), treated, and filtered, but bottled water costs thousands of times more than tap and adds to our growing plastic pollution problem. Only 30% of disposable water bottles are recycled in the U.S. and the rest are sent to landfills where they never fully decompose. A lot of these bottles also end up in rivers, lakes, and oceans, which pollute the ecosystems and kill marine life.

Forty percent (40%) of disposable water bottle companies print on their labels that their water is bottled from a public source, which means you’re purchasing bottled water that’s essentially derived from the tap! Why spend the extra money? With the purchase of a reusable water bottle, you can drink from your home sink or your school’s water fountain for a fraction of the cost while also keeping unnecessary plastic out of our landfills.

OBJECTIVE: The blind water taste test will illustrate the taste differences (or lack of) between tap and bottled water. It will also encourage students to think about where their drinking water comes from and why drinking tap water is better for the environment as well as their and their parents’ wallets.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- 1 gallon of tap water
- 1 gallon of bottled water
- 2 cups per student x total number of students = total cups per test
- Sharpie or other marker to write on the cups

PROCEDURE:

1. Set up 2 cups per student. Label one cup “A” and the other cup “B.” Fill one with tap water and one with bottled. Make sure that similarly labeled cups contain the same type of water (e.g. “A” = tap).
2. Make sure the tap and bottled waters used are both served at room temperature to ensure all of the flavors, clarity, etc. are fully present.
3. Make sure all tap water used comes from the same source, (e.g. the same water fountain or sink) and all bottled water used is the same brand.
4. Split the space on your chalkboard for cup A and cup B. Have the students work together in groups to try and identify the differences in taste, smells, and appearances of the water. Have the students write down their observations on the board, under the letter that coincides with their observations.
5. Once all of the students have completed their observations, have them guess which cup is tap and which is bottled and write their guesses on the board.
6. Let the students know which cup contained tap water and which contained bottled water. Discuss with the students where the tap water comes from specifically (based on their
homework assignment from the night before) and where the bottled water comes from (e.g. where it was sourced, as per the bottle or the company’s website).

7. Record the results (18 chose tap, 2 chose bottled) and share them and photos on your social media pages and tag us using the hashtag #yourschoolnameilovenywater.

**FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS (FOR STUDENTS) AFTER THE BLIND TASTE TEST:**

1. What are the possible sources for the tap water used for the taste test? Do you think your tap water at home comes from the same location? Do you think it tastes the same?
2. Which tasted better tap or bottled? Why?
3. Would you consider tap water safe to drink? If so, would you consider drinking tap water at school and at home using a reusable water bottle? Would you consider speaking to your parents about making this change at home (e.g. purchasing a water filter pitcher or filter for the kitchen sink)?