**River Rights: Whose Water Is It?**

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**STUDENT VERSION**

**Reading Selections for This Module**

McEwen, Bill. “River Plan Too Fishy for My Taste Buds.” *Fresno Bee* 26 Mar. 2009. ProQuest. Web.

Weintraub, Daniel. “River Restoration Project Offers a Sprinkling of Hope.” *Sacramento Bee* 26 Apr. 2009: E1.Print.

Reading Rhetorically

**Prereading**

**Activity 1:** **Pre-Test**

**San Joaquin River Delta Project**

1. Where does most of California’s drinking water come from?
2. Rain and snowfall
3. The ocean
4. Aquifers
5. Wells
6. Which of the following accurately describes the Central Valley of California?
7. One of the world’s most productive agriculture regions
8. The driest area in California with a large population
9. An empty desert
10. The most populated area in California
11. Into which part of California does the San Joaquin River flow?
12. Southern California
13. Northern California
14. Central California
15. Coastal California
16. The original purpose of dams was to
17. Make a lake for recreational purposes.
18. Store water for California residents.
19. Give fish a place to live.
20. Prevent flooding.
21. Which ocean fish has to swim upstream through rivers to lay eggs?
22. Cod
23. Bass
24. Catfish
25. Salmon
26. What region of California has the largest population?
27. Northern California
28. Central Valley
29. Bay Area
30. Southern California
31. Currently, most of the water from the San Joaquin River flows to
32. Bay Area residents.
33. Southern California residents.
34. Pacific Ocean.
35. The Friant Dam.
36. How does diverting water away from a river for municipal, household drinking purposes affect the river’s ecosystem?
37. Less wildlife and plants
38. Less flooding in residential areas
39. More food for the fish
40. Stronger ecosystem
41. What and where is the San Joaquin-/Sacramento Delta?
42. Area where the San Joaquin River begins to run into the ocean
43. Area where the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers meet
44. Flood plains around the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers
45. Places where the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers dry up
46. The San Joaquin-Sacramento Delta made national headlines because
47. It is the most agriculturally productive area in the state
48. Farmers are losing their jobs
49. It is one of the most endangered river areas in America
50. There is a strong controversy between farmers, the fishing industry, and others in California over the river
51. The main reason California Central Valley farmers are losing their farms is because
52. There is not enough water to keep their farms productive.
53. They went on strike to fight for their water allocation.
54. The bad economy makes workers scarce.
55. The river keeps flooding their farms.

**Activity 2:** **Getting Ready to Read—Quickwrite**

Think about how much water you and members of your household use on a daily basis. Your teacher will ask you to write for five minutes on one or all of the questions listed below. The purpose of this writing is to provide personal thoughts and opinions on the subject. Respond in a paragraph format, yet focus on your thoughts and examples rather than on spelling and grammar.

1. What would you do if you were told that you and your family had to use half as much water as you usually use? How would you adjust your water consumption?
2. What kind of reason would make this change in water usage more acceptable?
3. Who would you want to decide this? (A popular vote/state legislature/governor?)

**Activity 3:** **Getting Ready to Read: Pre-Test On-Demand Essay**

You will have 45 minutes to plan and write an essay on the topic assigned below. Before you begin writing, read the passage carefully and plan what you will say. Your essay should be as well organized and carefully written as you can make it.

“Water Controversies Boil Over”

The excerpt from this story is taken from the Sacramento Bee “Opinion” section published April 26, 2009.

In the coming year, 46 nations risk violent conflict over water and climate-related crises, and 56 other countries face political instability, according to a study by International Alert, a British advocacy group. The United Nations says water wars may be more likely in the future than wars over oil.

“Water will … become one of the defining limits to human development and a compounding factor in human misery,” Achim Steiner, director of the U.N. Environment Programme (Program), said during the World Water Forum, attended by more than 30,000 government officials and nonprofit leaders last month in Istanbul, Turkey.

A key message at the forum: There is probably enough fresh water available to meet human needs, despite climate change and population growth. However, the problem is poor management of water, which results in scarcity and conflict.

Fights over water-some small, some as large as California—are occurring across the globe. …Solving these conflicts (he says) requires us to accept that water does not belong to anyone. It belongs to all.

Mat Weiser

Explain Weiser’s argument, and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with his analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Take the following steps for this exercise:

* Read the assignment carefully.
* Decide which issue you are going to discuss.
* Discuss the purpose of the assignment. What will you try to accomplish in your essay?