

Teacher notes - Lesson 1: Is drought a global phenomenon?

Please note: Additional instructions are included in the notes section of the PowerPoints.

What is drought?

The first activity is a critical thinking technique called 'flat chat' (slide 1). Students are asked to study an image of a dried river bed and to answer the question 'What is drought?' with reference to the photograph. The flat chat activity requires a large piece of paper to be placed in the centre of each table and students are to write their ideas down in silence. They can add to and build on each other's ideas in order to generate a broad sheet.

Ask students to stand to complete this task; they will naturally rotate around their table as they add to each other's ideas. Students are then asked to remain in silence and move to another table in the room where they can read the ideas on that sheet and further build on those. Following this rotation, the students go back to their original table and read and discuss the ideas on their sheet to come up with a definition of the term drought.

Myths and misconceptions

There can be **several definitions of the term 'drought'** (slides 3-5) This can lead to discussion on the fact that no two droughts are actually the same. Include an exploration of the terms: water stress; water scarcity; water shortage (slides 6 and 7). Following this, the idea of drought myths is considered using the cartoon produced by the DRY research project (slide 8). Students are encouraged to discuss the myths listed on the slide and list any more that they can think of.

This presents an opportunity for discussion and comparison with myths that the students generated themselves. Ask students to choose two from their list and explain why they can be considered as drought myths. This may give opportunity for research online to enable students to give a detailed response. Ask students to think of two 'drought truths' – is this as straightforward as they might have thought?

In order to address the misconception that drought is a global south phenomenon, the students are given a blank map and asked to plot areas that they believe to be at risk of drought (slide 10). When compared to the map on slide 11 students can reflect on the global distribution of drought risk and water stress. This offers opportunity to explore these two sets of language too. Students are then asked on slide 12 to answer the question 'Is drought a global phenomenon?' They are required to make specific reference to the map and are encouraged to consider the global distribution shown which challenges the misconception that drought is restricted to the global south.

Research and presentation

The DRY (Drought Risk and You) project has conducted extensive research into seven catchment areas in the UK. Students are encouraged to explore this research in groups;

each group focuses on one catchment area and considers the drought risk for it. The website: <https://dryutility.info> and particularly the storymaps section (slide 16) can be explored by students on iPads or ICT facilities and also on the interactive whiteboard by the teacher. The choropleth map on slide 14 could be printed and shared with each group so that they consider the influence of average rainfall and location of the catchment area. Slide 15 gives some structure to the work the students are to research independently. They are encouraged to consider the role of each member of the group in presenting their findings.

Depending on available resources, students could present their findings as a radio broadcast, PowerPoint presentation or series of summary posters. All seven presentations could be filmed by the teacher to create a documentary of the seven catchment areas that could then be reviewed as the series of lessons progress. Whilst the presentations are being delivered, the remainder of the class is to complete the summary table to build up an image of the seven catchment areas and their key characteristics.

Reflection

The learning reflection on slide 17 encourages students to summarise their learning from the lesson into two bullet points representing their catchment area. The students could then take this information away with them in order to complete the extended learning task whereby they need to investigate ways in which the impact of drought in their catchment area may be reduced.