# **Fresh Waters Comprehension Check**

For questions 1-3, match each vocabulary term to the correct definition:

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| --- | --- |
| 1. Estuary | a. the area of land drained by a river or lake |
| 2. Wetland | b. an area of land that is covered by water for at least some of the year; can contain freshwater but can also be a little salty. |
| 3. Watershed | c. the wide part of a river where it meets the sea; fresh water and salt water meet and mix |

1. Estuary –
2. Wetland –
3. Watershed –
4. What is fresh water? Why is fresh water so important to our way of life on Earth?
5. How do streams turn into rivers? How are streams and rivers used by people?
6. How can pollution affect water sheds?
7. Why are wetlands important to protect from human activity, such as building towns, resorts, or shopping malls?
8. Describe how humans use groundwater and aquifers.

1. What is happening to many of Earth’s glaciers due to global warming and why is this problematic?
2. Most of Earth’s fresh water is currently unavailable for human use. List and describe at least two reasons why our access to fresh water is limited.

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1. Estuary – c
2. Wetland – b
3. Watershed – a
4. What is fresh water? Why is fresh water so important to our way of life on Earth?
   1. Fresh water is water that is salt free. It can be found in lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, wetlands, and glaciers. Living things, including humans, rely on fresh water for survival. In addition, humans have found ways to use fresh water to make their lives easier. For example, we use fresh water for electricity, cleaning our dishes, and even for flushing our toilets!
5. How do streams turn into rivers? How are streams and rivers used by people?
   1. Streams form from melted ice and snow running down the sides of mountains. As the water travels downhill due to the force of gravity, it gets faster and bigger. Streams connect with other streams or bodies of water to become even larger, eventually forming rivers that are wide, flat, and contain deep waterways. People use streams and rivers for transportation, hydroelectric power, and for fertilizing crops.
6. How can pollution affect watersheds?
   1. It is important to note the negative effects pollution has on watersheds. When land or water in a watershed is polluted, the contaminants affect any runoff, causing polluted water to spread to other, clean areas. Most water pollution comes from waste or sewage produced by farms, factories, refineries, and cities.
7. Why are wetlands important to protect from human activity, such as building towns, resorts, or shopping malls?
   1. It is important to protect wetlands from human activity because building on them makes it more difficult for them to protect and support their ecosystems as well as the variety of animals and plants that live there.
8. Describe how humans use groundwater and aquifers.
   1. Groundwater refers to the about 30% of Earth’s fresh water that is buried underground. Rain and melted snow seep through soil and fill empty spaces underground. An aquifer is a layer of rock and soil that contains groundwater. It can be used as a source of fresh water for rural areas and deserts.

1. What is happening to many of Earth’s glaciers due to global warming and why is this problematic?
   1. Glaciers are huge masses of ice that slowly move across the land. Ice sheets are dome-shaped glaciers spread across the landscape, covering everything with ice. Many glaciers are melting due to global warming. Not only does this cause issues for the animals relying on the glaciers for their habitat, it also causes rising sea levels and increased flooding.
2. Most of Earth’s fresh water is currently unavailable for human use. List and describe at least two reasons why our access to fresh water is limited.
   1. Almost all of Earth’s freshwater is unavailable to humans! Most of it is in glaciers, hidden underground as groundwater, frozen in permafrost (a permanently frozen layer found underground in cold areas of Earth), or traveling through the water cycle. Right now, people only have access to about one third of 1% of fresh water, but much of that is polluted and unsafe, too! Fresh water is precious, and we need to make choices that protect it.