

# 7a Water conservation

## Speaking

- 1 Work in pairs. Why do people talk about the need to save water when over 70 per cent of the Earth's surface is covered by water? Read the article and see if your answer was similar.

So what if people waste a lot of water – we've got enough, haven't we? Well, we may have a lot of sea water, but we are using fresh water faster than nature can replace it. So instead we are forced to recycle waste water, cleaning it and then piping it into people's homes. That process requires a lot of energy – running a tap for five minutes uses the same energy as burning a 60 watt light bulb for fourteen hours – and a lot of money. Also, when underground natural water reservoirs (or aquifers) get low on water, they can become contaminated with high concentrations of natural minerals like arsenic, or man-made chemicals from the ground. To prevent this, we need to keep these reservoirs well-stocked. So conserve water and you will save money and the planet.

A six minute shower	55 litres
A hamburger	2500 litres*
A serving of goat meat	42 litres
A 50g bar of chocolate	1410 litres
A serving of chicken	580 litres*
A cup of coffee	135 litres
Flushing the toilet	8 litres
500 sheets of paper	22,500 litres
A slice of bread	40 litres
½ kilo of clean wool	85,000 litres

\* in the case of the farm animals only a few litres were drunk by the animals or used in processing; the majority of the water went into the grain they were fed during their lives

- 2 Look at the facts about the water needed for various everyday things. Answer the questions.

- Are you surprised by any of the facts? Why?
- Can you draw any conclusions from them about the best ways to save water?

## Listening

- 3 2.2 Listen to four people from different countries (the United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, the United States and Mexico) talking about water. What does each say about:

- their own attitude to water use?
- what they think will happen if water is not conserved?

- 4 2.2 Listen again and answer the questions.

Speaker 1

- How does Liam describe Manchester?
- What does he do when he brushes his teeth?

Speaker 2

- What is the problem with desalinating water?
- What is Gemal researching?

Speaker 3

- How has the Colorado Delta changed in the last 100 years?
- What is the river water used for?

Speaker 4

- What practical water saving measures does Carmen take in the home?
- What does she suggest about other people's attitudes to water use?

- 5 Are any of the situations the speakers described similar to that of your country?

## Grammar mixed conditional sentences

- 6 Work in pairs. Look at the *if* sentences (1–6). Answer the questions (a–c).

- Which sentences describe present situations and present consequences?
- Which describe past situations and past consequences?
- Which are a mixture of the two?

- If we had known the facts, we would not have wasted so much water in the past.

Example:

*We didn't know the facts, so we wasted a lot of water in the past.*

- If I had been brought up in Saharan Africa, I would be a lot more conscious of water conservation.
- If we all used less water, the water companies wouldn't have to use so much energy treating water.
- If desalination methods didn't exist, this country would not have been able to develop in the way it has.
- If you had visited the area around the old delta in Mexico 100 years ago, you would be shocked to see it now.
- If more people thought and acted like me, things would not have come to this point.



### MIXED CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

#### First conditional (for present or future situations)

If + present simple, ... will + infinitive (without to) ...

#### Second conditional

If + past simple, ... would + infinitive (without to) ...

#### Third conditional

If + past perfect, ... would have + past participle

#### Mixed second and third conditional

If + past simple, ... would have + past participle

#### Mixed third and second conditional

If + past perfect, ... would + infinitive (without to) ...

For further information and practice, see page 83.

**7** Look at the grammar box. Then make conditional sentences based on the information in these situations.

- 1 We bought a cheap dishwasher that wasn't very efficient. As a result, we use a lot more water than we need to.
- 2 I don't use the dishwasher much, because no one told me that you use more water washing dishes by hand.
- 3 You wasted a lot of water in the past because you washed your car by hand instead of using a car wash.
- 4 Automatic carwashes are really expensive. As a result, I haven't used them very often.
- 5 Our water use is way above the average because we built a big swimming pool in the garden. So much of the water just evaporates away!
- 6 We water the garden when the temperature is cool, so that the water doesn't just evaporate away.
- 7 The United States has a shortage of water because they have tried to cultivate areas with a desert climate.
- 8 We changed our habits after we saw a shocking TV programme about how much water is wasted.

### 8 Pronunciation contractions in conditionals

**2.3** Listen to the contracted forms in these sentences and repeat.

- 1 If we hadn't built desalination plants, we'd still be fetching water from the well.
- 2 If you'd visited this area twenty years ago, you'd've seen a very different river.
- 3 If they don't act now, maybe it'll be too late.
- 4 If people'd been more careful, things wouldn't've come to this point.
- 5 If there's no rain, the river'll dry up.

**9** Look at these facts about the use of natural resources around the world. Then make hypotheses based on them. Use one of the conditional forms in the grammar box.

- 1 The Aral Sea in central Asia (a huge freshwater lake) is now one-tenth of the size it was in the 1960s because water has been used by farmers to irrigate their fields.
- 2 As a desert town, Las Vegas has to import a lot of water. But a lot of it goes on watering green spaces, particularly the 60 golf courses that have been built around the city.
- 3 Sixteen million tourists visit Greece each year, causing shortages of water on many of its islands.
- 4 In the 1970s Britain found a lot of gas in the North Sea. But rather than use it carefully, they used it immediately. Now more than 50 per cent of Britain's gas is imported.



The Aral Sea

### Vocabulary and speaking

**10** Work in pairs. Match each verb in A with as many nouns in B as you can. Then tell each other if you do any of these actions or support others who do.

**A** conserve   consume   preserve   protect  
run out of   save   spend   waste

**B** animals   food   forests   land   money  
energy   petrol   time   water

**11** Think about how your country has saved or wasted resources and write conditional sentences about them. Then mingle with the other students and tell each other your ideas. Choose the best idea and tell the class.