

What you can do...

Here's an activity you can do with your students (probably best for upper high school or eikaiwa) to help demonstrate exactly how lucky we are here in the developed world. It's really simple.

Every time you use electricity, put a one yen coin in a jar. That means every time you flick a light switch, use a computer, watch TV, play a video game or blow dry your hair (or anything else that requires electricity) you put one yen in a jar. Do the same for water. Anytime you use water...drink it, turn on a tap or flush a toilet...put a one yen coin in the same jar (Using the same jar demonstrates how water and power are related). Do this for one week.

Does this sound familiar? It should! This is the same activity that I talked about back in September with power and water. But this month you're going to make one teeny little variation...

To further demonstrate how everything is inter-related, ask your students to add a additional coin to the jar every time they eat something (since food production requires H₂O). At the end of the week, total the number of coins. This is a representation of how much water they've consumed in one week.

Another idea...have your students calculate their water footprint. The Water Footprint Network (<http://www.waterfootpring.org>) has two excellent options for this. The first is a quick individual water footprint calculator that offers a very general and quick estimate of your individual water footprint based on the average consumption pattern of an individual in your country

The other option is an extended version of the basic calculator which asks specific questions about food consumption (for example, how many kilograms of meat or dairy products do you use per week) and personal water use (How many times per day do you brush your teeth, shave or wash your hands?).

An even better idea...combine the two! The coin activity is a very good fit with the extended water footprint calculator...

There are many different variations on this activity. Here's one of mine...feel free to come up with your own!

Keep the activity the same, but increase the coin denomination. At the end of the week you'll have more money in the jar, which means more money to donate to the charity of your choice.