



## ***Teacher's Guide***

### **Drinking Water: Bottle or Tap** **Planet H<sub>2</sub>O**

#### **Grade Levels:**

Intermediate  
Junior High

#### **Subject Areas:**

Environmental Education  
Consumer Education  
Media and Society  
Social Studies

#### **Synopsis:**

On-the-street interviews conducted by a group of young teens in New York City reveal that most New Yorkers prefer to drink bottled water rather than tap water. Meanwhile, a water-safety expert confirms that there is very little difference between bottled water and tap water and that tap water may actually be healthier. In an effort to understand why people nonetheless prefer bottled water, the teens conduct a taste test and discover that they can't tell the difference between New York City tap water and various brands of bottled water. They blame people's preference for bottled water on the influence of advertising. Next the teens investigate the bottled-water industry, environmental problems caused by plastic bottles, and the threat to government regulation of water quality if people continue to prefer bottled water. By the time they are finished, the suggestion that individuals bottle their own tap water seems quite reasonable.

#### **Learning Objectives:** Students will:

- Understand that there is very little difference between bottled water and tap water.
- Explain how governments regulate drinking water standards.
- Provide examples of the environmental damage caused by the bottled-water phenomena.
- Consider their personal responsibility to help alleviate this environmental problem.

#### **Vocabulary:**

Pristine, precious, artesian

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### **Pre-Viewing Discussion:**

Do you prefer to drink bottled water instead of tap water? What are the reasons for your preferences?

Is there any way to prove that bottled water is better for your health than tap water?

Isn't the quality of our tap water regulated?

How would you go about proving that there is little difference between tap water and bottled water?

### **Post-Viewing Discussion:**

Why did so many New Yorkers prefer to drink bottled water? Do you think their reasons were valid?

What environmental problems have resulted from so many consumers drinking bottled water?

Do you think these environmental problems are significant?

Will you give up your bottled-water habit as a result of watching this program? Why or why not?

### **Further Activities:**

Investigate one or two brands of bottled water to find out how the quality of the water is controlled by the manufacturer.

Investigate how Perrier mineral water came to be bottled. Determine if this water is any better than competing brands or if advertising has been the key to the product's success.

Compare the information given on bottled-water labels and the information the government provides about the quality of your tap water.

Investigate the relationship between disease and poor water quality in developing nations.

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