

Test Your Water Smarts

Take this quiz (don't worry, you won't get graded) to test your water smarts. Then give the quiz to your family and friends to test their knowledge on water quality. We can't solve all these problems if people don't know they exist. Be the ball . . .

1. True or false. Watersheds are located mainly in mountainous regions with high rainfall.
2. Circle the correct answer. Most of the pollutants entering our waters come from the following sources:
 - A. Wastewater treatment plants
 - B. Runoff from fields and streets
 - C. Factories along rivers
3. True or false. Students can join organizations to help monitor their waters.
4. True or false. Dirt, bacteria, and nutrients are the most common pollutants in our waters.
5. True or false. Leaves should be raked down a storm drain so they can decompose in the stream and provide food for the fish.
6. True or false. To test if your toilet is leaking, you can squirt a couple drops of food dye in the top of the tank and wait a few minutes to see if the dye shows up in the toilet bowl.
7. Circle the correct answer. The following organizations monitor the quality of our waters:
 - A. Volunteer organizations, including kids like you
 - B. State, local and tribal agencies
 - C. The federal government
 - D. All of the above
8. Circle the correct answer. Nutrients that enter our waters come from the following sources:
 - A. Leaking septic systems
 - B. Excess fertilizers washing off lawns
 - C. Pet waste
 - D. All of the above
9. What percentage of rivers and streams assessed in the most recent national water quality report scored a GOOD rating, meaning the waters fully supported their designated uses?
 - A. 10%
 - B. 32%
 - C. 65%
 - D. 93%

How do you rate?

More than five wrong: Uh oh. Better read this report again!

3 to 5 wrong: You've gotta do better than that if you're going to make a difference. Check out some of the web sites listed on page 18.

1 to 3 wrong: Pretty good. Find the correct answers and start spreading the word.

0 wrong: Excellent! You've got the smarts to be an environmental champion. Now, go out there and make a difference!

1. F, we all live in a watershed; 2. B; 3. T; 4. T; 5. F, decomposed material uses up the oxygen and then fish die; 6. T; 7. D; 8. D; 9. C.

Answers:

Home Survey

To improve your home's environmental friendliness, you need to know where you and your family stand on the environmentally-friendly meter. Please answer the questions below and then calculate your score. If some questions don't apply to you, try answering them anyway, using good ol' common sense (lots of us don't have yards, garages, or dogs!).

1. Your family runs the dishwasher and washing machine
 - a. Only when they're full
 - b. When they are about half full
 - c. When they have only a few items in them

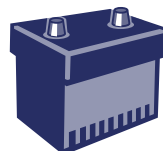
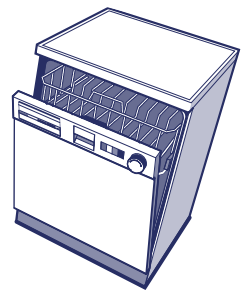
2. Your house has low-flow devices (which use less water than standard devices) in the
 - Bathroom sink (number ____)
 - Shower (number ____)
 - Toilets (number ____)
 - Kitchen
 - Dishwasher

3. Take a look at all of the faucets in your house. How many leak? ____

4. Your family recycles
 - a. Glass
 - b. Plastic
 - c. Newspapers
 - d. Metal

5. When you look into your garage or shed, you see
 - a. No cans of paint, fertilizer, yard chemicals, or car batteries. Your family recycles them at the local hazardous waste facility.
Bonus: Where is the facility located? _____
 - b. One can of paint, but your family is redecorating and it will be used
 - c. Plenty of cans of paint, fertilizers, chemicals, and old car batteries.
 - d. No cans of paint or old car batteries. Your family threw them away in the regular trash.

6. When you look at the floor of your garage and/or driveway, you see
 - a. No oil or chemical stains
 - b. A few drops of oil or chemicals
 - c. A lovely collage of chemical stains and leaked oil



7. If you have a family dog, whoever walks it
 - a. Always picks up after the pooch
 - b. Sometimes picks up after the pooch
 - c. Never picks up after the pooch, except when someone steps in it
8. Describe how your family deals with your lawn
 - a. Constantly fertilizes, spreads chemicals for weed and bug control, and waters it like crazy. Your parents pay more attention to the lawn than to you!
 - b. Hires a lawn care company to do everything in choice “a”
 - c. Fertilizes infrequently, uses little or no chemicals for weed and bug control, and waters occasionally in the early morning or late afternoon
 - d. Your “lawn” only has native grasses and plants (native means that the plants grow naturally in your area of the country and usually don’t require any watering or fertilizers), and your family removes the weeds by hand (really)
9. Your yard is mostly:
 - a. Patches of dirt and/or a patio
 - b. Grass, shrubs, flowers, trees, and pervious (water absorbing) surfaces
10. Your family disposes of yard waste (leaves and grass clippings) by
 - a. Throwing it into the nearby pond or stream
 - b. Raking it into the storm drain
 - c. Collecting it to be recycled by the town or county public works department
 - d. Composting it and using it in the garden or planting beds
11. If you have a stream or pond in your yard or neighborhood, you see
 - a. A healthy watercourse with lots of fish and with vegetation, like overhanging trees and shrubs, along the edge
 - b. No sign of fish and has mowed grass or impervious surfaces right along the edge
 - c. No water because that’s where you dump your trash
12. If you have a septic system
 - a. When was the last time that it was pumped? _____
 - b. By whom? _____



So, how did you score?

Mom Nature thinks that you're pretty cool for doing this survey. Give yourself 5 points to start out.

- To be most efficient with water and energy, the dishwasher and washing machine should only be run when they're full.
 - add 3 points
 - subtract 1 point
 - subtract 3 points
- Low-flow devices can save lots of water, plus there will be less water to clean at the water treatment plant.
 - * add 1 point for every low-flow device in your house
- Water conservation is always environmentally friendly. Leaking water faucets waste precious water.
 - * subtract 2 points for each leaky faucet
- Recycling is good for the environment. Recycling materials into useful products uses less energy and water than using new natural resources.
 - add 2 points
 - add 2 points
 - add 2 points
 - add 2 points
- Cans of oil-based paint and old car batteries should never be put into the regular trash. They are a hazardous waste and should be recycled by a special facility.
 - add 5 points
BONUS add 10 points (good for you!)
 - add 5 points
 - subtract 3 points
 - subtract 5 points
- When it rains or you hose down the garage, oils and other gunk on the floor of the garage or driveway will be washed into a storm drain that leads into a stream. That's bad news for the fish and other critters living in the stream.
 - add 5 points
 - add no points
 - subtract 5 points (A collage of oils and chemicals is certainly NOT art!)
- Pet waste should always be picked up and put into the trash or flushed down the toilet. If left on the ground, it can wash into a storm drain or directly into a stream.
 - add 5 points
 - add 1 point
 - subtract 5 points (Ewwwww! That's gross!)
- Lawns should be fertilized sparingly, and weed and bug chemicals applied only when absolutely necessary. Native plants need little care and often provide improved habitat for animals. If the lawn is fertilized too much, the excess



- fertilizer will just wash into a storm drain or directly into a stream.
- subtract 3 points
 - subtract 5 points
 - add 3 points
 - add 5 points
9. When it rains, the runoff picks up dirt from bare patches in the yard and washes it into a storm drain or directly into a stream. Dirt can clog fish gills, smother stream critters, and change the flow of water in the stream. A yard with lots of bare patches and impervious surfaces is bad news!
- subtract 5 points
 - add 5 points
10. Composting or recycling leaves and grass clippings creates new topsoil. Yard waste should never be thrown into the regular trash or any other sensitive area such as a wetland or stream. Too many leaves and grass clippings can clog up those sensitive areas and add too many nutrients. Yard waste clogs storm drains and ends up in our waterways.
- subtract 5 points
 - subtract 5 points
 - add 5 points
 - add 5 points
11. A “buffer area” is an area with many plants along a streambed. A buffer area filters pollutants such as phosphorus and dirt out of rainwater before it enters the stream or pond. A buffer area also shades the water to keep it cool for the critters in the summer. And as we learned, cool water holds more oxygen than warm water.
- add 5 points
 - add no points
 - subtract 5 points (Try using a trash can!)
12. Septic systems require maintenance, such as regular pumping of the tank every few years.
- add 5 points if it was within the past three years
subtract 5 points if it was over 5 years ago
 - add 5 points if it was by a certified contractor
subtract 5 points if it was by your Uncle Bob

What Mom Nature thinks of your score . . .



50 points or more

You and your family are environmentally friendly! Mom Nature is really proud of you! Keep up the good work!

20 to 50 points

You and your family are really close to environmentally friendly. Mom Nature is pleased, but she would like you to do a bit better.

negative points to 20 (eek!)

Mom Nature is pretty upset and wants you and your family to go to your rooms and reread this report until you learn more about protecting the environment!