

Active Reading

Section: Water Resources

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

Most of the fresh water that is available for human use cannot be seen—it exists underground. When it rains, some of the water that falls onto the land flows into lakes and streams. But much of the water percolates through the soil and down into the rocks beneath. Water stored beneath the Earth's surface in sediment and rock formations is called **groundwater**.

As water travels beneath the Earth's surface, it eventually reaches a level where the rocks and soil are saturated with water. This level is known as the *water table*. In wet regions, the water table may be at the Earth's surface and a spring of fresh water may flow out onto the ground. But in deserts, the water table may be hundreds of meters beneath the Earth's surface. The water table is actually not as level as its name implies. The water table has peaks and valleys that match the shape of the land above it. Just as surface water flows downhill, groundwater tends to flow slowly from the peaks of the water table to the valleys.

IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS

One reading skill is the ability to identify the main idea of a passage. The main idea is the main focus or key idea. Frequently, a main idea is accompanied by supporting information that offers detailed facts about main ideas.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

1. Where is most fresh water that is available for human consumption found?

2. How does water get beneath Earth's surface after it rains?

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

3. Water stored in sediments and rocks beneath Earth's surface is called

_____.

4. The level where rocks and soil become saturated with water is called

_____.

Active Reading *continued*

SEQUENCING INFORMATION

One reading skill is the ability to sequence information, or to logically place items or events in the order in which they occur.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided to show the sequence of the process in which groundwater is formed.

5. Water that will become groundwater falls on the surface of Earth when _____.
6. Water first percolates through the _____.
7. Then, water reaches the _____ beneath.
8. Eventually, the water reaches the _____, where the rocks and soil are already _____ with water.

RECOGNIZING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

One reading skill is the ability to recognize similarities and differences between two phrases, ideas, or things. This is sometimes known as comparing and contrasting.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

9. Why is a water table *not* like a table in your home?

10. Explain the difference between water tables in wet and desert regions.

RECOGNIZING CAUSE AND EFFECT

One reading skill is the ability to recognize cause and effect.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

11. What movement occurs with groundwater? What causes this movement?

12. Why might a spring flow out of the ground in a wet region?

