How People Get Their Water

Reservoirs: "Holding Tanks" for Drinking Water

Let your students **"Ride the Water Cycle"** with the following activity. It will help them understand the role of reservoirs in maintaining a reliable supply of drinking water.

Objective: To illustrate how a reservoir works.

Target Audience: Primary (K-6)

Teacher's Notes:

Water moves in a continuous cycle between the air, ground, and plants and animals. Most water does not naturally exist in a pure form or in a form that is safe for people to drink. That is why water must be cleaned before we drink it. Water utilities provide such treatment before water is sent through pipes to homes in the community.

The demand for water varies. The availability of water also varies in different areas of the world. To meet those varying needs, water utilities may store extra water in places known as reservoirs. Water is usually contained in reservoirs by a dam. Reservoirs help ensure that communities do not run out of water at any given time regardless of the communities' total water use.

Materials Needed:
Plastic Box
Spray bottle
Pebbles
Soil
Sand
Leaves
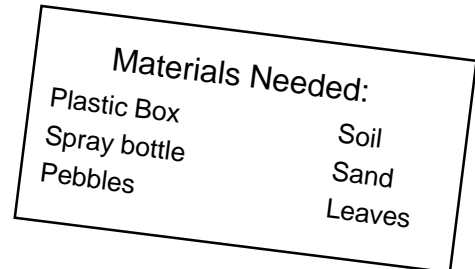
Questions to Expand Students' Thinking:

Q What are some of the sources of water for a reservoir?

A Precipitation in the form of rain and snow. Other bodies of water that feed the reservoir, such as lakes and rivers.

Q How does water get into a reservoir?

A It seeps over and through the soil above the reservoir.

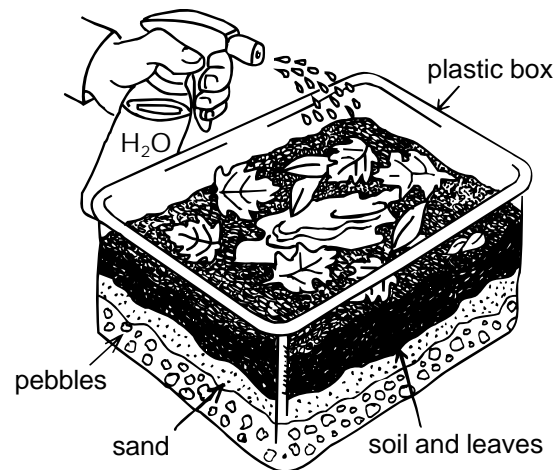**Q** What contains or holds water in a real reservoir?

A Dams.

Q What kind of natural treatment does water receive in a reservoir?

A Natural filtration through leaves, grass and soil. Some settling also occurs in the reservoir.

Activity Directions:

1) Construct a model of a reservoir using a clean, clear plastic box. Line the bottom of the box with small pebbles and then layer sand, soil, and leaves on top.

2) Carefully spray water on the four corners of the model until the soil mixture is saturated and the water has seeped through to the open area (the reservoir).

H_2O — plastic box — pebbles — sand — soil and leaves