

# Water: Our Most Basic Resource

## Key Terms

**Water Store:** a place in the world where water is stored. Ex: ocean, ice sheets and groundwater

**Water Flow:** where water moves from one store to another. Ex: water cycle, precipitation, etc

**Hydrologic Cycle:** pathway followed by water from oceans and lakes through the movement of water through the atmosphere and then back to the land and waterways.

**Groundwater:** water found below the Earth's surface in the spaces in soil and bedrock.

**Run-off:** water that flows off the land through lakes and rivers into the ocean.

**Watershed:** an area of high land that separates one drainage basin from another

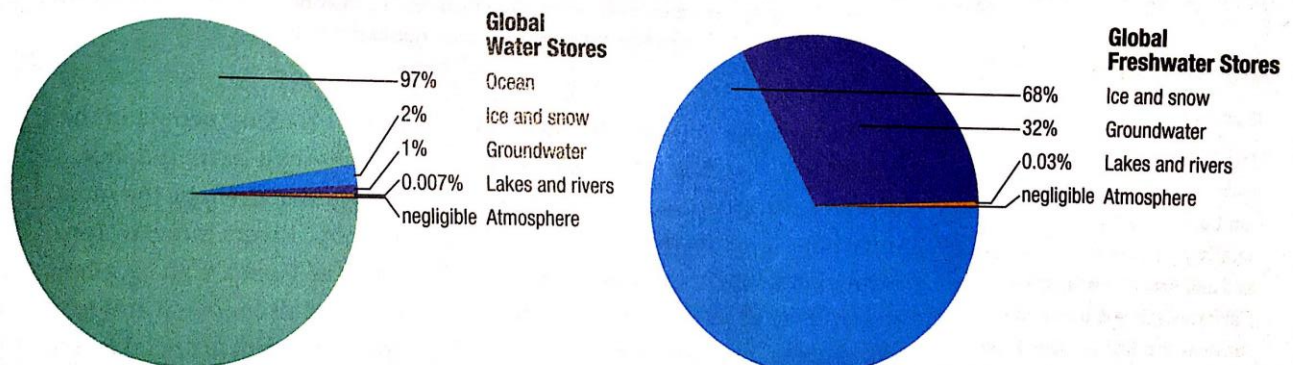
**Drainage Basin:** area drained by a river and its tributaries. One drainage basin is separated from another by an area of higher land called a watershed.

**Wetlands:** swamp, marsh and bog; places where the water table is at ground level

## Facts About Water...

- Only 2.5% of the world's water is fresh water – the other 97.5% is salt water
- Almost 70% of fresh water is frozen in glaciers and permanent snow
- 9% of Canada's area is covered in water, 20% if we include wetlands and groundwater
- Canada has 25% of the world's wetlands – the largest area in the world
- Canada has more lakes than any other country
- The Great Lakes are the largest system of fresh, surface water on Earth containing 18% of the world's fresh, surface water
- The Great Lakes provide drinking water to 8.5 million Canadians

## Global and Freshwater Stores



Source: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

## Water Uses

The way in which we use water is categorized into 2 uses:

**In stream Uses** – When the water remains in its natural setting

- Hydro-electric power
- Fish habitats
- Recreation
- Shipping

**Withdrawal Uses** – When water is removed from its source

- Industry
- Nuclear power
- Domestic Use
- Agriculture

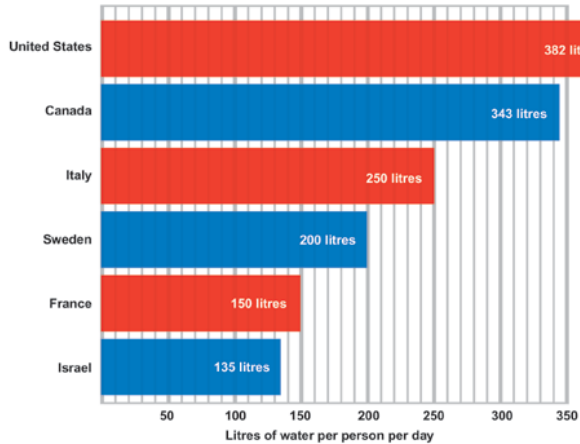
- Most withdrawal uses consume water, meaning less is returned to the source than is taken out. The water that is returned is often degraded

## Daily Uses of Water

How much water do you think you and your family use on a daily basis?

- The average Canadian uses about 343L of water a day for personal use
- Compared to other countries, we pay very little for the use of water

**Average daily domestic water use**  
(per capita)



**Typical municipal water prices in Canada and other countries**  
(per cubic metre)

