

Andrew Connolly
Andrewmc2401
AC750818@ohio.edu
Ohio University

Every production process originates in water, one of the building blocks of life. It is necessary for organisms to live and function, and is often used in the refining process for creating goods for customers. Today's activity provided students with the opportunity to explore the water consumption of certain goods in their lives.

The first item I chose to look at was eggs. I often have scrambled eggs for breakfast on campus, so I decided to look at how much water goes into producing eggs. I was surprised to see that it takes 52 gallons of water to produce one single egg according to the water footprint calculator, though with further investigation I began to realize why. This water is used to raise the chicken, chicken feed, and clean the eggs. One has to think of every aspect to create a single product. When one considers how many items they use each day, their water footprint quickly rises.

I then decided to look into clothing, another item considered a human necessity. The most common item in my wardrobe is a standard cotton t-shirt. I use them with other types of clothing, or they stand as a shirt in themselves. Therefore, I wanted to know what goes into what I wear. It takes 659 gallons of water to produce a single cotton t-shirt. This means everytime that I need a new shirt, it takes 659 gallons of water to produce the new shirt I wear. This number was very alarming to me, and I am going to strive to buy second hand products now at thrift shops. Not only will it save the environment by reusing products, but it will save me money as well, providing me more money to spend on things like organic or FLOSN foods.

One often takes electricity, more specifically lights, for granted. I was curious how much water it takes to produce the energy to light a lightbulb. According to Treehugger.com it takes approximately 4,500 gallons of water to light one 60 watt bulb 12 hours a day for one year. When one considers how many lights are in a school, dormitory, or office building, this number grows to enormous proportions.

As a student, I also have a great deal of notebooks and handouts for classes. Therefore I was interested in discovering how much water it takes to create a piece of paper. According to theworldcounts.com it takes 5 gallons of water to produce a single piece of paper, let alone harvest the materials to create it. When one considers 100 page notebook, they are looking at at least 500 gallons of water going into it. So one should strive to use a whole page of paper, and if it is not fully used, save it for scratch work. ONE also should recycle anything they can to offset their waste.

With these four previous thoughts in mind, I was curious how much water goes into what I would consider one of my greener practices, eating a salad occasionally as dinner. This simple act still requires a great deal of water. 21 gallons of water go into a single salad according to the water footprint calculator. Even in a practice I consider sustainable the amount of water I use is still high for everything requires water, and in a society pressed by water shortages, every ounce counts.

The biggest thing that surprised me in the course of today's research, was how much water goes into producing paper, as it is considered a staple in the modern classroom. One notebook per class, for nine classes, and then handouts, and forms, and so much more all totals to a gigantic sum of water used for a single semester of college on paper alone. One takes for granted paper, a simple product in the eyes of many. It is so much more than simple though.

I can incorporate what I learned from today's activity into my daily life in order to strive to reduce my water waste. First, I am going to strive to eat two days without meat/eggs each week to reduce my water waste from food. I also will buy secondhand clothing, to reuse products, and limit my water waste from clothing. I will also strive to limit my paper usage by truly using a whole page of paper, and using scraps whenever possible. Every action counts in the fight for our planet. For most of the practices I listed above, there are alternatives, rather than cutting something out, except for paper and eggs. Those I must completely cut out, unless one considers typing notes an alternative to paper. For electricity though, one can use sunlight during the day, or buying secondhand clothes to replace new ones. These practices are all feasible, if one focuses on what they are doing. After a while though, it will become a habit, and habits become success stories. One can achieve anything if they set their heart to it.