



Water Changes Her Day

C1 | AGES 16+ | WATER, TIME AND OPPORTUNITY

S01

Two students. The same examination. Different control over their time. Explore how access to water connects with unpaid work, education and the freedom to make choices.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

When does better water access become a fairer opportunity?

ACCESS

Can I obtain water?

TIME

What work is reduced?

CHOICE

Who decides what is next?

Your route

1. Read an opinion article and outline its argument.
2. Analyse how language and structure guide the reader.
3. Interpret evidence and test a project's public claim.
4. Write a reasoned comment or a speech for a youth forum.

BEFORE READING / THINK, PAIR, CHALLENGE

A school offers every student the same after-school study session. Is that automatically an equal opportunity? Consider responsibilities, access and choice. Discuss the principle without sharing private experiences.

Lesson format: 2 × 90 minutes, or 90 minutes plus independent writing.

Text status: an original opinion article written for this resource. The opening is hypothetical, not a real person's testimony. Published evidence appears separately on S04. This is a classroom enquiry, not a campaign for an international action day.



Who owns the saved hour?

TEXT A | ORIGINAL OPINION ARTICLE | EU4BLUE, 2026 | PART 1

S02

- 01 Imagine two students approaching the same examination: equally ambitious, equally aware that their results may influence what happens next. One must first collect household water; the other turns on a tap. The examination begins at the same time, but their preparation does not. This hypothetical contrast reveals a limitation in the reassuring language of equal opportunity. Institutions can issue identical invitations while remaining indifferent to the unequal conditions under which people are expected to accept them.
- 02 Collecting water is labour, even when its cost never enters a household budget. Walking, queuing and carrying make competing claims on finite hours. The opportunities displaced may include education and paid employment, but also sleep, friendship and unproductive pleasure. To defend a girl's time solely in terms of future earnings is to impose another condition on its value. She should not have to promise economic returns before her exhaustion, her interests or her leisure become legitimate concerns.
- 03 A closer water supply could alter that calculation substantially. Yet time released is not necessarily time over which its former collector gains control. If the minutes are reassigned to cooking, cleaning or unpaid care, a measurable improvement in access may coexist with a persistent restriction on choice. This is not an argument against infrastructure. It is an argument against allowing an easily counted benefit to stand in for a more demanding question: who acquires the authority to organise the day?
- 04 An equivalent problem arises when participation is reduced to attendance. Suppose service users are invited to a consultation after tariffs, opening hours and maintenance arrangements have effectively been settled. Their testimony may decorate the project report without altering its design. A seat at the table is not necessarily a share in the decision. Meaningful influence requires routes through which users can contest proposals, obtain responses and see their priorities affect what is eventually implemented.

Concepts: agency = the capacity to act and make choices; discretion = authority to decide; opportunity cost = the alternatives forgone. Distinguish equality of provision from substantive access.



Who owns the saved hour?

TEXT A | ORIGINAL OPINION ARTICLE | EU4BLUE, 2026 | PART 2

S03

- 05 The representation of those users deserves equal scrutiny. Narratives organised around helpless girls and benevolent outsiders can mobilise sympathy while withholding agency. People who collect water are also observers of queues, negotiators of household demands and critics of unreliable services. Their experience constitutes knowledge, not merely a collection of moving anecdotes. Taking it seriously means accepting disagreement, including disagreement with a project that others have already decided to celebrate. Partnership is less photogenic than rescue, but it is more accountable.
- 06 There is a serious counterargument. Loading an urgent engineering task with every ambition for social change risks postponing practical improvements. A discussion of power will not repair a broken pipe. The objection rightly challenges inflated promises: no water project can, by itself, eliminate educational disadvantage or transform every household relationship. Nevertheless, decisions about charges, repairs and operating hours are already decisions about access and responsibility. Treating them as socially neutral does not remove their consequences; it merely leaves those consequences less examined.
- 07 Evaluation should therefore distinguish provision, use and control. A functioning installation is an achievement; an affordable, dependable service is a further one. Reduced collection time is valuable; greater discretion over that time is another outcome again. The appropriate evidence includes users' accounts, repeated measurements and transparent responses to complaints. It should also leave room for uneven results. Some users may benefit while others remain excluded, and an average improvement should not erase that difference. A project photograph cannot carry the evidential weight of all these claims.
- 08 Water can change her day. Whether she can shape that day is the harder test. The aim is neither to romanticise endurance nor to dismiss infrastructure because it cannot solve everything. It is to judge practical progress without confusing it with completed equality. A credible promise of opportunity must address not only the hours that become available, but the people authorised to decide what those hours are for.

Concepts: agency = the capacity to act and make choices; discretion = authority to decide; opportunity cost = the alternatives forgone. Distinguish equality of provision from substantive access.

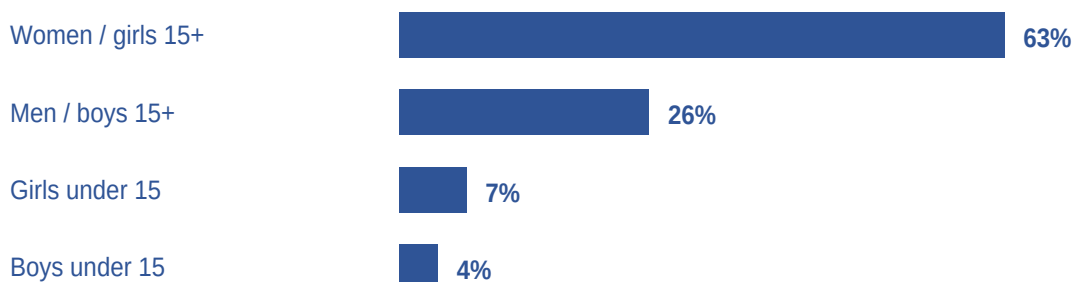
Evidence without shortcuts

TEXT B | PUBLISHED DATA AND A SIMULATED PROJECT AUDIT

S04

Published context [1]

WHO/UNICEF's 2023 report estimates that, in 2022, 1.8 billion people lacked drinking water on their premises. In these households, primary collection responsibility was: women/girls aged 15+ 63%; men/boys aged 15+ 26%; girls under 15 7%; boys under 15 4%.



Original chart from report percentages. Denominator: households collecting water off premises. Categories record the primary collector; they do not measure each person's hours or prove an effect on exam results. These are 2022 estimates, not a live count.

FICTIONAL PROJECT / SIX MONTHS AFTER OPENING

A community water service reports results for the same 40 participating households before and after opening. All figures below are invented for analysis, not real research.

Indicator	Before	After
Mean collection time per household / day	80 min	25 min
Households reporting girls do most collection	30 / 40	28 / 40
Girls aged 16–18 attending school regularly	18 / 24	20 / 24
Service-user seats on a 10-person committee	0 / 10	2 / 10

No comparison community was surveyed. School fees also changed during the period. Attendance definitions, variation between households and committee voting rights are not reported.



Understand, then analyse

TASKS 1–2 | READING AND LANGUAGE ANALYSIS

S05

1 / OUTLINE

Outline the writer's position on the extent to which improved water access can advance equal opportunity. Write 120–150 words in your own words.

Planning space / no personal opinion in your outline

2 / ANALYSE

Analyse how the writer constructs a qualified argument for substantive equality. Consider the progression of the argument, rhetorical choices and the treatment of a counterargument. Evaluate the relationship between persuasive effect and evidential support.

Do not assume that a technique has the same effect on every reader. Explain a plausible function in this text. A vivid hypothetical example illustrates a claim; it does not establish its prevalence.

Choice + paragraph	Brief quotation	Function in the argument



Audit the promise

TASK 3 | DATA, CAUSALITY AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

S06

THE PROJECT'S PROPOSED CAPTION

"Our new water service has ended the gender gap. Every girl now has an extra hour for school."

- A. Quantify the time change and the attendance-rate change, specifying denominators and units.
- B. Assess the inferential gaps in the caption: aggregation, attribution, measurement and the meaning of equality.
- C. Produce a defensible caption of no more than 35 words without implying a causal result the design cannot establish.

Calculations and evidence limits

Revised caption

Further challenge: propose one additional measure of agency and one comparison that would strengthen attribution. Explain what each can and cannot establish.



Whose decision is it?

TASK 4 | DELIBERATION BEFORE WRITING

S07

A youth forum is considering how a community water service should be judged. Use these perspectives to test your position. They are fictional discussion roles, not quotations or representative voices of a country or culture.

SERVICE USER

A shorter queue helps. But if household work is redistributed, who should decide what is fair? Ask whose preferences were actually collected.

MAINTENANCE LEAD

Reliability needs money, parts and trained staff. Ask how promises will survive breakdowns and who is responsible for repairs.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Attendance is important, but so are sleep, friendship and choice. Ask whether students can refuse extra responsibilities or influence decisions.

EVALUATION EDITOR

Averages can conceal unequal results. Ask which groups benefited, what changed elsewhere and what evidence would challenge a success story.

Negotiate two operational success criteria without collapsing reliability, access and agency into one measure. State an unresolved trade-off and the evidence needed to revisit it.



Write a reasoned response

TASK 5 | CHOOSE ONE OPTION / USE YOUR OWN PAPER

S08

OPTION A / COMMENT

“Saving time is not the same as sharing power.”

Comment on this statement, referring to Text A and the evidence on S04. Weigh a counterargument and reach a reasoned conclusion. Suggested length: 350–450 words.

OPTION B / SPEECH

Write a speech for a school youth forum entitled “A fairer day”. Assess what a successful water-access project should achieve. Use Text A and S04, address an objection and propose two justified success criteria. Suggested length: 350–450 words.

Writing standard

Develop a sustained argument rather than a catalogue of concerns. Integrate evidence critically, qualify causal claims and weigh practical constraints. For the speech, adapt register and rhetorical choices to a school audience without sacrificing analytical precision.

My position / evidence / counterargument / conclusion

Revision check: Have I distinguished fictional and published evidence? Have I answered the task, considered another view and explained my judgement? Is each paragraph doing a clear job?



Teaching for depth

C1 | TEACHER GUIDE | UPPER-SECONDARY ENGLISH

T01

Purpose: connect gender equality and water access with critical reading, rhetorical analysis, evidence literacy and argumentation. Students distinguish time saved from control over time and assess representation without reducing people to victims.

Materials: S01–S08, paper and optional calculators. No internet required. Print S07 once per group; learners may refer to roles without cutting.

Lesson	Sequence / minutes
1 / 0–10	S01: equal opportunity dilemma; discuss without personal disclosure.
1 / 10–30	Read Text A. Mark thesis, qualification and counterargument.
1 / 30–45	Task 1: outline; compare selection and accuracy.
1 / 45–70	Task 2: analyse; develop two or three supported paragraphs.
1 / 70–90	S04: distinguish published context from invented project evidence.
2 / 0–20	S06: audit caption, calculate and qualify claims.
2 / 20–35	S07: deliberation; agree criteria and retain a disagreement.
2 / 35–75	S08: individual writing, using a plan.
2 / 75–90	Peer review and revision; compare the quality of justification.

Differentiation

C1: denser syntax and concepts; independent rhetorical analysis, scrutiny of evidential support, and a sustained evaluative response. Require qualification, counterargument and clearly defended criteria.

Assessment use: develops comprehension, analysis and judgement associated with upper-secondary English. It is not an official Abitur paper or a claim of alignment with every course/year. CEFR labels indicate intended support levels, not certified assessment.

Inclusive practice: do not ask learners to disclose hardship. Avoid country-wide stereotypes. Offer oral rehearsal or accessible text formats; keep intellectual expectations visible.



Reading and analysis key

EXPECTATION HORIZON / TEXT A

T02

TASK 1 / CORE CONTENT

Improved water access may reduce unpaid labour and widen opportunities. It does not guarantee control over saved time or influence over services. The writer advocates reliable provision, meaningful participation and evaluation of users' choices, while acknowledging the limits of a single project.

Task 2 / Defensible analytical routes

Paragraph 1: hypothetical parallel students and the contrast between identical exam time and unequal preparation turn abstract equality into a concrete dilemma. The imagined example illustrates the thesis; it is not empirical proof.

Paragraphs 2–3: the movement from measurable work to leisure and decision-making widens the criteria for success. Contrasts between time saved and time controlled challenge an automatic link between access and empowerment.

Paragraph 4: the meeting/consultation scenario distinguishes presence from influence. In C1, the table metaphor makes the distinction memorable; wording and analytical examples must match the level's text.

Paragraph 5: contrasting rescue narratives with users' knowledge challenges paternalistic representation and strengthens the agency argument.

Paragraph 6: concession to urgent engineering needs avoids an absolute either/or position. The rebuttal shows that service design already involves social choices.

Paragraphs 7–8: the progression to evaluation and the repeated "day" motif link practical criteria with the initial question of opportunity.

Illustrative analysis paragraph

The writer makes the opening dilemma accessible by placing two students in parallel situations before introducing unequal responsibilities (paragraph 1). This contrast encourages readers to question whether an identical examination provides an equal opportunity to prepare. Its function is illustrative rather than evidential: the imagined comparison clarifies the argument but cannot establish how often the disadvantage occurs. The distinction matters because the article later asks readers to judge success claims critically.

Credit alternatives: reward accurate, well-supported interpretations. A named technique without an explanation of function is insufficient. The model illustrates reasoning, not a required script or a complete answer.



Evidence and judgement key

TASKS 3–5 | CALCULATIONS AND ARGUMENT QUALITY

T03

TASK 3A / CALCULATIONS

Mean collection time falls by **55 minutes per household per day** (80 – 25), a relative reduction of **68.75%**.

Regular attendance rises from **75%** (18/24) to **83.3%** (20/24): approximately **8.3 percentage points**, or two students.

Task 3B / Why the caption fails

The mean saving is not an hour and refers to households, not each girl. Averages do not show distribution or how time is used. Girls still do most collection in 28 of 40 participating households. A small before/after attendance change cannot establish causation: there is no comparison group and fees changed. Committee seats do not establish voting power. These indicators cannot demonstrate that a gender gap has ended.

Task 3C / Example caption (30 words)

“Six months after opening, participating households reported shorter average collection times. This is encouraging progress; fairer responsibilities, reliable service and greater influence over decisions remain goals to assess with users.”

Tasks 4–5 / Qualities of a strong judgement

Distinguishes a valuable practical improvement from comprehensive equality. Acknowledges that infrastructure can enable change without guaranteeing it. Addresses the objection that projects have limited budgets and responsibilities. Uses both texts without treating the fictional audit as global evidence. Values people's knowledge, choices and leisure as well as educational outcomes.

Possible success criteria

Reliable, accessible provision: monitor downtime, affordability and waiting time across different user groups, with a response procedure for faults.

Control and influence: ask users privately who decides how saved time is used; examine whether their proposals change service rules. Record representation and actual decision rights separately.

An appropriate comparison and repeated observations can strengthen an evaluation; neither automatically removes every alternative explanation.

Do not require one ideological conclusion. A qualified defence of infrastructure-first priorities can earn full credit if it addresses agency, uses evidence accurately and engages with objections.

Assess the thinking and writing

FORMATIVE RUBRIC / NOT AN OFFICIAL EXAM MARK SCHEME

T04

Suggested weighting for the written portfolio: content 40 points; language and communication 60 points. This is a local teaching rubric, not a prescribed Abitur scale. Do not convert totals into examination grades without the rules applicable to your course.

Dimension	Criterion	Max.
CONTENT / 40	Outline: accurate thesis, qualifications and response	10
	Analysis: supported explanation of structure and language	15
	Judgement: evidence, counterargument, reasoned conclusion	15
COMMUNICATION / 60	Task and genre fulfilment; organisation and coherence	20
	Precise, varied vocabulary and appropriate register	20
	Grammatical control, sentence construction and accuracy	20

Apply each criterion consistently

Strong (about 80–100%): accurate, sustained and well supported; minor weaknesses do not undermine the response.

Developing (about 50–79%): mostly relevant and understandable, but uneven in precision, depth or control.

Limited (about 20–49%): partial achievement; frequent unsupported points or communication problems.

Minimal (below 20%): little relevant evidence of the assessed skill.

Judge intermediate performance proportionately; record a brief reason.

Use across the three editions

Apply language expectations appropriate to the selected band. The B1–B2 edition is supported preparation for these skills, not equivalent to C1 performance. For an independent assessment, remove S05 scaffolds and S07 roles as appropriate and set writing time for your class.



Sources and permissions

TEACHER REFERENCE / ORIGINAL EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

T05

1 / Published statistical context

WHO and UNICEF (2023). Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000–2022: Special focus on gender. See the section on gender and drinking water, particularly the global distribution of collection responsibility.

The S04 chart is newly drawn from reported percentages; no published chart is reproduced.

OPEN THE REPORT

2 / English task operators

Standardsicherung NRW. Englisch: Übersicht über die Operatoren (gültig ab dem Abitur 2025).

Consulted for the use of outline, analyse and comment. Operators are not mechanically restricted to one requirement level; demand depends on the complete task.

OPEN THE OPERATOR REFERENCE

WHAT IS ORIGINAL / WHAT IS SIMULATED

Text A is an original pedagogical opinion article, differentiated into three versions. It is not a newspaper reprint or testimony. The project audit, roles and captions are fictional. The chart layout, tasks and teaching notes are original. No UN campaign theme, campaign text or campaign artwork is adapted.

USING THE MATERIAL

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