

# Who Polluted the River?

Help your students better understand how pollution gets in our rivers. Gather the materials listed below and put each pollutant in a small labeled container, like a film canister or yogurt container. Tell them their character names as you distribute the pollutants that go with each character. As you read the story aloud, have each student come to the "river" to dump his/her pollutant as you say it. Follow-up the story by having students answer the last question of the story and then discuss which pollutants would be easiest to clean out of the water and which would be the most difficult. Explain to your students that at water treatment plants, lab workers have to find out all of the pollutants that are in the water and find ways to clean them all out. Discuss with your students how we can prevent water pollution.



## Materials :

Large plastic container filled with water that can be the "river"

Pollutants (in small labeled plastic containers)	<input type="checkbox"/>					Character with the pollutant
fishing line (tangled)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jenny and Mike (fishing)				
dog waste (cocoa and water)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Andy walking his dog				
garbage	<input type="checkbox"/>	family picnicking				
leaves	<input type="checkbox"/>	trees				
oil leak (cooking oil)	<input type="checkbox"/>	family car				
pesticides (red koolaid crystals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. and Mrs. Hall (gardeners)				
fertilizer (green koolaid crystals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Green (farmer)				
fertilizer (green koolaid crystals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. Birdie (golf course caretaker)				
cow manure (cocoa and water)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr. and Mrs. Holstein (cow herdsman)				
dirt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sam Clay (construction worker)				
mysterious liquid (vinegar)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Benson family (garage cleaners)				

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## The Story

Early explorers canoed up the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers and wrote in their journals of beautiful forests and prairies they could see from their boats. They also noticed an abundance of wildlife such as foxes, groundhogs, porcupines, deer, beavers, raccoons, squirrels; they had only to drop their lines in to catch plenty of fish to eat. The water looked so clean and clear, do you think they drank it?



Today, Jenny and Mike are fishing in the river. They have been trying for quite awhile to catch some fish. They are getting thirsty. Do you think they will drink water from the river?

Mike's fishing line gets tangled, so he cuts it off and throws the tangled mess into the river. Andy is walking his dog right along the riverbank so he can look for rocks as he walks along. As soon as it starts raining, Andy runs home and doesn't see his dog's waste get washed into the river.

A family is picnicking nearby. When it starts to rain, the family is in a hurry to get to the car and leaves some trash and garbage behind. It gets blown around and washed into the river. The wind picks up and blows leaves into the river, too. The family's car leaked some oil onto the parking lot while they were picnicking, which soon gets washed into a nearby ditch that leads to the river.



In a subdivision nearby, Mr. and Mrs. Hall have been busy working in their garden. They have worked very hard planting and then weeding their vegetables and don't want to lose any of their crop to insects, so they spray the garden with pesticides (bug killer). When it starts raining, they run inside as the rain washes the pesticide into a little creek by their house which leads to the river.

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Mr. Green, a farmer down the road, is busy spraying fertilizer on his fields so that his crops will grow better. The rain catches him by surprise, so he heads his tractor for home as the rain washes the fertilizer into a ditch, which leads to a creek, which leads to the river.



Mr. Birdie, the caretaker of the new golf course in town, is busy putting fertilizer on the putting greens to make them look like a rich, green carpet of grass. When it starts to rain, Mr. Birdie quickly heads back to the clubhouse.

Mr. and Mrs. Holstein have a new herd of cows that they are so proud of. They didn't repair the fence by the river before they put them in their pasture, so the cows like to cool off in the river. The cows are depositing lots of manure in the river everyday.

Sam Clay and his crew are hauling tons of dirt with their big Caterpillars as they work on getting the ground ready for a new building. Sam is very disappointed that it has started raining so hard; he was hoping to get a lot more digging done today. He and his crew head home and don't see all of the loose dirt that washes off of the construction site, down a slope and into a creek that empties into the river.

The Benson family has been busy cleaning out their garage. They find some rusty, old cans filled with a mysterious liquid. They aren't sure what it is, but it looks dangerous. "Let's get rid of it!" exclaims Mrs. Benson. "Let's dump it in the ditch," says Billy Benson. The dangerous liquid creeps downhill in the ditch, headed for the river.

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