



**SSHEAN**

*Social Studies & History Education  
in the Anthropocene Network*

# “Fresh Water”: A Prompt for the Planet

## LESSON PROMPT

This lesson prompt introduces learners to an environment-themed song and includes a series of accompanying discussion questions and activities.

“Fresh Water” is a song composed by Sabrina Fielding, a BEd student in the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University (2021-22). Sabrina created this song from the perspective of the fresh water of Ontario.

In Sabrina’s words, “Having the chance to reflect on them [the lakes, bays, and other bodies of fresh water in Ontario] and the impact they have not only on my life, but as a source of life and sustenance to the environments around them, made me realize just how important it is for students to have an emotional connection to the earth in order to feel motivated to make changes.”



# Fresh Water

By: Sabrina Fielding

Morning  
Sweet tender soft of the morning  
Rising above like a warning  
To all of the sailors below

Promise  
Licking the shores till they're honest  
Fearing the breath of the sun  
And what you've become  
It keeps me awake

Can you take it  
The hollows of earth and un-break it  
Dive in my waters, remake it  
Be the gentle young touch of a flame

Let the current hold you

Calling  
Sands of my skin, they are calling  
The creatures within, they want to know  
Where do we go when all of this is taken?

I was always supposed to outlive you  
How could I ever forgive you for everything you've done?

If you knew me  
If you went right down deep and looked through me  
Everywhere shines  
I am golden  
Glowing until I am gone

Listen to the song: <https://bit.ly/3BZMKVi>



## “Fresh Water”

# Prompt for the Planet

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The song “Fresh Water” was created as part of an assignment submitted to Sara Karn in *PROF 503: Integrating Environmental Education in the Classroom* in the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University. The assignment description is attached below and could be adapted by teachers for different grades and subject areas.

### The Prompt

As environmental educators across all subject areas and grade levels, we are tasked with inspiring in our students a sense of appreciation and care for the environment, including more-than-humans. Part of caring for and appreciating others—other humans, other species, other natural phenomena—involves empathizing with them, or trying to understand their perspectives and experiences. This assignment invites you to keep the Earth in mind and consider: what might the planet say and feel in this moment in time?

This assignment has been adapted from an initiative called “Prompt for the Planet.” Amanda Gorman, the first Youth Poet Laureate of the United States, wrote an inspiring poem “Earthrise” and performed it for the Climate Reality Project in 2018.

You can watch and listen to a reading of this poem by Amanda Gorman:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwOvBv8RLmo&ab\\_channel=ClimateReality](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwOvBv8RLmo&ab_channel=ClimateReality)

Subsequently, Amanda was asked by a professor (David Gould) and their student (Shannon Nolan) from the University of Iowa to create a prompt for the rising generations, asking young people to lend their voices to the Earth. The collaboration grew into a global initiative: Prompt for the Planet.

Please respond to the prompt created by Amanda Gorman:

**“Think of one element and speak in its voice through pictures and/or words.**

*What would the raging forest fires say to the world?*

*What would the wind from a hurricane sound like?*

*What does freshly fallen rain on an area in drought feel and taste like?*

**Think of it as creating an open letter from the planet.”**



1. In response to the prompt, you may produce a drawing or photograph, write a poem or short story, create a short video or song, or something else. You are encouraged to be as reflective and creative as possible. For ideas, inspiration, examples, and tips: <https://www.promptfortheplanet.com/the-prompt>
2. The creation must be accompanied by a short 250-300 word explanation of your response and how the process of developing it has contributed to your understanding of the importance of environmental education.

### **Success Criteria**

- ✓ I have selected an element (plant, animal, mineral, natural phenomenon, etc.) and responded to the prompt from the perspective of this element.
- ✓ I have developed a response to the prompt in the form of a drawing, photograph, poem, story, song, video, or something else.
- ✓ I have demonstrated creativity and reflection.
- ✓ My creation is accompanied by a short 250-300 word explanation of my response and how the process of developing it has contributed to my understanding of the importance of environmental education.



## “Fresh Water”

# Discussions & Activities to Accompany “Fresh Water”

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### Discussion Questions

1. From whose perspective is the song written? Why is this significant?
2. What emotions and feelings does this song evoke for you?
3. According to the song, what is the relationship like between humans and fresh water?
4. Why is fresh water so important for humans and more-than-humans?
5. How has fresh water been important to human and more-than-human communities in the past?
6. What is a local body of water in our community? What positive and negative things has it seen humans do to it over time?

### Activities

1. Share the Prompt for the Planet with students and provide “Fresh Water” as an example response. Have students create their own responses to the prompt, including songs.
2. Identify a local source of fresh water within your own community. Discuss its importance for humans and more-than-humans in the past. Take a class trip to this fresh water source and observe its importance for humans and more-than-humans today.
3. As a class, learn more about Indigenous relationships with water near the place where you live. Guide students to write their own land and water acknowledgement.
4. Research the causes and impacts of water pollution and its disproportionate impacts on marginalized communities. Become involved in efforts to improve access to clean drinking water (write letters to government officials, create protest signs).

