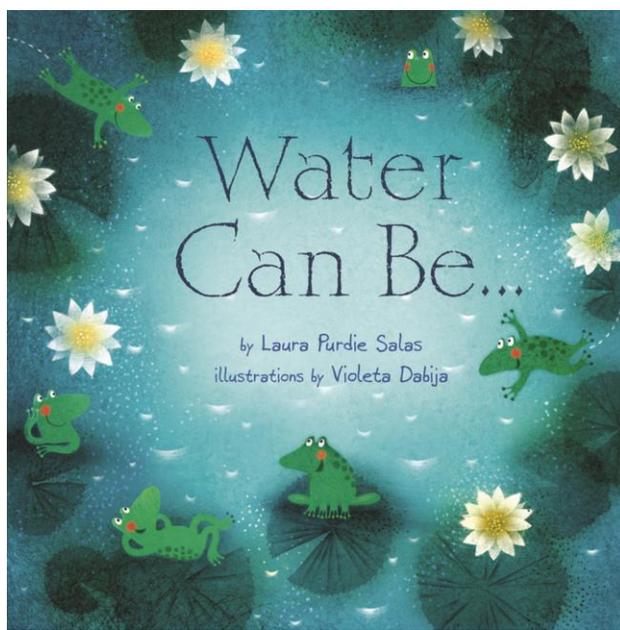


Water Can Be...

Classroom Guide

written by Laura Purdie Salas
illustrated by Violeta Dabija
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Story Summary: Water is crucial to our world! *Water can be a.../ Thirst quencher/ Kid drencher/ Cloud fluffer/ Fire snuffer.* Find out about the many roles water plays in this poetic exploration of water throughout the year.



Laura Purdie Salas is an award-winning Minnesota poet and writer. She has written more than 120 books, including *A Leaf Can Be...*, *BookSpeak! Poems About Books*, and *Stampede! Poems to Celebrate the Wild Side of School*. Her books have received many honors, such as Bank Street Best Book; IRA Teachers' Choice; NCTE Notable Children's Book; Minnesota Book Award; Riverby Award for Nature Books; Cybils Poetry Award; Eureka! Gold Medal; and the White Ravens Award. Laura has been skiing, snowshoeing, canoeing, swimming, snorkeling, whitewater rafting, canyoning, kayaking, and more. She loves water in all seasons and all forms. Learn more at laurasalas.com.



Violeta Dabija lives in Moldova, a small Eastern European country. She has illustrated more than 25 children's books and enjoys creating magic pictures and unique environments for her characters. Learn more at violetadabija.com.

Reviews:

 **Kirkus:** "In a look at the forms, functions and uses of water, Salas and Dabija turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. The simple text and spot-on rhymes belie the sophistication of the inherent message behind the verse—water is a life-giver." [Starred review](#).

Booklist: "Like its predecessor, *A Leaf Can Be . . .* (2012), this picture book explores an aspect of the natural world in a way that is imaginative but ultimately informative. A fine choice for reading aloud in the classroom or at home."


MILLBROOK PRESS

Water Can Be... guide by LP Salas. Online: http://www.laurasalas.com/pdfs/Water/Water_CG.pdf.
More educator materials: <http://www.laurasalas.com/nonfiction/nfbks/water.html>.

Water in Our Lives

One thing that inspired Laura Purdie Salas to write this book was the idea that we often only think of water as liquid that we drink or take a bath in or swim in. But water is busy doing so many things that we don't even think of!

Show Laura's video about how her family uses water: <http://youtu.be/by1Ye2Hi7fo> or http://www.laurasalas.com/nonfiction/nfbks/water_t_fam.html (or <http://tinyurl.com/lxe3obj>). As a class, brainstorm ways people use water. Include fun activities, like ice skating or swimming, as well as water's more necessary jobs. Try tracking one student's entire day and see how water figures in. For example:

- Woke up
- Ate breakfast (cooked and washed dishes with water)
- Brushed teeth (in water)
- Went to the bathroom (flushed with water)
- Walked to bus stop (the yards and gardens in your neighborhood need water)
- Rode the bus to school
- Painted during art time (rinsed paint and wash hands)
- Etc.



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After reading *Water Can Be...*, discuss what new roles of water the kids learned. And talk about what other things water does that didn't make it into the book. Tell students that Laura Purdie Salas had lots of other ideas to write about, but the book only had room for eleven pairs of water activities.

Make a Rain Gauge

Create a classroom rain gauge (<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/free-printable/science-printables/make-rain-gauge> or <http://tinyurl.com/lbymt53>). Track rainfall daily for a month. Record your findings on a large chart.

Partner up with a school in another area of the country. Exchange your rain gauge measurements each week. Create a bar graph that compares your rainfall to the other school's rainfall.

Be a Water Explorer

Water in many forms is showcased in *Water Can Be...* Read some other water books over a couple of weeks, like *A Cool Drink of Water* (Kerley, National Geographic, 2006), *A Long Walk to Water* (for older readers, Park, Clarion, 2010), *All the Water in the World* (Lyon, Atheneum, 2011), *One Well: The Story of Water on Earth* (Strauss, Kids Can Press, 2007), and *There Goes the Water* (Salas, Picture Window Books, 2010)

Choose some water near your school to explore in person, if possible. Otherwise, explore through online and printed materials. It could be anything from a puddle in the schoolyard to the Atlantic Ocean! Depending on the water you choose, you might gather information from your city, the National Park Service, or your state's Department of Natural Resources. Explore these questions:

- Does it have a name?
- Is it saltwater or freshwater?
- How long has it been there?
- Does it change with the seasons?
- Does the water move?
- What lives in the water?
- What plants grow in or around it?
- How do people use the water?
- Is the water clean?
- Would you want to drink or bathe in this water?



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After thinking and researching, create a class display about your of water. Draw a large picture. Surround it with the facts and ideas students have created, as well as maps, photos, stories, poems, and other materials.

Paint with Water

Grab some paintbrushes and a bucket of water and head outside on a dry day. Paint pictures, letters, your names—anything you like—on concrete. If it's a warm, sunny day, you will see the words and pictures disappear shortly—a great demonstration of evaporation!

Make a Can Be... Book!

Water Can Be... can be a great mentor text for talking about interesting word choice, text structure, inferring, giving information through illustrations, and nonfiction text features. In groups or as a class, choose a topic to create your own Can Be... book about. Something simple, like a box or a thread or a tissue, usually works best.



First, brainstorm the different things this object could be used for. Think outside the box! Remember, no answer is wrong. Depending on your students' age level and the depth you want to go to, this could be a creativity project or a research project.

Next, choose the strongest answers to be part of your Can Be... book, modeled after *Water Can Be...*

Then let each student or group create a page that includes a picture, the phrase telling what the object can be (don't worry about rhyming!), and a short explanation in prose. See the template at the end of this teaching guide.

Once the writing and drawing are complete, bind each book in the method of your choice. Here are 5 simple ideas:

<http://wonderteacher.com/5-easy-ways-to-bind-books-in-the-classroom/> (or <http://tinyurl.com/n4lpzo9>).

Or skip my template and create a cool graduated-page book (see <http://bookzoompa.wordpress.com/category/simple-book-binding/> or <http://tinyurl.com/n3xkdbm>).

Arrange your pages so that with the book closed, you can read all of the things a Whatever Can Be..., and then when you lift each flap, you see the picture and explanation.



5th-graders' Can Be... books at Milaca (MN) Elem.

Craft a Water Cycle Bracelet

Learn about the water cycle. Two resources: Laura's water cycle video on her website (<http://tinyurl.com/mr7m8y5>) or her book *There Goes the Water*. Help students create bead bracelets to remember the water cycle.



Materials for each bracelet:

- blue yarn or 2 blue pipe cleaners, or elastic cord
- pony beads: one each of light blue, green, dark blue, yellow, clear, white

Directions:

1. String beads: light blue, green, dark blue, yellow, clear, white
2. Make a display showing the water cycle, and also post a key:

light blue=rain falls (precipitation)
green=water lands on ground
dark blue=water flows to sea (collection)
yellow=sun warms the water
clear=water forms water vapor (evaporation)
white=vapor turns to clouds (condensation)

3. Tie the ends of the yarn together or twist two pipe cleaners together to make a bracelet of the right size.

Sing a Water Cycle Song

Sing this verse Laura wrote to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.

Raindrops, raindrops, from the sky
How did you get up so high?
First you fell upon the ground,
in lakes and puddles all around.
Gathered in the sun-warmed sea.
I never guessed what you would be:
Water vapor, rising high.
Forming clouds up in the sky.

As you sing the song, have students touch the bead on their bracelets (if you made them) that corresponds with each line.

More Cool Water Cycle Activities

Make a cloud in a jar! This cool science experiment shows how clouds are made. You can find lots of samples online—one is at <http://tinyurl.com/m8ekj2n>.

Make a water cycle in a baggie. One sample online is at http://www.sjrwm.com/challenge/water_cycle.html.

Count It Up!

Watch Laura's video about the forms of water at <http://tinyurl.com/ka3hpuj>. Study the book illustrations. Make a chart, and then mark the form(s) of water in each picture. Some pictures have more than one form!

<u>Liquid</u>	<u>Solid</u>	<u>Gas</u>
\	\	\
\		
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[Answer key by key word on page: Water—liquid creek; Tadpole—liquid lake; Picture—liquid puddle and rain; Otter—liquid lake; Downhill—liquid river and solid snow; Garden—liquid rain and gas clouds; Valley—gas fog; Thirst—liquid pond; Kid—liquid sprinkler; Drink—solid ice; Rainbow—liquid rain and gas clouds and water vapor; Home—liquid ocean; Ship—liquid ocean and rain and gas clouds; Cloud—liquid ocean and gas clouds; Fire—liquid hose water; School—liquid fountain; Bruise—solid ice; Salmon—liquid river; Eagle—liquid river, solid snow, and gas clouds; Storm—solid snow; Decorator—solid ice/frost; Woodchuck—solid snow; Snowman—solid snow; Water—solid ice and snow]

Play Fact or Opinion

Play a class game to practice listening skills and telling fact from opinion.

1. Review the differences between facts and opinions.
2. Have students line up across the back of the room.
3. Stand at the front of the room, holding *Water Can Be...* Page through the book and make a statement about each page. Some of them should be facts, for example: "The girl can see herself in the puddle" or "Rain helps plants grow." Some of them should be opinions, for example: "That dog is so cute" or "This storm is scary."
4. If students hear a fact, they move forward one step. If they hear an opinion, they move backward one step. Students who move the wrong direction start over at the back of the room. The student(s) who reach the front of the room first creates the statements for the next round.

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Get Artsy

Play with pictures and words to show what YOU think water can be...

Give each student a piece of plain white or light colored paper.

As a group, brainstorm water-related words/activities. These could be as basic as swimming or ice cubes to more distant things. If you say “water,” and a kid thinks “beach,” then sunscreen and flip flops might be used—and that’s fine!

Have students decorate their pages to celebrate water, using any method. Kids can color, draw, write, collage, paint, do cut paper, make sand art... anything you like! Invite students to be inventive! The more colorful, the better. Don’t rely on all blue (like I did below!) Here are some basic samples.



If you get your entire school to participate, or at least more than 100 students, here’s something nifty you could do. Take photos of the completed papers. Try to make each paper fill an entire photo. Then create a Folder in Google Drive, name it with your school name and state or country, upload all your images, share it with me (lauras_accounts@yahoo.com). I will download the images and use them to create a cool mosaic of one of the book illustrations. Just send me an email so I know where to email the digital file. I’ll also likely share the mosaic online with your school identified.

Name _____

_____ **can be a ...**

[illustration]



[explanation]

