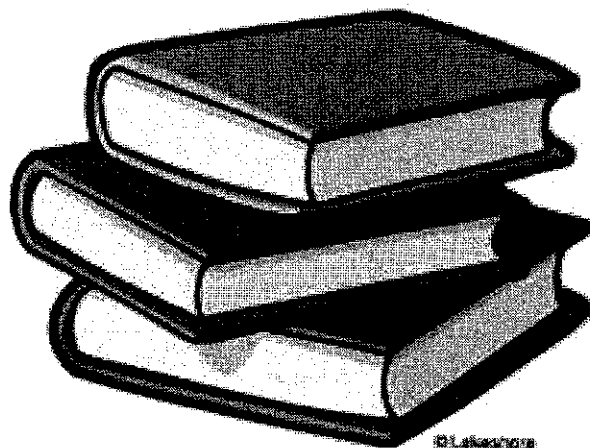




National  
Literacy Test  
**Year 9**  
Practice Paper

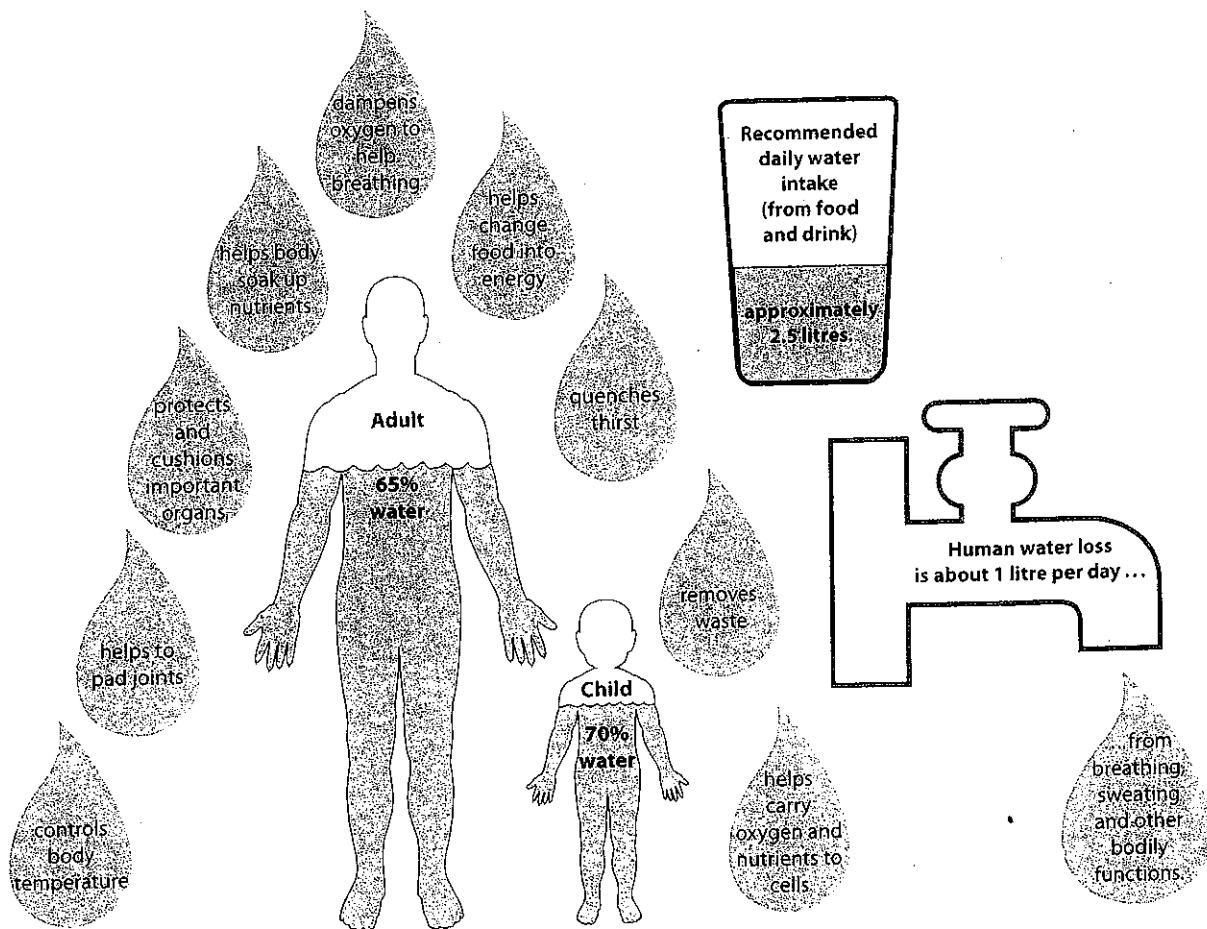


## Lost Without It

Imagine trying to live in a world dominated by dihydrogen oxide. This is a compound\* that has no taste or smell and is so variable in its properties that it is generally benign but at other times swiftly lethal. Depending on its state, it can scald you or freeze you. In the presence of certain organic molecules it can form acids so nasty that they can strip the leaves from trees and eat the faces off statuary. In bulk, when agitated, it can strike with a fury that no human edifice could withstand. Even for those who have learned to live with it, it is an often murderous substance. We call it water.

Water is everywhere. A potato is 80 per cent water, a cow 74 per cent, a bacterium 75 per cent. A tomato, at 95 per cent, is little but water. Even humans are 65 per cent water, making us more liquid than solid by a margin of almost two to one. Water is strange stuff. It is formless and transparent and yet we long to be beside it. It has no taste and yet we love the taste of it. We will travel great distances and pay small fortunes to see it in sunshine. And even though we know it is dangerous and drowns tens of thousands of people every year, we can't wait to frolic in it. Because water is so ubiquitous we tend to overlook what an extraordinary substance it is. I hardly need point out that we would be lost without it.

\* In science, a compound is something made by combining two or more elements.



1

What is dihydrogen oxide?

Tick **two**.

an imaginary substance

poison

a tasteless compound

an acid

a lethal element

water

1  
1m

2

Look at the text in the box below.

**Underline two** words that show that dihydrogen oxide can be deadly.

Imagine trying to live in a world dominated by dihydrogen oxide. This is a compound\* that has no taste or smell and is so variable in its properties that it is generally benign but at other times swiftly lethal. Depending on its state, it can scald you or freeze you. In the presence of certain organic molecules it can form acids so nasty that they can strip the leaves from trees and eat the faces off statuary. In bulk, when agitated, it can strike with a fury that no human edifice could withstand. Even for those who have learned to live with it, it is an often murderous substance. We call it water.

2  
1m

3

*Depending on its state ...*

What does this tell us about dihydrogen oxide?

Tick **one**.

that it is always moving

that it can be found in different areas

that it can take different forms

that it is normally safe

3  
1m

4

Look at the first paragraph.

Which of the following best describes the acids mentioned in the text?

Tick **one**.

polluted

hygienic

decaying

destructive

4  
1m

*please turn over*

TOTAL  
4m

5

We call it water.

What is the intended effect of this sentence?

Tick **one**.

- to surprise the reader
- to worry the reader
- to stress the dangers
- to cause confusion

5  
1m

6

According to the text, for what do people *pay small fortunes*?

Tick **one**.

- keeping fit and healthy
- insurance protection against drought
- travel insurance
- going on summer holidays

6  
1m

7

Look at the text in the box below.

**Underline three** words or phrases that might make water seem dull and unexciting.

Water is strange stuff. It is formless and transparent and yet we long to be beside it. It has no taste and yet we love the taste of it. We will travel great distances and pay small fortunes to see it in sunshine.

7  
1m

8

Look at the text and diagrams.

Put ticks to show which statements are **true** and which are **false**.

	True	False
Water has no taste.		
Water has a distinct smell.		
A bacterium is 75 per cent water.		
Humans are more solid than liquid.		
Water drowns tens of thousands of people each year.		
Humans lose about 2.5 litres of water a day.		

8  
2m

9

Put ticks to show which of the following statements from the text are **fact** and which are **opinion**.

	Fact	Opinion
... it can scald you or freeze you.		
A tomato, at 95 per cent, is little but water.		
Water is strange stuff.		
... we long to be beside it.		
... we can't wait to frolic in it.		

9  
2m

10

Look at the whole text.

Put ticks in the table below to show whether the information can be found in the **written** section, the **diagrams** or in **both**.

	Written	Diagrams	Both
Water can be dangerous.			
Water forms part of living things.			
70 per cent of a child's body is water.			
Water is important in everyone's life.			

10  
1m

*please turn over*

TOTAL  
38m

