

Edexcel IAL Geography

Water Conflict Glossary of Definitions



Anthropogenic Factors - Factors and influences caused by humans.

Aquifer - A permeable or porous rock which stores water

Channel Flow - Water flowing in a rivulet, stream or river

Cloud Seeding - The addition and dispersal of particles - such as dry ice or salt - to encourage precipitation.

Desalination Plant - The conversion of seawater to freshwater, suitable for human consumption.

Drought - An extended period of deficient rainfall relative to the statistical average for the region (UN)

Economic Water Scarcity - When water resources are available but insufficient economic wealth limits access to it

Global Hydrological Cycle - The continuous transfer of water between land, atmosphere and oceans. The Earth is a closed system.

Hydrological Drought - Insufficient soil moisture to meet the needs of vegetation at a particular time

Infiltration - The movement of water vertically through the pores in soil.

Meteorological Drought - When long-term precipitation trends are below average

Open System - A system affected by external flows and inputs (such as a drainage basin, or a sediment cell)

Periodic Variability - Predictable changes in the conditions of a basin that occur annually, seasonally or monthly.

Physical Water Scarcity - A physical lack of available freshwater which cannot meet demand

Salinisation - Where salt water contaminates freshwater stores or soils, creating saline conditions and reducing human use/ consumption.

Saltwater Encroachment - The movement of saltwater into freshwater aquifers or soils. This may be caused by sea level rise, storm surges or over-extraction.



Secular Variability - Long term changes to a climate, for example due to climate change.

Smart Irrigation - Providing crops with a water supply less than optimal, to make crops resistant to water shortages.

Stochastic Variability - Short-term, unpredictable changes to the conditions of a basin, such as localised thunderstorms.

Topography - The relief and shape of the land

Water Budget - The annual balance between inputs and outputs within a system

Water Conservation - Strategies to reduce water usage and demand

Water Recycling - The treatment and purification of waste water, to increase supply

Water Scarcity - There are limited renewable water sources (between 500 and 1000 cubic metres per capita per year)

Water Security - The ability to protect and access a sustainable source to adequately meet demand

Water Sharing Treaty - International agreements for transboundary sources

Water Transfer - Hard engineering projects, such as pipelines or aqueducts, that divert water between basins to meet demand

