

# Take the Tap-Water Challenge:

## Can Your Friends Tell Bottled Water from Tap Water?

**GOAL:** To compare the taste of bottled water to the taste of tap water.

Lots of North Americans drink bottled water. It's clean and portable, and you can find it in any corner store. However, it also creates waste, costs money, and needs to be transported in large trucks – this emits lots of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. It makes you wonder: is bottled water worth it? Is tap water so much worse? Grab some thirsty friends and ask them to take the following challenge to see which is more refreshing.

The Tap-Water Challenge is a blind taste test where the participants drink both tap water and bottled water but don't know which is which. Once they've told you the one they like best, you do the big reveal and identify the tap water and the bottled water.

1. Get some bottled water from the store and fill a pitcher with tap water. Make sure both are chilled before you spring the challenge on your unsuspecting pals. (The bottled water and the tap water need to be the same temperature or some Sherlock Holmes might figure out which is which in advance.)
2. Grab some glasses for the taste test – in the interests of science, try to get some that are all the same! You'll need two glasses for each person taking the challenge. Label them "A" and "B" (or "X" and "Y," or whatever you want – just don't make one of the options cooler than the other, or it'll slant the results).
3. Crack open the bottled water, and get the pitcher of tap water ready for action. For each person taking the challenge, pour tap water into one glass and bottled water into the other. Remember which glass has the tap water and which has the bottled water, but be careful the participants don't see which is which.
4. Have each participant take a swig from each glass and then complete the first part of the response form provided on the next page (you can cut it in half to save trees). After everyone finishes Part 1 on the forms, allow some time for sharing thoughts.
5. After all participants have completed the first part of the response form, do the big reveal: tell them which one was the tap water and which one was the bottled water! Now have your crew think about and talk about the questions in Part 2 of the form. If you take action, the next step is up to you!



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### Part 1

In front of you are two samples of water. One is from a bottle, and one is from the tap. Can you tell which is which?

Taste the first sample. Notice everything you can about it. Is it warm or cold? How does it taste? How does it smell? Is it refreshing and thirst-quenching? **Write your thoughts about it here:**

Wait a bit, and then try the second sample. Notice everything you can about it. Is it warm or cold? How does it taste? How does it smell? Is it refreshing and thirst-quenching? **Write your thoughts about it here:**

**Which one is tap water?**

Sample # \_\_\_\_\_

**Which one is bottled water?**

Sample # \_\_\_\_\_

Think about it! Was one better? Which one? In what way was it better? Once the others have written their answers, talk it out.

### Part 2

Now that you have completed the "Tap-Water Challenge," do you think that bottled water is worth the cost in terms of money, greenhouse gas emissions, and plastic waste? Do you want to spread the word about the drawbacks of bottled water? Do you have any ideas for action? Share them with OWL!



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