**Reading Purpose: How is the California drought affecting the daily lives of citizens?**

Directions: Answer the following questions in **COMPLETE** sentences.

**With Dry Taps and Toilets, California Drought Turns Desperate**

**By Jennifer Medina**

**The New York Times**

**10/2/14**

PORTERVILLE, Calif. — After a nine-hour day working at a citrus packing plant, her body covered in a sheen *(shine)* of fruit wax and dust, there is nothing Angelica Gallegos wants more than a hot shower, with steam to help clear her throat and lungs.

“I can just picture it, that feeling of finally being clean — really refreshed and clean,” Ms. Gallegos, 37, said one recent evening.

But she has not had running water for more than five months — nor is there any tap water in her near future — because of a punishing and relentless drought in California. In the Gallegos household and more than 500 others in Tulare County, residents cannot flush a toilet, fill a drinking glass, wash dishes or clothes, or even rinse their hands.

1. How is the drought affecting citizens in California?

Unlike the Okies who came here fleeing the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, the people now living on this parched *(dried out with heat)*  land are stuck. “We don’t have the money to move, and who would buy this house without water?” said Ms. Gallegos, who grew up in the area and shares a tidy mobile home with her husband and two daughters. “When you wake up in the middle of the night sick to your stomach, you have to think about where the water bottle is before you can use the toilet.”

Now in its third year, the state’s record-breaking drought is being felt in many ways: vanishing lakes and rivers, lost agricultural jobs, fallowed *(uncultivated land)* farmland, rising water bills, suburban yards gone brown. But nowhere is the situation as dire as in East Porterville, a small rural community in Tulare County where life’s daily routines have been completely upended *(to turn something upside down)* by the drying of wells and, in turn, the disappearance of tap water.

2) How is the drought affecting the economy of California?

“You don’t think of water as privilege until you don’t have it anymore,” said Ms. Serrato, whose husband works in the nearby fields. “We were very proud of making a life here for ourselves, for raising children here. We never ever expected to live this way.”

Like Ms. Serrato, the vast majority of residents here in the Sierra Nevada foothills are Mexican immigrants, drawn to the state’s Central Valley to work in the expansive agricultural fields. Many here have spent lifetimes scraping together money to buy their own small slice of land, often with a mobile home sitting on top. Hundreds of these homes are hooked to wells that are treated as private property: When the water is there, it is solely controlled by owners. Because the land is unincorporated, it is not part of a municipal *(of or relating to a city or town)* water system, and connecting to one would be prohibitively *(so high that people are prevented from using or buying something)* expensive.

3) Why isn’t the government stepping in to provide the residents of the Sierra Nevada Foothills with water?

The Gallegos family’s drinking water comes only from bottles, mostly received through donations but sometimes bought at the gas station. For bathing, doing dishes and flushing toilets, the family relies on buckets filled with water from a tank set in the front lawn, which Mr. Gallegos replenishes every other day at the county fire station. Often, the water runs out before he returns home from his job as a mechanic, forcing Ms. Gallegos to wait for hours before she can clean.

The family has spent hundreds of dollars to wash their clothes at the laundromat and on paper goods to avoid washing dishes. Ms. Gallegos recently told her 10-year-old daughter that there was no money left to pay for her after-school cheerleading club.

The local high school now allows students to arrive early and shower there. Parents often keep their children home from school if they have not bathed, worried that they could lose custody if the authorities deem the students too dirty, a rumor that county officials have tried to dismiss. Mothers who normally take pride in their cooking now rely on canned and fast food, because washing vegetables uses too much water.

4) How is the lack of water affecting the Gallegos’ daily life?

**Video: Paradise Burning**

How could California’s drought affect the rest of the country?

**California Approves Forceful Steps Amid Drought**

By Ian Lovett

The New York Times

8/15/14

LOS ANGELES — With rainfall this year at historically low levels and reservoirs quickly dwindling, California officials on Tuesday approved the most drastic measures yet to reduce water consumption during the state’s increasingly serious drought, including fines of up to $500 per day under some circumstances for watering a garden, washing a car or hosing down a sidewalk.

The new measures come in response to an apathetic public that has ignored repeated pleas to save water since Gov. Jerry Brown declared a statewide drought emergency in January. Though the governor asked all Californians to reduce their water consumption by 20 percent, water use actually increased by 1 percent statewide in May, according to a state survey released Tuesday.

“People really don’t understand the gravity of the drought, particularly in urban California, where people are hundreds of miles from their water source,” said Felicia Marcus, chairwoman of the [State Water Resources Control Board](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/), which voted on Tuesday to impose the new regulations. They are expected to take effect around Aug. 1.

5) What are some of the restrictions California is proposing to save water?

Persuading people in urban areas to take the drought seriously has proved difficult, Ms. Marcus said. “They’re not seeing the fact that there are communities on the verge of running out of water all the time,” she said. “We can’t afford to let any more areas get into that situation.”

After a lengthy hearing on Tuesday, the water control board imposed a series of mandatory restrictions on the use of potable *(drinkable)* water that will limit outdoor watering to two days a week, largely prohibit washing sidewalks and driveways, and ban washing cars without a shut-off nozzle on the hose. Violations may be punished with fines of up to $500 per day.

The drought has already pummeled farmers in California, which is home to the nation’s largest agricultural sector. So far this year, about a third less water than usual has been available to the state’s farmers, according to [a report](https://watershed.ucdavis.edu/news/2014/07/15/new-center-report-details-drought-impact?destination=node/589) released Tuesday by the Center for Watershed Sciences at the University of California, Davis. The report projected that the drought would cost about $2.2 billion in statewide revenue this year, and that 17,100 farm-related jobs would be lost.

Richard Howitt, an environmental economist at the university and an author of the report, said that while much of the state had been able to deal with the drought economically, parts of the Central Valley, the state’s agricultural heartland, were being hit hard. Huge portions of farmland have been left unplanted.

Mark Madison, general manager of the Elk Grove Water District near Sacramento, said his customers had already reduced their water consumption by more than 18 percent. Imposing fines for water waste is like asking him to “thank them with a sledgehammer,” Mr. Madison said. “I think, in general, the approach is heavy-handed.”

Lisa Brown, the water efficiency administrator for Roseville, Calif., echoed his concerns. She said that during a less severe drought in 2009, her city had issued hundreds of tickets to people wasting water and found that it was not an effective strategy.

“We find if we cite them, they turn off their irrigation just to get us off their case,” Ms. Brown said, “but as soon as we leave, they turn it back on again.”

6) Do you believe the restrictions that California is proposing will be effective in reducing water usage? Why or why not?

7) What measures do you think California needs to take in order to save water?

**Homework:** Research an article about the drought in Australia. Write a **two paragraph** summary of the article (5-7 sentences per paragraph) and **list your source!**