



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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The Mill River Water Unit

Guide for Curriculum Unit 84.06.05
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This unit focuses on water in general by studying the hydrologic cycle, maps and waterpower. It then narrows its focus to Connecticut's Mill River Basin which provides local examples of the general concepts covered.

The unit has four major sections. Section I, on the hydrologic cycle, stresses that we have a specific, limited amount of water on Earth and the water we have continuously moves in a cycle of precipitation and evapotranspiration. Students should learn to explain the cycle in words and diagrams, including the definitions of key terms. The map study, Section II, points out the need to go beyond the political state boundaries when considering geologic features and processes such as a region's water supply and flow. Included here are knowing map locations, determining a river profile and using scales, a scale line and contour lines.

Water has been essential in the economic development of New England. Central in this was the development of water power, the topic of Section III. The main purpose here is to describe the transition from water power being used first in local mills, then in factories and finally to produce electricity. Both the mechanics and significance of this are covered.

The last part, Section IV, focuses on the Mill River. The river's history brings social, industrial and geologic aspects into play. In looking at the hydrology of the Mill River Basin, the more general concepts from the first three sections are made tangible in terms of experiments and field trips.

(Recommended for Biology classes, grade 10, and different levels of Social Studies and Technical Math classes)

Key Words

Ecology Environmental Science Connecticut Mill River Geology Water Systems West River

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