

What's a Watershed?

PART A: Make a Watershed Model

1. Briefly discuss how well the model represented reality for the concept of watersheds and drainage divides.

2. Write your own description or definitions for the following terms.

* Watershed

* Drainage divide

PART B: Explore Your Watershed in Google Earth

3. Starting at the largest river in your watershed, use the tilt and zoom features of Google Earth to "fly" upstream along smaller and smaller tributaries. What differences do you see in the landscape, landcover, and population densities near the areas' largest streams compared to its smallest tributaries?

4. Write a description of your watershed. Include information about the shape of the land and how the land is used. What purposes do the dams in your watershed serve? Indicate how the population density of the area changed from 1990 to 2000. Use screen shots of different views in your Google Earth map to support or illustrate your description.

5. In places where rivers are designated as a political boundary between two adjacent states or countries, the two entities may have disputes about the river. For instance, they might argue about which one has the right to use the water or set rules about what waste products can be discharged into the river. Briefly discuss some advantages and disadvantages of using drainage divides rather than rivers as political boundaries.