

## 4.8 Global Connections

The maps show the world's average freshwater supplies for three different years. Each map shows the availability of water per person on six continents. The maps do not show the total amounts of fresh water available in each year. The map for the year 2025 is based on population estimates for that year.

### What factors might cause the changes in freshwater availability you see in the maps?

Population is growing rapidly in places like India and Africa, but the amount of fresh water is not increasing. As a result, far more people must share the same amount of water. Climate changes in the future may also reduce the amount of clean, fresh water available. In addition, some sources of fresh water, such as wells, may have been polluted, and now these sources are no longer safe.

### What concerns for the future can be drawn from the maps?

The maps show that freshwater shortages are likely to increase over time. This situation could lead to rising water costs. It could also lead to less food production, since many crops require regular irrigation. In addition, public health problems could arise as people turn to less safe sources of water to survive.

**How can people best use and manage the world's freshwater resources?** People can do many things to better manage sources of fresh water. One is to prevent all kinds of water pollution. Another is to find better ways to store and distribute existing water supplies. Using less water in homes, industries, and on farms can stretch limited supplies. So can recycling water so that it can be used again and again.

### Freshwater Availability Around the World, 2025



### 1950

