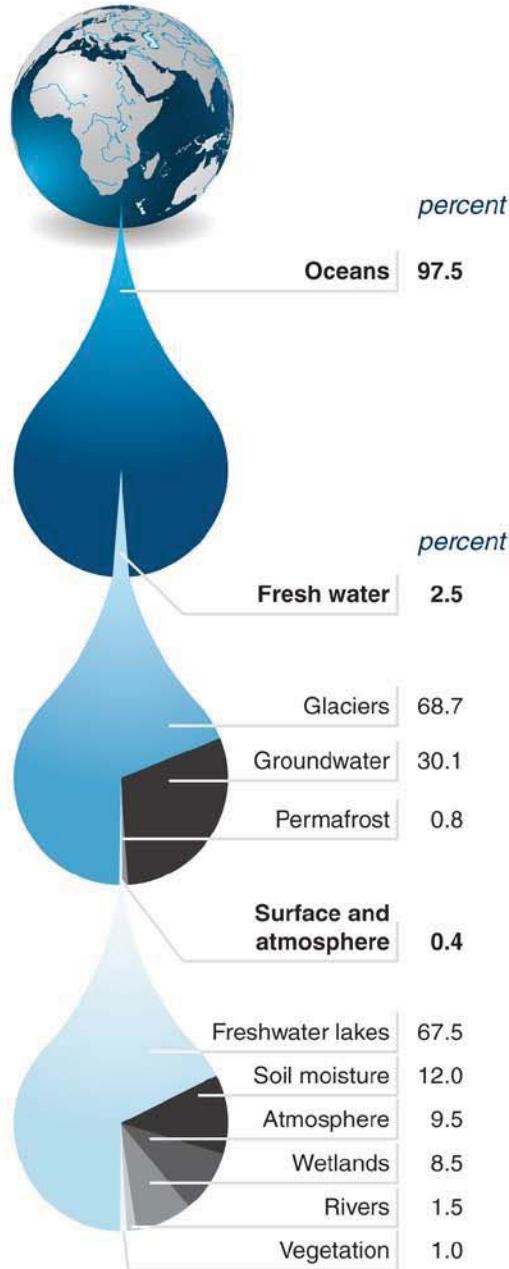
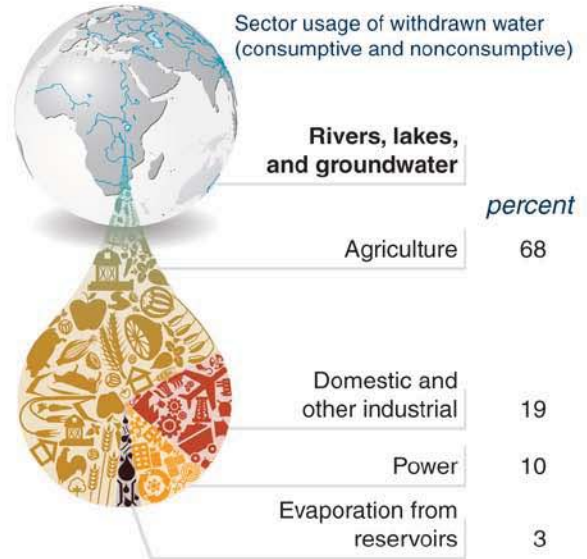


The Earth's Water

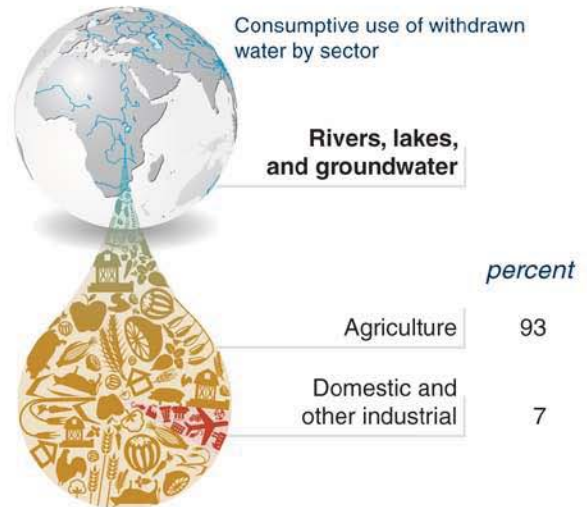
Water Distribution



Freshwater Use



Freshwater Use



Note: When humans use water, they affect the quantity, timing, or quality of water available to other users. Water for human use typically involves withdrawing water from lakes, rivers, or groundwater and either consuming it so that it reenters the atmospheric part of the hydrological cycle or returning it to the hydrological basin. When irrigated crops use water, it is consumptive use—it becomes unavailable for use elsewhere in the basin. In contrast, releasing water from a dam to drive hydroelectric turbines is generally a nonconsumptive use because the water is available for downstream users but not necessarily at the appropriate time. Withdrawals by a city for domestic and industrial use are mainly nonconsumptive, but if the returning water is inadequately treated, the quality of the water downstream is affected.

Source: Multiple, as quoted by World Bank, 2010.