fact sheet

Interpreting your results

What do your data mean?

Water monitoring measurements tell us about quality of a water supply.

It gives information on plants and animals that might live there, and if water is safe to drink.

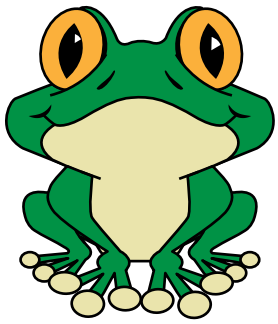
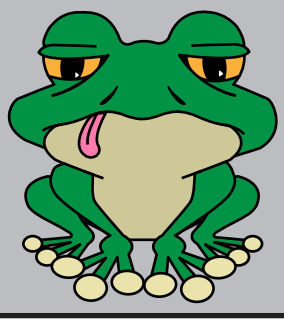
Many plants and animals like special environmental conditions to survive. If these change they may not grow as well. If there are big changes most plants and animals will die.

Use the tables below to interpret your data. Compare each measurement to the best range for plants and animals.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Turbidity

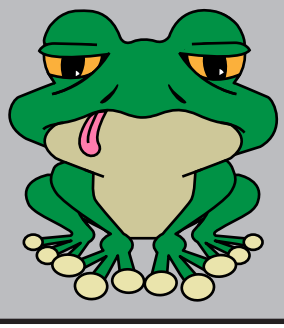
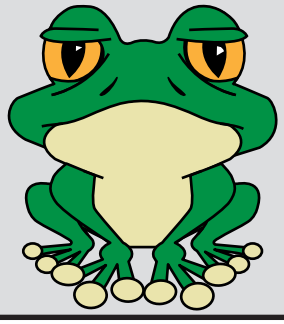
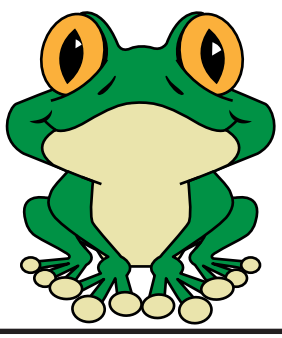
How turbid (cloudy) is your water sample? What does this mean?

Turbidity (NTUs)		
clean	**may be polluted**	**pollution problem**
< 25	25 - 30 (moderate) 30 - 45 (high)	> 45
		

CHEMICAL CHARACTERISTICS

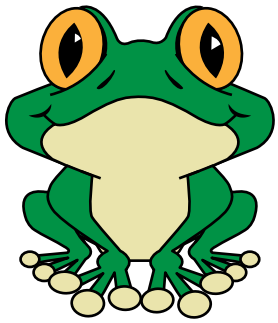
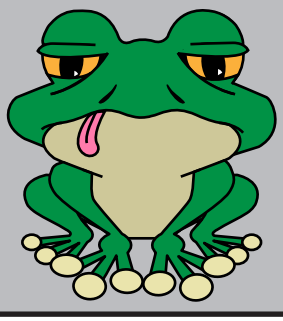
Dissolved oxygen

How much dissolved oxygen is in your water sample? What does this mean?

Dissolved oxygen (ppm)		
too low to support life	**stressful for life**	**supports life**
< 3.0	3.0 - 5.0	> 5.0
		

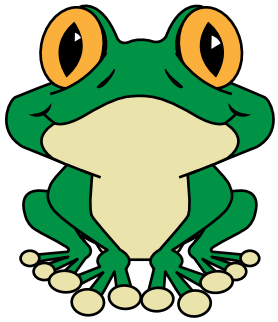
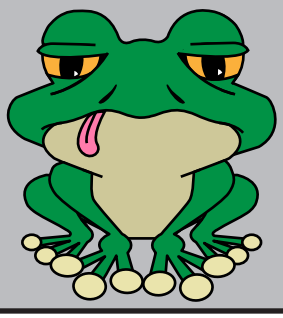
Salinity

What is the salinity of your water sample? What does this mean?

Salinity (ppm)		
fresh	**brackish (slightly salty)**	**salty**
< 500	480 -1500 (moderate) 1500- 6000 (very high)	> 6000
		

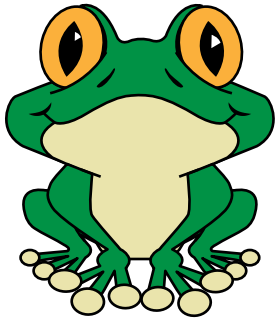
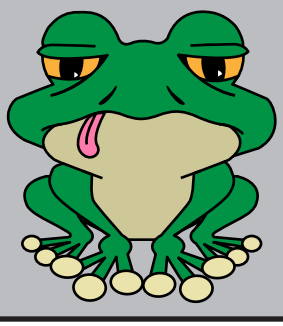
pH

What is the pH of your water sample? What does this mean?

normal	may be polluted	pollution problem
5.0 - 7.0 no limestone 7.0 - 8.5 limestone	8.5 - 9.0 or 4.0 - 5.0	< 4 or > 9
		

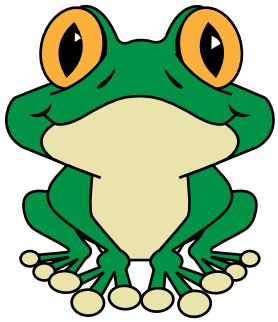
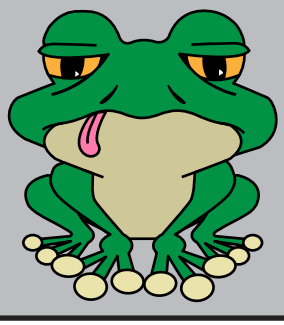
Phosphorus

How much phosphorus is in your water sample? What does this mean?

Phosphorus (mg/L)		
low	**medium**	**high**
< 0.1	0.5	> 1.0
		

Nitrate

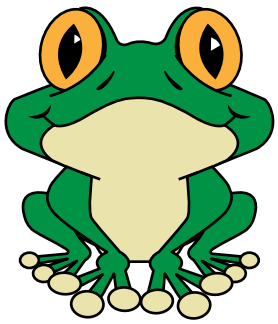
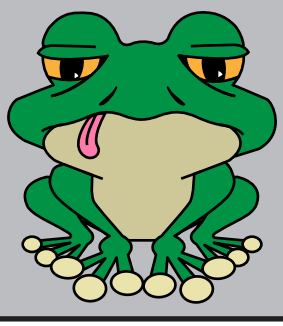
How much nitrate is in your water sample? What does this mean?

Nitrate concentration (mg/L)		
low	**medium**	**high**
< 50 mg/L	50 – 100 mg/L	> 100 mg/L
		

BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS - PLANTS AND ANIMALS

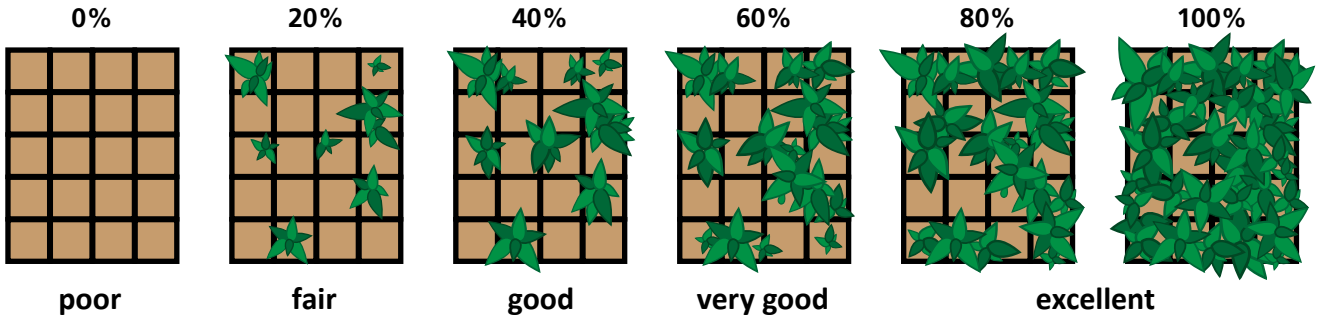
E. coli

Was *E. coli* present in your water sample? What does this mean?

E. coli negative	*E. coli* positive
	

Vegetation

What percentage vegetation cover did you find at your field site? What does this mean?



Animals

How many macroinvertebrates did you count at your field site?
What does this mean?

Number of macroinvertebrates	Water quality
0-40	poor
41-51	fair
52-69	good
70-106	very good
106+	excellent

How many different types of macroinvertebrate did you find at your field site?
What does this mean?

Different types of macroinvertebrates	Water quality
0-5	poor
6-10	fair
11-15	good
15-23	very good