

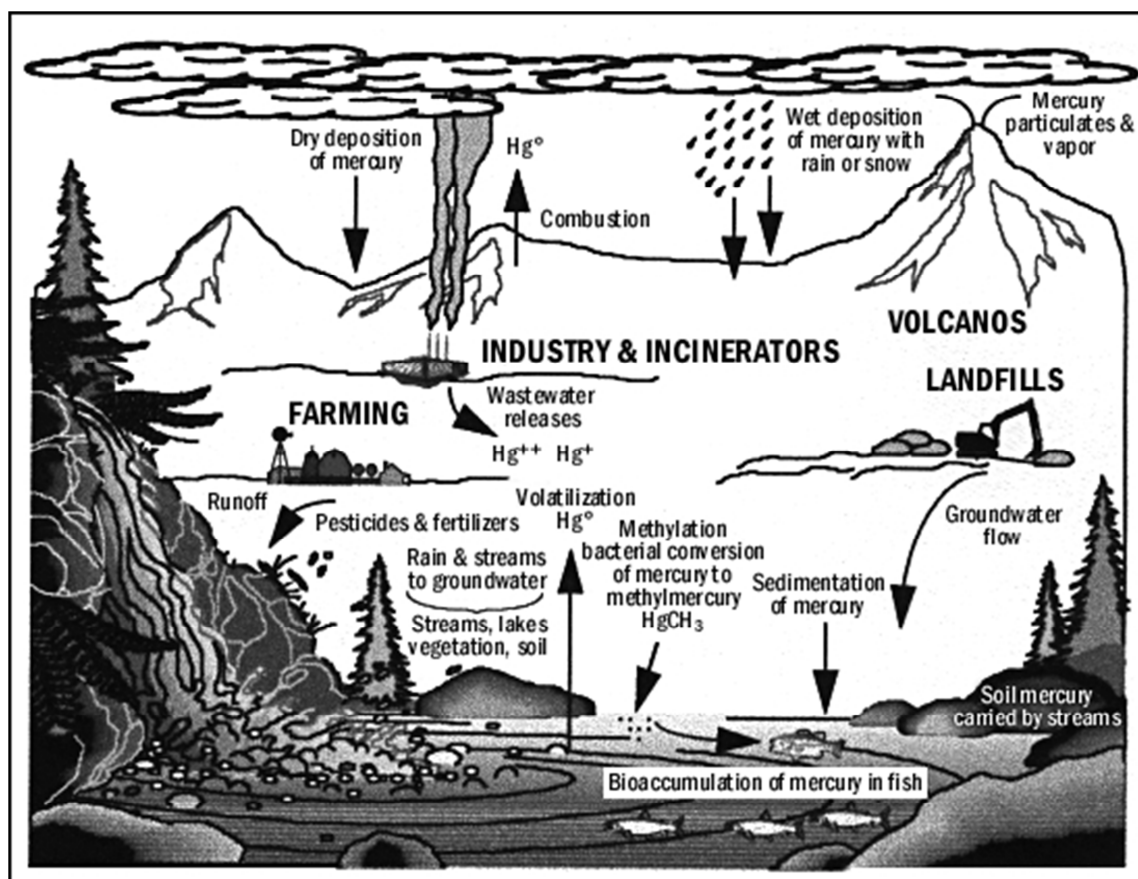
Mercury and Minamata mystery

Worksheet 1

1. In pairs go online and find answers to the questions about mercury:

- What is 80Hg? What do they symbolize?
- What are other two names for mercury ?
- What element category is mercury?
- What is the standard physical state of mercury?
- Where is mercury used?
- Does mercury occur naturally in the environment?
- Why is mercury dangerous to humans?

2. "Approximately 80% of the mercury released from human activities is elemental mercury released to the air, primarily from [fossil fuel combustion](#), mining, and smelting, and from solid waste incineration. About 15% of the total is released to the soil from fertilizers, fungicides, and municipal solid waste (for example, from waste that contains discarded batteries, electrical switches, or thermometers). An additional 5% is released from industrial wastewater to water in the environment."



Look at the diagram and read about mercury pollution. What is the process of mercury accumulation in fish ?

Go to <http://thefisheriesblog.blogspot.com/2012/10/mercury-in-fish-what-should-i-eat.html> and check which fish is safe to eat and which to avoid.

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3. Mercury poisoning is very dangerous and the symptoms may include heart problems, skin allergies, nervous disorders among many. Go online and read about one of the greatest environmental disasters and the Minamata Disease.

- Where did the disaster happen?
- When was that?
- How did it start ?
- What were the symptoms?
- How many people were affected by the incident?
- What was the cause of the Minamata disease?