Why is it pouring down with rain but we have a hosepipe ban?

Climatologists have stated that the hosepipe ban could last as long as Christmas.	A growing demand for water from people and businesses is causing the over abstraction of water from rivers and reservoirs
The South West, Midlands, East Anglia, the South East, South and East Yorkshire are all experiencing a hosepipe ban.	Scientists have proposed the use of desalinisation plants to convert seawater into drinkable water.
13 million peoples' lives are at risk due to the drought in the Horn of Africa. Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya have been worst affected.	More than double the average monthly rainfall for April fell in the UK in April 2012.
The last 18 months have been the driest in terms of average rainfall on record for many parts of the UK.	Drought is the experience of less than average rainfall in a particular place, meaning that resources do not match demand.
Percolation is the filtering of water through land into the groundwater or aquifers beneath.	Standpipes are water pipes that are placed on a street for people to collect water from, as opposed to using their own taps.
The UK is leaking huge amounts of water every day in cracked and broken pipes beneath the ground.	Many rivers burst their banks and flooded at the same time as the hosepipe ban. The River Severn and River Don both flooded badly at this time.
Badminton horse trials were cancelled for the first time since 1987 due to river flooding in Gloucestershire.	People who flout a hosepipe ban face a fine of £1000. The ban applies to all homes within the restricted areas.
Ground that is already dry encourages increased surface run off rather than percolation, moving water quickly back into streams and rivers.	Many UK reservoirs and lakes are at 50% capacity. They should be at around 90-95% capacity at this time of year.
Surface run off is the flowing of water over land into streams and rivers, without soaking into the ground.	Caroline Spelman, environment secretary, has said that standpipes may be required in streets next year if the drought situation worsens.
Desalinisation plants use up large amounts of energy creating a large carbon footprint.	An aquifer is a large underground store of water. London sits above an aquifer which provides much of the water for the city.
Standpipes were used in 1976 when a hosepipe ban was in place due to an extremely dry summer.	Experts claim it will take many months of heavy precipitation to top up groundwater levels sufficiently.
Since August 2009, only 10 months have had higher than average rainfall in the south of England. 25 months have experienced lower than average rainfall.	The ground has to be wet already to allow significant water to percolate through and top up groundwater and aquifers
It is the levels of groundwater that is causing drought in many places, as recent rain has topped up rivers and streams.	Many sports clubs will struggle to maintain grounds during the hosepipe ban. Golf courses and cricket clubs will be affected badly.

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Instructions:

- Read through the statements and sort them into groups. You can choose how you classify the statements as there are many ways of doing this.
- Have a think about why there is a hosepipe ban when April has been so wet. Start to piece your story together and choose the most important clues.

Follow up questions:

1) What do the following terms mean:
   a) Groundwater?
   b) Percolation?
   c) Aquifer?
   d) Precipitation?
   e) Surface Run Off?

2) Why do you think that there is a drought when it has been so wet in April? Write a detailed paragraph giving evidence using your most important clue cards.

3) What might be the effects of an extended drought in the UK? How will it affect your life?

4) Generally the south of the UK has experienced a hosepipe ban, whilst the north hasn't. Can you think of a solution that would mean nobody has to experience a hosepipe ban?

5) Why are desalinisation plants not seen as a more attractive option? Give reasons for your answer.

6) Design a poster encouraging people to use water responsibly.