



Three Gorges Dam

Students distinguish between facts and opinions, while learning about the Three Gorges Dam.

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Grade Level	6-8
Duration	2-3 class periods

Adapted from "The Three Gorges on the Yangtze...Dam it?" by Barbara Soto and from resources compiled by Patience Berman

National Geography Standards

ELEMENT FIVE: ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY

14. How human actions modify the physical environment.

Arizona Geography Strand

Grade 6

Concept 2 places and Regions

PO 2 Describe the factors that cause regions and places to change.

Concept 5 Environment and Society

PO 1 Describe ways that human dependence on natural resources influences economic development, settlement, trade and migration.

PO 2 Describe the intended and unintended consequences of human modification (e.g., irrigation, aqueducts, canals) on the environment.

Grade 7

Concept 4 Human Systems

PO 2 Describe the push and pull factors that cause human migrations (e.g., need for raw materials, enslavement, employment opportunities, impact of war, religious freedom, political freedom).

PO 10 Describe how changes in technology, transportation, communication, and

Other Arizona Standards

Grade 6

Strand 2 World History

Concept 9 Contemporary World

PO 1 Describe current events using information from class discussions and various resources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, television, Internet, books, maps).

Grades 7 and 8

Strand 2 World History

Concept 9 Contemporary World

PO 1 Describe current events using information from class discussions and various resources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, television, Internet, books, maps).

Reading Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies

Craft and Structure

6-8.RH.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

6-8.RH.8 Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

Writing Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Text Types and Purposes

6-8.WHST.1 Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.

a. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

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resources affect the location of economic activities in places and world regions.

Concept 5 Environment and Society

PO 2 Describe the consequences of natural hazards (e.g., Dust Bowl hurricanes, droughts, earthquakes).

Grade 8

Concept 4 Human Systems

PO 1 Identify the push and pull factors (e.g., wars, economic conditions, human rights conditions, famines, political strife/wars, natural disasters, changes in technology) that drive human migrations.

Concept 5 Environment and Society

PO 2 Describe why humans modify ecosystems (e.g., resources, economic livelihood).

b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

d. Establish and maintain a formal style.

e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Production and Distribution of Writing

6-8.WHST.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

a. Produce clear and coherent functional writing (e.g., formal letters, envelopes, procedures, labels, timelines, graphs/tables, experiments, maps, captions, charts, diagrams) in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Overview

There is a delicate balance between humans and the natural systems in which they interact. Humans often change their natural environment in an attempt to "improve" it. Sometimes it does increase the environment's ability to support the humans. However, sometimes it decreases the environment's ability to do so.

Purpose

In this lesson, students will learn about the Three Gorges Dam through categorizing statements as opinions or facts about the building of the dam. This lesson is built around the controversy over the huge project the Chinese government has undertaken. Some believe it will only improve the lives of the Chinese people by controlling floods and assisting in bringing commerce further inland. Others believe that the costs (financial, environmental, and loss of history) far outweigh the possible benefits.

Materials

- copies of Student Fact Sheet 1, 2, and 3
- Map of Three Gorges Dam Construction Site <http://www.pbs.org/itvs/greatwall/dam1.html>
- scissors
- glue sticks or tape
- construction paper or butcher paper
- paper, pens, and pencils
- Public Service Announcement Writing Prompt

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- identify statements as fact or opinion.
- state his or her opinion in the form of a public service announcement.

Procedures

SESSION ONE

1. Distribute two large pieces of construction paper or butcher paper per student or small group.

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2. Discuss the fact and opinion statements. Have students label one large piece of paper "FACT." Also have them write a description or definition of a fact statement. "A fact is a statement that can be proven. It can be checked to see if it is true or false." Note that a fact statement does not need to be true to be a fact. It can be a false fact.

3. Have students label the other paper "OPINION." Students should write a brief definition or description on their large paper. An opinion is a statement that cannot be checked. "It is a belief, judgment, or feeling."

4. Distribute student Fact Sheet 1 to each student or one per small group. Students should cut apart the fact sheet on the lines to separate each fact. (To save time, cut the sheets apart before the lesson begins.)

5. Instruct students to read through each statement and determine if it is a fact or opinion statement.

6. Students should then adhere the statement to the appropriate piece of construction or butcher paper.

SESSION TWO

7. When all or most students/groups have completed this, discuss each statement with them. Discuss whether it is a fact or opinion and why. Also, discuss the content of the statement. There are many vocabulary words that will need to be defined.

8. When all of these statements have been discussed, discuss the facts on Student Fact Sheet 2. Be on the look out for opinion statements!

9. When appropriate in the discussion, show students a map of China. Point out the Yangtze River and the placement of the Three Gorges Dam, as well as the location of the reservoir.

SESSION THREE (or homework)

10. When discussions have been exhausted, give students the Public Service Announcement assignment.

11. Work with students as they work through the writing process. To save time, give students the P.S.A. assignment as homework.

Assessment

Students will be assessed according to the results of the Fact/Opinion activity and participation in class discussions.

Students will also be assessed on their understanding of the project and its effects on the land and people based on the Public Service Announcements they write. The Public Service Announcements will be assessed on Voice, Organization, and Ideas. Mastery will be considered a 4 or higher.

Extensions

Use Fact Sheet Number Three for further discussion or as independent reading prior to the completion of the Public Service Announcement.

Have students share their Public Service Announcements with the class. Students may then vote as to whether or not the dam should be built.

View the video "Three Gorges: The Biggest Dam In The World." The video is 50 minutes in length and can be ordered through The Discovery Channel. This is an excellent video and assists students in picturing the size and impact of the project.

Students could research the Dam on their own. Students could then submit statements to be compiled for the Fact and Opinion Handout. Students could also complete independent research projects.

See

<http://www.chinavista.com/travel/yangtze/main.html>

<http://journal.probeinternational.org/three-gorges-probe/>

http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/google_map_three_gorges.htm

<http://www.pbs.org/itvs/greatwall/dam1.html>

In addition to, or in place of the Public Service Announcement, students could also write a business letter to the government of China or to an environmental group.