Three Gorges Dam

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Kathy Tyler Stelten</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>2-3 class periods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### National Geography Standards

**ELEMENT FIVE: ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY**

14. How human actions modify the physical environment.

### Arizona Geography Standards

**Grade 6**

- **Strand 4 Geography**
  - **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**

- **Strand 4 Geography**
  - **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 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**

- **Strand 4 Geography**
  - **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

### Arizona Language Arts Standards

**READING STANDARD:**

Grades 6, 7, and 8

- **Strand 3: Comprehending Informational Text**
  - **Concept 1: Expository Text**
    - PO 3. Distinguish fact from opinion in expository text, providing supporting evidence from text.

**WRITING STANDARD:**

Grades 6, 7, and 8

- **Strand 2: Writing Components**
  - **Concept 2: Organization**
    - PO 1. Use a structure that fits the type of writing (e.g., letter format, narrative, play, essay).
    - PO 2. Develop a strong beginning or introduction that draws in the reader.
    - PO 3. Place details appropriately to support the main idea.
    - PO 4. Include effective transitions among all elements (sentences, paragraphs, ideas).
    - PO 5. Construct paragraphs by arranging sentences with an organizing principle (e.g., to develop a topic, to indicate a chronology).
    - PO 6. Create an ending that provides a sense of resolution or closure.
  - **Concept 3: Voice**
    - PO 1. Show awareness of the audience through word choice, style, and an appropriate connection with, or distance from, the audience.
    - PO 2. Convey a sense of identity through originality, sincerity, liveliness, or humor appropriate to the topic and type of writing.
    - PO 3. Use language appropriate for the topic and purpose.
    - PO 4. Choose appropriate voice (e.g., formal, informal, academic discourse) for the audience and purpose.
  - **Concept 4: Persuasive**
    - PO 1. Show awareness of the audience through word choice, style, and an appropriate connection with, or distance from, the audience.
    - PO 2. Convey a sense of identity through originality, sincerity, liveliness, or humor appropriate to the topic and type of writing.
    - PO 3. Use language appropriate for the topic and purpose.
    - PO 4. Choose appropriate voice (e.g., formal, informal, academic discourse) for the audience and purpose.

**Strand 3: Writing Applications**

Grade 6
Three Gorges Dam

ecosystems (e.g., resources, economic livelihood).

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).

PO 1. Write persuasive text (e.g., essay, paragraph, written communications) that:
   a. establishes and develops a controlling idea
   b. supports arguments with detailed evidence
   c. includes persuasive techniques
   d. excludes irrelevant information

Grade 7 and 8
Strand 3: Writing Applications
Concept 4: Persuasive
PO 1. Write persuasive text (e.g., essay, paragraph, written communications) that:
   a. establishes and develops a controlling idea
   b. supports arguments with detailed evidence
   c. includes persuasive techniques
   d. excludes irrelevant information
   e. attributes sources of information when appropriate

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

The purpose of this lesson is to teach students about the Three Gorges Dam. There is much 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 China
  (See www.threegorgesprobe.org)
- 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.

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.
Three Gorges Dam

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 using the simplified 6-trait rubric. 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.


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.