

Controlling the Flow of the Colorado River

Summary

Students will learn about the Colorado River and human efforts to control water flow. Students will then research other water management efforts throughout the country and report their findings.

Time Frame

3 class periods of 45 minutes each

Group Size

Pairs

Materials

Computer and slide projector for power point presentation, computers with Internet and word processing access. Maps of United States Southwest, colored pencils, example for students.

Background for Teachers

Teachers should be comfortable with Power Point presentations and guided Internet research, as well as familiar with Colorado River tributaries and dams.

Student Prior Knowledge

This is fairly basic level instruction, although students should be familiar with Internet research.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will understand how human actions modify the physical environment, use maps to acquire information from a spatial perspective, use Internet research skills to gain further understanding, and work in cooperative pairs to compile information.

Instructional Procedures

Overview: Most of the earth's surface is covered by water, but it isn't distributed evenly across the face of the planet. The construction of dams represents one effort to control water and make it more useful to people. This lesson investigates the human attempt to control the Colorado River of the American Southwest. Instructional procedures: Begin the lesson with a discussion of famous rivers in the United States and other countries. Ask your students if they realize that most of these rivers are dammed. Discuss what a dam is, then explain that we are going to explore the Colorado River. It might also be a good idea to give a bit of history about the Colorado River (there is a great website attached to this lesson). Show your students the attached Power Point Presentation. This has details about the river and the dams on it. The assignment for the students is two-fold (and detailed in the Power Point). First, they will label a political map of the western United States with the Colorado River, along with its tributaries, dams, and major population centers. Students will then work in pairs to research dams in other states, and compile their findings in a word processing format (student exemplar attached).

Strategies for Diverse Learners

If you have students who are second-language speakers, pair them with a native English speaker. This should ease any possible language barriers for this assignment.

Rubrics

[Social Studies: Dam Research and Writing Rubric](#)

Bibliography

This lesson was adapted from the National Geographic curriculum website.

Authors

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