River at Risk

Preventing conflict and negotiating a workable solution

SS24.CWI.7b "Formulate possible means to prevent and resolve modern conflicts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions that could prevent the dispute from growing, and circle actions that could help resolve it after water deliveries fall.

A Dispute on the Sela River

1 In a fictional region, the Sela River crosses from Northbank into Southbank. A dry season has lowered its flow, and Northbank has proposed a new irrigation gate upstream. Southbank farmers fear their fields will receive too little water. Northbank residents fear that limiting the gate will threaten their food supply. Online rumors claim that one side plans to shut off the river entirely, although neither government has announced such a plan. Small protests have blocked a border crossing used by food trucks. Both governments say they want to avoid violence, but neither trusts the other's water measurements.

2 To prevent the dispute from growing, engineers from both sides could measure river flow together and post the readings each week. Local radio stations could check claims with those engineers before repeating them. Farmers from both countries could meet before planting season to discuss water needs. These steps cannot create rain, but they can reduce false claims and reveal shortages early. Each government could also promise to keep the border crossing open for food deliveries, even during tense talks. A public hotline for reporting threats could help officials respond before a protest turns violent.

3 If the gate is built and water deliveries fall, leaders would need a way to resolve the immediate dispute. They could pause new withdrawals for two weeks while a neutral water specialist reviews the shared readings. After that review, both sides could negotiate a temporary schedule that gives farms a minimum flow and adjusts withdrawals when the river rises or falls. A joint committee could check whether each side follows the schedule and settle complaints. Any agreement would need to account for Northbank's crops as well as Southbank's, or people might reject it. Courts could remain an option if talks fail.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could the governments prevent arguments over water measurements before the gate is built?

2. What two actions could communities take to keep rumors or threats from leading to violence?

3. If the gate lowers water deliveries, what two steps could leaders take to begin resolving the dispute?

4. After the review, what agreement and follow-up could address both countries' water needs?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a long power outage shuts down the shared water sensors just as the border crossing is blocked again. Propose a three-step plan that protects food access, reduces mistrust, and helps both sides settle water use until readings return; explain why one step comes first.

River at Risk

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions that could prevent the dispute from growing, and circle actions that could help resolve it after water deliveries fall. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could the governments prevent arguments over water measurements before the gate is built?	**Engineers from both sides could measure the river together and publish the readings each week.**
2	What two actions could communities take to keep rumors or threats from leading to violence?	**Radio stations could check claims with the engineers before repeating them, and residents could report threats through a public hotline.**
3	If the gate lowers water deliveries, what two steps could leaders take to begin resolving the dispute?	**They could pause new withdrawals for two weeks while a neutral specialist reviews the shared readings.**
4	After the review, what agreement and follow-up could address both countries' water needs?	**The countries could agree on a temporary schedule with a minimum flow that changes with river conditions. A joint committee could check compliance and settle complaints.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

First, officials from both countries should reopen the crossing for monitored food deliveries, because families need supplies while talks continue. Next, mixed teams can take manual river measurements at agreed sites and publish records signed by both sides. Using those records, representatives can set a short-term withdrawal limit and review it every few days. This gives them a way to adjust the limit if the river level changes.

Accept other passage-supported proposals for the short answers. For Your Turn, look for three feasible steps that address food access, trust, and temporary water use, with a reason for the chosen first step.