# Across the River

How a border turned shared water into a source of conflict and cooperation

**GHW.7.1** "Recognize that conflict and cooperation among groups of people occur for a variety of reasons, including nationalist, racial, ethnic, religious, political, economic…"

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline phrases that show why the rivers' locations mattered. Circle reasons for conflict, then write 1 beside a disagreement and 2 beside an agreement.

### A Border Across the Indus

1. In 1947, British India was divided into India and Pakistan. Leaders who sought Pakistan argued that Muslims needed a separate homeland, while other leaders wanted a united country. This nationalist and religious conflict shaped a new border. It also cut across the Indus river system, which fed farms and towns on both sides. Several major rivers began in or flowed through territory controlled by India before reaching Pakistan. Farmers in Pakistan worried that decisions made upstream could leave their fields dry. India also wanted water for its own farms and growing towns. A political border had become a water problem.

2. The disagreement was not simply about which country owned a river. Both governments needed dependable water to grow food and support their economies. Pakistan relied heavily on canals that drew from the Indus system, while India planned irrigation projects of its own. Because rivers cross borders but governments control land, a canal gate or new project on one side could affect people on the other. Officials had to decide how to divide access to the rivers without treating the entire system as the property of just one country. Those resource and economic concerns pushed the governments toward talks.

3. After years of negotiations supported by the World Bank, India and Pakistan signed the Indus Waters Treaty in 1960. It gave India primary use of the Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej rivers and Pakistan primary use of the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab rivers. India retained limited rights to use water from the western rivers under treaty rules. The agreement did not erase political rivalry or every dispute over water projects. Yet it set rules for sharing a river system that crosses national territory. The treaty remained in force during wars between the two countries in 1965 and 1971, showing how cooperation can continue amid conflict.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did nationalist and religious concerns help turn the Indus river system into a border issue?

2. Why did the rivers' locations give Pakistan reason to worry about decisions made in India?

3. What economic and resource concerns brought both governments to the negotiating table?

4. How did the treaty address control of the rivers without ending every conflict?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

In four or five sentences, invent two neighboring groups that share a water source near a disputed border. Identify two different reasons for conflict, explain why the location matters, and propose a specific agreement that benefits both groups.

# Across the River



## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline phrases that show why the rivers' locations mattered. Circle reasons for conflict, then write 1 beside a disagreement and 2 beside an agreement. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did nationalist and religious concerns help turn the Indus river system into a border issue? | **Arguments over a separate homeland for Muslims helped lead to the division of British India. The new border crossed a river system used by people on both sides.** |
| 2 | Why did the rivers' locations give Pakistan reason to worry about decisions made in India? | **Several rivers began in or flowed through Indian-controlled territory before reaching Pakistan, so upstream decisions could affect water available to Pakistani farms.** |
| 3 | What economic and resource concerns brought both governments to the negotiating table? | **Both needed dependable water for food production and their economies. Pakistan depended on canals, and India wanted water for its own irrigation projects.** |
| 4 | How did the treaty address control of the rivers without ending every conflict? | **It assigned primary use of three rivers to each country and allowed India limited use of the western rivers. Political rivalry and disputes over water projects remained.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Northbank and Southbank communities both rely on a spring in hills claimed by both sides. Northbank leaders say the hills belong to their nation, while Southbank farmers fear losing income if water is diverted. Because the disputed hills hold the spring, control of that land would also affect access to its water. The communities could jointly manage the spring and agree on how much water each side may take during dry months.

Accept other passage-supported explanations that connect a reason for conflict or cooperation to territory. For Part 3, look for two distinct reasons, a clear link between location and control, and a workable agreement.