

Water's Long Shadow

Trace how a past water decision affects Central Asia today.

6.1d "Issues and problems experienced in the regions of the Eastern Hemisphere have roots in the past."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each past action or decision, and circle each present-day problem or response connected to it. Write the same number beside a past decision and its connected result.

The Aral Sea's Past and Present

- ① In Central Asia, the Aral Sea once received water from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers. During the Soviet period, beginning in the 1960s, planners diverted much of this river water into canals to grow cotton in the dry region. Cotton brought jobs and income, but the canals often leaked and used enormous amounts of water. Less water reached the sea each year. This past decision changed the area's environment and created problems that people still face.
- ② As water levels fell, the Aral Sea split into smaller bodies of water. Fishing ports such as Muynak, once on the shore, were left far from water, and many fishing jobs disappeared. Wind now blows salty dust from the exposed lakebed across nearby towns and farms. The dust can harm crops and may worsen breathing problems. These environmental and economic issues did not appear suddenly. They grew from decades of taking river water for irrigation.
- ③ Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have tried different responses. Kazakhstan built a dam that helped raise water levels in the northern part, called the North Aral Sea, allowing some fish to return. The larger southern part, mostly in Uzbekistan, remains severely reduced. Countries in the region also must share river water for farms, cities, and ecosystems. Decisions about water today can create tension because each country needs it. Understanding the earlier diversions helps leaders weigh present choices and avoid repeating harm.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What decision made during the Soviet period caused less water to reach the Aral Sea?

2 Explain how the past irrigation decision led to the loss of many fishing jobs.

3 Name two present-day environmental or health problems connected to the shrinking Aral Sea.

4 How does Kazakhstan's dam show that a present-day action can respond to a problem rooted in the past?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly three sentences explaining how one past decision caused a current problem around the Aral Sea. Include two details from the passage and one action leaders could take today.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each past action or decision, and circle each present-day problem or response connected to it. Write the same number beside a past decision and its connected result. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What decision made during the Soviet period caused less water to reach the Aral Sea?	Planners diverted water from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers into canals to grow cotton.
2	Explain how the past irrigation decision led to the loss of many fishing jobs.	Diverting river water lowered and split the Aral Sea. Ports were left far from the water, so fishing jobs disappeared.
3	Name two present-day environmental or health problems connected to the shrinking Aral Sea.	Salty dust can harm crops, and it may worsen breathing problems. The sea also remains severely reduced.
4	How does Kazakhstan's dam show that a present-day action can respond to a problem rooted in the past?	The dam helped raise water levels in the North Aral Sea and allowed some fish to return. It responds to water loss caused by earlier river diversions.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Past Soviet irrigation diverted river water to cotton fields, so less water reached the Aral Sea. Today, salty dust harms farms and fishing jobs have declined. Leaders should conserve water and cooperate across borders so farming needs do not cause more environmental damage.

Accept responses that accurately connect Soviet-era river diversions for cotton irrigation to a current environmental, health, economic, or political issue. For Part 3, accept a reasonable present-day action that addresses water use or regional cooperation.