# River at Risk

Weigh how international groups respond to a dispute

**7.C.8.7** "Analyze reasons for conflict and cooperation among regions, evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of international organizations and alliances (e.g., European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline the cause of the dispute, circle two reasons the countries might cooperate, and number three ways international groups could help. Mark one limit on what each group can do.

### A Dispute Over Water

1. Imagine two neighboring countries, Rivermark and Coastland, sharing a river. Both depend on it for farms, but a dry summer leaves less water. Rivermark builds a gate upstream, and Coastland says the gate blocks water its farmers need. Leaders argue over how much water each country should receive. Some residents demand that their government send soldiers to the border. Others want talks because fighting could ruin farms on both sides. Rivermark belongs to the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), while Coastland belongs to neither.

2. EU officials could encourage talks about the river and use trade ties to encourage a settlement. Because Coastland is not an EU member, the EU cannot simply order it to accept a deal. Cooperation could protect trade and help farmers plan, but talks may take time while crops fail. NATO offers Rivermark a different kind of support: its members have pledged collective defense if a member faces an armed attack. That pledge may discourage an attack, but NATO cannot decide how the river's water should be shared.

3. If fighting begins, families might flee, and injured people may need care. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is a neutral humanitarian organization, not a military alliance. It can seek access to people affected by conflict, provide aid, and help separated relatives reconnect. Its neutrality can help it work across battle lines, but it cannot force either side to allow safe access. These groups address different problems, so Rivermark's leaders must weigh defense, a negotiated water agreement, and urgent help for civilians rather than expect one group to do everything.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What caused the dispute, and why might both countries choose talks instead of fighting?

2. How could the EU help resolve the dispute, and what limits its ability to do so?

3. Why might NATO's pledge help Rivermark, and why would the countries still need another way to settle the water dispute?

4. If fighting begins, what need could the ICRC meet that NATO's defense pledge does not, and what could prevent the ICRC from helping?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Suppose two fictional countries dispute a border road. One is an EU and NATO member, the other belongs to neither, and fighting has displaced families. In 4 to 5 sentences, recommend two groups from the passage, give one benefit and one limit of each, and explain how they could meet different needs.

# River at Risk



## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the cause of the dispute, circle two reasons the countries might cooperate, and number three ways international groups could help. Mark one limit on what each group can do. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | What caused the dispute, and why might both countries choose talks instead of fighting? | **A dry summer left less river water, and Coastland says Rivermark's gate blocks water its farmers need. Talks could prevent fighting that would ruin farms on both sides.** |
| 2 | How could the EU help resolve the dispute, and what limits its ability to do so? | **The EU could encourage talks and use trade ties to encourage a settlement, but it cannot order Coastland, a nonmember, to accept a deal.** |
| 3 | Why might NATO's pledge help Rivermark, and why would the countries still need another way to settle the water dispute? | **The pledge of collective defense may discourage an armed attack on Rivermark. NATO cannot decide how the two countries should share the water.** |
| 4 | If fighting begins, what need could the ICRC meet that NATO's defense pledge does not, and what could prevent the ICRC from helping? | **The ICRC could provide aid to people affected by conflict or reconnect separated relatives. Either side could deny it safe access.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The EU could encourage talks over the road, which might protect trade, but it cannot order the nonmember country to accept a deal. The ICRC could help displaced families reconnect, but it cannot force either side to grant safe access. Talks could ease the border dispute while the ICRC meets urgent needs. Neither group alone could do both jobs.

Accept other supported comparisons, including NATO as a possible deterrent to an armed attack on its member. Responses should distinguish settling the dispute, providing defense, and meeting humanitarian needs.