

# Should the Ethiopian Grand Dam Be Built?



## An Argumentative Performance Task for 7<sup>th</sup> grade Geography

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## **Partnerships and Partitions Performance Task – ARGUMENTATIVE**

### **Student Directions**

#### **Task:**

In recent years, a heated debate has emerged about whether or not Ethiopia should build the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Dams help regulate water and can provide hydroelectricity. They also alter the environment's natural state. You must take a position for or against the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Do you think Ethiopia has the right to build this dam? Or do you agree with Egypt that the dam should not be built?

After you have looked at these sources, you will answer some questions about them. Briefly scan the sources and the three questions that follow. Then go back and read the sources carefully so you will have the information you will need to answer the questions and complete your research. You may use scratch paper to take notes on the information you find in the sources as you read.

In Part 2, you will write an argumentative essay on a topic related to the sources.

#### **Directions for Beginning:**

You will examine several sources. You can re-examine any of the sources as often as you like.

#### **Research Questions:**

After examining the research sources, use the remaining time in Part 1 to answer three questions. Your answers to these questions will be scored. Also, your answers will help you think about the information you have read, which will help you write your argumentative essay.

You may refer back to your scratch paper to look at your notes when you think it would be helpful. Answer the questions in the spaces below the items.

Your written notes on scratch paper will be available to you in Part 1 and Part 2 of the performance task.

## **Part 1**

### **Sources**

#### **Source #1**

The following article is from the BBC News, published March 21, 2014. **"Will Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam dry the Nile in Egypt?"**

#### **Will Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam dry the Nile in Egypt?**



*Ethiopia is pressing ahead with construction of a major new dam on the River Nile, despite stiff opposition from Egypt. BBC correspondents in both countries report from both sides of an increasingly bitter water dispute.*

#### **Emmanuel Igunza, Ethiopia**

A vast section of northern Ethiopia has been turned into a giant building site.

Construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (known as GERD) is now about 30% complete.

The whole project spans an area of 1,800 sq km (695 sq miles).

Once completed, in three years, it will be Africa's largest hydropower dam, standing some 170m (558ft) tall.

At a cost of \$4.7bn (£2.9bn) it will also be hugely expensive - mostly funded by Ethiopian bonds and taxpayers.

The dam is located in the Benishangul region, a vast, arid land on the border with Sudan, some 900km north-west of the capital Addis Ababa,

Temperatures here can get as high as 48C (118F). Most of the vegetation that existed on the dam site has been cleared to make way for the construction, and the area is now extremely dusty.

In May last year, the builders achieved their first milestone when they diverted the course of the Blue Nile.



*What used to be the river bed is now being lined with layers and layers of concrete that will form part of the main dam.*



*Some 8,500 people working at the site, where construction carries on 24 hours a day.*



*Part of the actual dam structure is already taking shape. The workers are busy at work on what looks like a huge floor of concrete.*

Downstream, Egypt - which relies almost totally on the waters of the Nile, says their supply will be under threat.

Egypt and Sudan currently get the lion's share of the Nile's waters under colonial-era treaties. While Sudan backs Ethiopia's plans, Egypt has remained opposed.

Talks to ease tensions between the two countries have collapsed.

Despite this, Ethiopian foreign ministry spokesman Amb Dina Mufti describes the dam as a "win-win" project.

"Sudan has already seen the benefits and has come on board, we hope Egypt will see that too," he says.

The concern in Egypt is about the potential threat to its dominance over the Nile.

Egypt fears Ethiopia's dam will restrict the flow of this strategic waterway - the main source of water in a country where rainfall is scarce.

The row started in 2011, and Egypt has been worried ever since that its annual quota of the Nile water might be reduced.

This conflict comes at a time when different parts of Egypt are already suffering from a shortage of water. In the northern Nile Delta, the agricultural heart of Egypt, a lot of farmers are waiting with a heavy heart to see if they will be able to cultivate their land next summer.

"With even less water, we will die. We can't survive," says Hafiza, one of the farmers.

Ethiopia says its hydro-electric dam will not harm either of its downstream countries, Egypt or Sudan. However, Egypt is highly skeptical.

"It is a matter of life or death, a national security issue that can never be compromised on," says foreign ministry spokesman Badr Abdelatty.

Egypt is aware that some 30% of the Ethiopian dam is completed. It is still unclear what Egypt's next step will be.

**Source #2**

The following source is a video from You Tube published October 1, 2014.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1S57T2OQhf4>

## **“Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam explained”**

By Apple Daily English

Transcript:

Egyptian president, Mohamed Morsi, on Monday warned Ethiopia that all options are open in dealing with its construction of a Nile dam that threatens its country's water supply. To make way for the Grand Renaissance Dam, Ethiopia started diverting a stretch of the Blue Nile with its border in Sudan. The river, one of the Nile's two major tributaries, contributes roughly 4/5 of the Nile's flow, while the other, the White Nile, accounts for less than 1/5. Upon completion, the dam will be 145 meters in height and stretched nearly 1.8 kilometers in length. Experts estimate that to fill Ethiopia's massive reservoir, could cost Egypt as much as 20% of its Nile water in 3-5 years. The building of the \$4.7 billion hydroelectric dam, Africa's largest, challenges a colonial era agreement giving Egypt the rights to 90% of the Nile's water.

### Source #3

The following source is from BBC news published May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

#### **"Ethiopia diverts Blue Nile for controversial dam build"**



Egypt and Sudan are concerned that the dam will affect vital water supplies

Ethiopia has started diverting a stretch of the Blue Nile to make way for a \$4.7bn (£3.1bn) hydroelectric dam that has caused a dispute with countries downstream, state media say.

The Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which is currently under construction, is part of a \$12bn (£8bn) investment project to boost power exports.

The Blue Nile is one of two major tributaries of the Nile - one of the world's longest rivers.

Egypt and Sudan object to the dam.

They say it violates a colonial-era agreement, which gives them rights to 90% of the Nile's water.

The Grand Renaissance Dam, which is being built in the Benishangul-Gumuz region bordering Sudan, will eventually have a 6,000 megawatt capacity, according to the Ethiopian government. This is the equivalent of at least six nuclear power plants.

The dam's construction... does not cause any harm on any country," Alemayehu Tegenu Ethiopia Energy Minister.

"The dam is being built in the middle of the river so you can't carry out construction work while the river flowed," Mihret Debebe, chief executive officer of the state-run Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation, told the Reuters news agency.



"This now enables us to carry out civil engineering work without difficulties. The aim is to divert the river by a few meters and then allow it to flow on its natural course."

Ethiopia claims to be the source of about 85% of the total water in the Nile.

The Blue Nile originates in the country's Lake Tana and flows hundreds of miles north into Sudan and then Egypt before eventually flowing into the Mediterranean.

Egypt is particularly dependent on the water supply, with growing populations placing it under increasing strain, although Sudan also relies on the source.

Egypt's Deputy Foreign Minister for African Affairs, Ali Hifni, said that the diversion of the river was not something to worry about, according to the Egyptian state-run news agency Mena.

But Mr Hifni said that the dam itself was of concern.

Experts from Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan are set to announce findings of a study into the impact of the Ethiopian dam on the Nile's flow in the coming weeks.

Ethiopia's energy minister, moved to dispel fears over the dam's impact, Reuters reports.

"The dam's construction benefits riparian countries, showcases fair and equitable use of the river's flow and does not cause any harm on any country," Alemayehu Tegen said.

Source #4 The following source is from National Geographic.com published October 29, 2010.

<http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2013/07/24/geography-in-the-news-ethiopia-dam-projects/>

Ethiopia GERD Map



**Research Questions:**

After examining the research sources, use the remaining time in Part 1 to answer three questions about them. Your answers to these questions will be scored. Also, your answers will help you think about the information you have read, which should help you write your argumentative essay.

You may refer back to your scratch paper to look at your notes when you think it would be helpful. Answer the questions in the spaces below the items.

Your written notes on scratch paper will be available to you in Part 1 and Part 2 of the performance task.

**1. Explain how a dam changes the environment?**

Provide **two** pieces of evidence, from two different sources, and explain how each piece of evidence supports this claim. Identify the source of each piece of evidence by title or number.

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2. **Explain the controversy over building of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam?** Provide **two** pieces of evidence, from two different sources, and explain how each piece of evidence supports this claim. Identify the source of each of piece of evidence by title or number.

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3. **How will building the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam affect Egypt?**

Provide **two** pieces of evidence, from two different sources, and explain how each piece of evidence supports this claim. Identify the source of each of piece of evidence by title or number.

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## Student Directions

### Part 2

You will now review your notes and sources, and plan, draft, revise and edit your writing. You may use your notes and refer to the sources. Now read your assignment and the information about how your writing will be scored; then begin your work.

### **Your Assignment: Should Ethiopia construct the Renaissance Dam along the Blue Nile River?**

#### **Argumentative Essay Scoring:**

Your argumentative essay will be scored using the following:

1. **Organization/purpose:** How well did you state your claim, address opposing claims, and maintain your claim with a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end? How well did your ideas thoughtfully flow from beginning to end using effective transitions? How effective was your introduction and your conclusion?
2. **Evidence/elaboration:** How well did you integrate relevant and specific information from the sources? How well did you elaborate your ideas? How well did you clearly state ideas in your own words using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose? How well did you reference the sources you used by title or number?
3. **Conventions:** How well did you follow the rules of grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization and spelling?

**Now begin work on your argumentative essay.** Manage your time carefully so that you can

1. plan your multi-paragraph argumentative essay
2. write your multi-paragraph argumentative essay
3. revise and edit the final draft of your multi-paragraph argumentative essay

*[Dictionaries and thesauri will be available.]*

For Part 2, you are being asked to write a multi-paragraph argumentative essay, so please be as thorough as possible.

Remember to check your notes and you're pre-writing/planning as you write and then revise and edit your argumentative essay.

## Scoring Rubrics (Teacher Use Only)

### Part 1- Research Questions (35 minutes)

Item #	Grade	Claim	Target	DOK	Item Standard	Evidence Statement
1	7	4	4	2	RH1	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

1. Explain how a dam changes the environment? Provide two pieces of evidence, from two different sources, and explain how each piece of evidence supports this claim. Identify the source of each of piece of evidence by title or number.

Rubric:

Score Point	Description
2	Response is an identification and an adequate evidence based justification of which source provides the most accurate information about dams changing the environment supported by two details from the identified source.
1	Response is an identification and a limited /partial evidence-based justification of which source provides the most accurate information about dams changing the environment supported by two vague or loosely related details from the most accurate source. OR Response is an identification and an adequate evidence based justification of which source provides the most accurate information about dams changing the environment supported by one detail from the identified source.
0	Response is an explanation that is insufficient, incorrect or irrelevant. Just identifying the source is insufficient.

## Scoring Rubrics (Teacher Use Only)

### Part 1- Research Questions (35 minutes)

Item #	Grade	Claim	Target	DOK	Item Standard	Evidence Statement
1	7	4	4	2	RH1	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

2. Explain the controversy over building the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Provide two pieces of evidence, from two different sources, and explain how each piece of evidence supports this claim. Identify the source of each of piece of evidence by title or number.

Rubric:

Score Point	Description
2	Response is an identification and an adequate evidence based justification of which source provides the most accurate information about the dam's controversy supported by two details from the identified source.
1	Response is an identification and a limited /partial evidence-based justification of which source provides the most accurate information about the dam's controversy the environment supported by two vague or loosely related details from the most accurate source. OR Response is an identification and an adequate evidence based justification of which source provides the most accurate information about the dam's controversy supported by one detail from the identified source.
0	Response is an explanation that is insufficient, incorrect or irrelevant. Just identifying the source is insufficient.



## Scoring Rubrics (Teacher Use Only)

### Part 1- Research Questions (35 minutes)

Item #	Grade	Claim	Target	DOK	Item Standard	Evidence Statement
1	7	4	4	3	RH1	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

3. How will building the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Grand Dam affect Egypt? Provide two pieces of evidence, from two different sources, and explain how each piece of evidence supports this claim. Identify the source of each of piece of evidence by title or number.

Rubric:

Score Point	Description
2	Response is an identification and an adequate evidence based justification of which source provides the most accurate information about the effects of the dam on Egypt supported by two details from the identified source.
1	Response is an identification and a limited /partial evidence-based justification of which source provides the most accurate information about the effects of the dam on Egypt supported by two vague or loosely related details from the most accurate source. OR Response is an identification and an adequate evidence based justification of which source provides the most accurate information about the effects of the dam on Egypt supported by one detail from the identified source.
0	Response is an explanation that is insufficient, incorrect or irrelevant. Just identifying the source is insufficient.

4-Point Argumentative Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 6-11)					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Purpose/Organization	<p>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure, creating a sense of unity and completeness. The response is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>claim is introduced, clearly communicated, and the focus is strongly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>effective introduction and conclusion</li> <li>logical progression of ideas from beginning to end; strong connections between and among ideas with some syntactic variety</li> <li>alternate and opposing argument(s) are clearly acknowledged or addressed*</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected. The response is adequately sustained and generally focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>claim is clear, and the focus is mostly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>adequate introduction and conclusion</li> <li>adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end; adequate connections between and among ideas</li> <li>alternate and opposing argument(s) are adequately acknowledged or addressed*</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure, and flaws are evident. The response is somewhat sustained and may have a minor drift in focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>claim may be somewhat unclear, or the focus may be insufficiently sustained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>inconsistent use of transitional strategies and/or little variety</li> <li>introduction or conclusion, if present, may be weak</li> <li>uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end; and/or formulaic; inconsistent or unclear connections among ideas</li> <li>alternate and opposing argument(s) may be confusing or not acknowledged *</li> </ul>	<p>The response has little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may be related to the claim but may provide little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>claim may be confusing or ambiguous; response may be too brief or the focus may drift from the purpose, audience, or task</li> <li>few or no transitional strategies are evident</li> <li>introduction and/or conclusion may be missing</li> <li>frequent extraneous ideas may be evident; ideas may be randomly ordered or have an unclear progression</li> <li>alternate and opposing argument(s) may not be acknowledged *</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>

\* acknowledging and/or addressing the opposing point of view begins at grade 7

4-Point Argumentative Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 6-11)					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Evidence/Elaboration	<p>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the argument(s) and claim that includes the effective use of sources (facts and details). The response clearly and effectively expresses ideas, using precise language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comprehensive evidence from sources is integrated; references are relevant and specific</li> <li>effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques*</li> <li>vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>effective, appropriate style enhances content</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides adequate support/evidence for the argument(s) and claim that includes the use of sources (facts and details). The response adequately expresses ideas, employing a mix of precise with more general language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate evidence from sources is integrated; some references may be general</li> <li>adequate use of some elaborative techniques</li> <li>vocabulary is generally appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>generally appropriate style is evident</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the argument(s) and claim that includes partial or uneven use of sources: (facts and details). The response expresses ideas unevenly, using simplistic language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some evidence from sources may be weakly integrated, imprecise, or repetitive; references may be vague</li> <li>weak or uneven use of elaborative techniques; development may consist primarily of source summary or may rely on emotional appeal</li> <li>vocabulary use is uneven or somewhat ineffective for the audience and purpose</li> <li>inconsistent or weak attempt to create appropriate style</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the argument(s) and claim that includes little or no use of sources: (facts and details). The response's expression of ideas is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence from the source material is minimal or irrelevant; references may be absent or incorrectly used</li> <li>minimal, if any, use of elaborative techniques; emotional appeal may dominate</li> <li>vocabulary is limited or ineffective for the audience and purpose</li> <li>little or no evidence of appropriate style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>

\*Elaborative techniques may include the use of personal experiences that support the argument(s).

2-Point Argumentative Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 6-11)				
Score	2	1	0	NS
Conventions	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates little or no command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>infrequent use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> </ul> <p>(Off-purpose responses will still receive a score in Conventions.)</p>

Holistic Scoring:

- Variety:** A range of errors includes formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling
- Severity:** Basic errors are more heavily weighted than higher-level errors.
- Density:** The proportion of errors to the amount of writing done well. This includes the ratio of errors to the length of the piece.