

Dam Divides the Nile

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is Africa's largest hydroelectric project, and its opening has sparked both hope and tension throughout the region.

The dam is located on the Blue Nile River in Ethiopia's Benishangul-Gumuz Region, about 14 kilometres east of the border with Sudan. The dam stretches nearly two kilometres across the river and stands about 145 metres tall, making it a massive structure that dominates the landscape. Its reservoir holds up to 64 billion cubic metres of water and the plant can produce over 5000 **megawatts** of electricity, enough to double Ethiopia's current supply and offer power to neighbouring countries.

For Ethiopia, the GERD is a symbol of national pride and economic promise. The country, with over 100 million people, aims to become a regional powerhouse in electricity generation and export. Many Ethiopians see the project as a chance to end

frequent power shortages and boost development. The dam is expected to bring industry, jobs, and investment.

The neighbouring countries of Egypt and Sudan are deeply worried about how the dam will affect the vital flow of the Nile River. Egypt relies on the Nile for almost all its freshwater and agriculture. Any reduction in water impacts farming, jobs, and stability. Egyptian officials call the dam an "**existential** threat" since their population depends on a constant and reliable flow from the river. Decades-old treaties once secured most Nile water for Egypt and Sudan, leaving countries upstream, like Ethiopia, with little say.

Sudan is also anxious that lower water levels may harm its crops and threaten its own dams, especially given its frequent droughts. Both Egypt and Sudan fear that during dry years, Ethiopia could hold back water in the GERD reservoir, making shortages worse downstream. There is no formal agreement yet about how the dam should be managed during droughts, increasing the risk of disputes.

The main concern is how much water will reach Egypt and Sudan, since their economies, food supply, and daily life depend on the Nile. They worry Ethiopia could use the dam for political or economic leverage, and that in times of drought, their share of water could drop dangerously. Resolving these issues peacefully will require negotiation and trust among the three countries. ★



DID YOU KNOW

Ethiopia is landlocked and borders Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan, and South Sudan.

To view videos, go to:
<http://resources.dynamic-classroom.ca/books/hpof>

Video



WORD POWER

MEGAWATT: A unit for measuring electrical power

EXISTENTIAL: Connected with human existence

Dam Divides the Nile

1. Where is the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam located?

2. Describe the dam.

3. How is the dam important for Ethiopia?

4. Why are Egypt and Sudan worried about the dam?

5. What do the two countries fear may happen during dry years?

CRITICAL THINKING

1. Why do you think Ethiopia built the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam? Explain your answer.

2. If you were in charge, how would you solve disagreements about water from the Nile?

Map Activity: Ethiopia

1. Locate and label the following countries:

ETHIOPIA

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

CHAD

DJIBOUTI

EGYPT

ERITREA

KENYA

LIBYA

SAUDI ARABIA

SOMALIA

SOUTH SUDAN

SUDAN

UGANDA

YEMEN

2. Locate and label the following cities:

Addis Ababa

Bangui

Djibouti

Juba

Khartoum

N'Djamena

Riyadh

Sanaa

3. Locate and label the following bodies of salt water:

Gulf of Aden

Mediterranean Sea

Red Sea

4. Create a colour legend for your map with the following:

Ethiopia

Other Countries

Salt Water

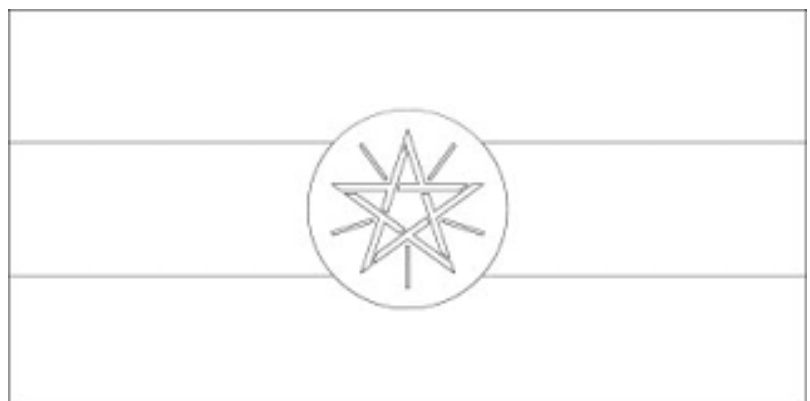
5. Draw and label the compass bearing.

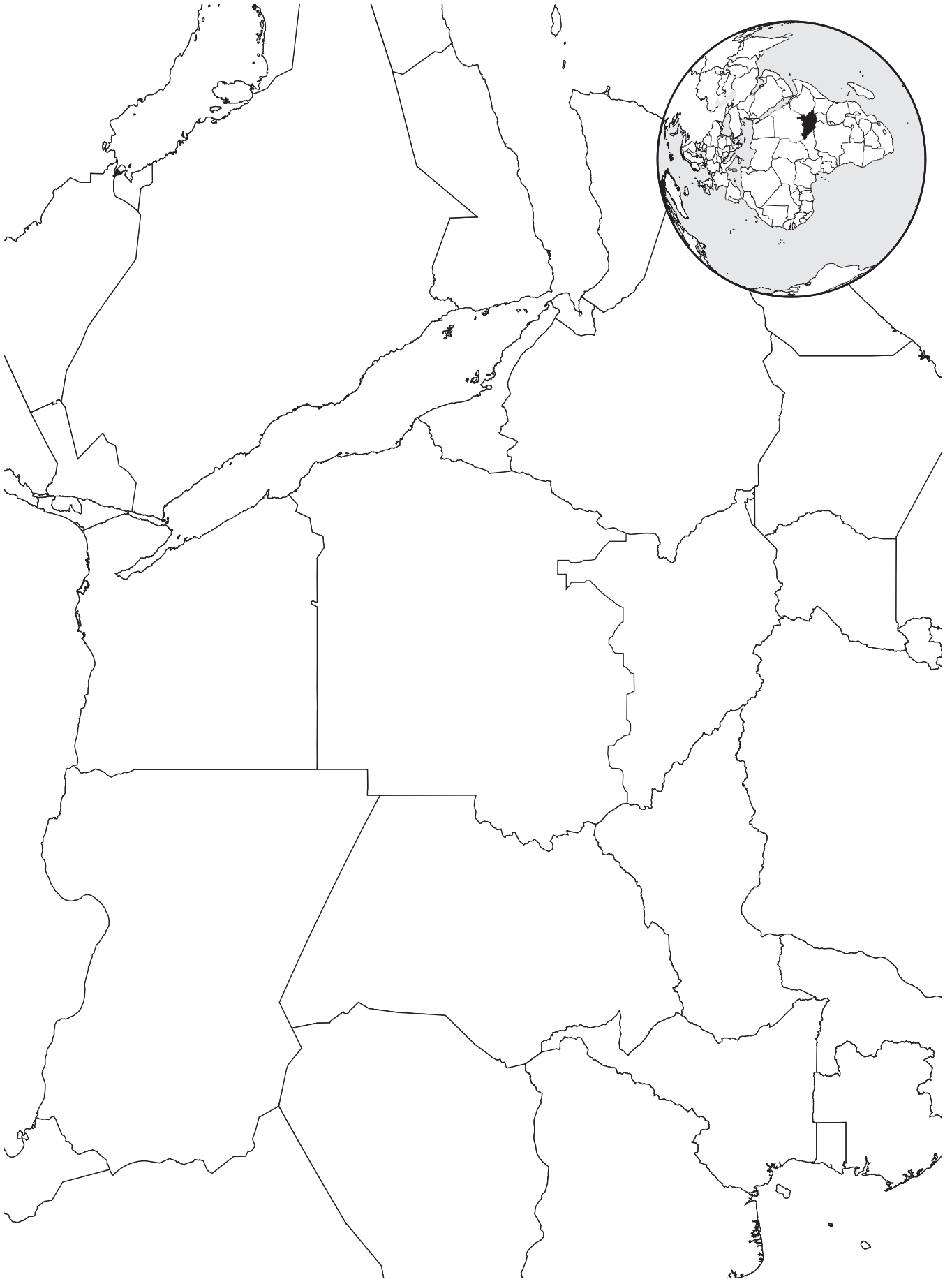
6. Label your map:

Ethiopia and Neighbouring Countries

7. Colour the flag as follows:

Three equal horizontal bands of green (top), yellow, and red, with a light blue disk centred on the three bands; on the disk is a yellow pentagram with single yellow rays emanating from the angles between the points.





Word Power

Using the words listed below, fill in the blanks in the following sentences. All of the words have been used in the article.

1. The beaver built a _____ across the river to create a pond.
2. After the storm, they found the boat _____ from the dock.
3. He was feeling _____ about the upcoming test.
4. The town experienced _____ thunderstorms during the summer.
5. She decided to _____ her business by using social media.

anxious, boost, dam, dispute, downstream, drought, frequent, freshwater, hydroelectric, industry, reservoir, symbol

Quiz

1. The dam stretches nearly two kilometres across the river and stands about 145 metres tall, making it a massive structure that dominates the landscape.
True False
2. Egypt aims to become a regional powerhouse in electricity generation and export.
True False
3. The dam's reservoir holds up to 64 billion cubic metres of water and the plant can produce over 5000 megawatts of _____.
4. Many Ethiopians see the project as a chance to end frequent power _____ and boost development.
5. Egypt relies on the _____ for almost all its freshwater and agriculture.

Weekly News Answer Key

Dam Divides the Nile

1. **Where is the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam located?**

The dam is located on the Blue Nile River in Ethiopia's Benishangul-Gumuz Region, about 14 kilometres east of the border with Sudan.

2. **Describe the dam.**

The dam stretches nearly two kilometres across the river and stands about 145 metres tall, making it a massive structure that dominates the landscape. Its reservoir holds up to 64 billion cubic metres of water and the plant can produce over 5000 megawatts of electricity, enough to double Ethiopia's current supply and offer power to neighbouring countries.

3. **How is the dam important for Ethiopia?**

For Ethiopia, the GERD is a symbol of national pride and economic promise. The country, with over 100 million people, aims to become a regional powerhouse in electricity generation and export. Many Ethiopians see the project as a chance to end frequent power shortages and boost development. The dam is expected to bring industry, jobs, and investment.

4. **Why are Egypt and Sudan worried about the dam?**

The neighbouring countries of Egypt and Sudan are deeply worried about how the dam will affect the vital flow of the Nile River. Egypt relies on the Nile for almost all its freshwater and agriculture. Any reduction in water impacts farming, jobs, and stability. Sudan is also anxious that lower water levels may harm its crops and threaten its own dams, especially given its frequent droughts.

5. **What do the two countries fear may happen during dry years?**

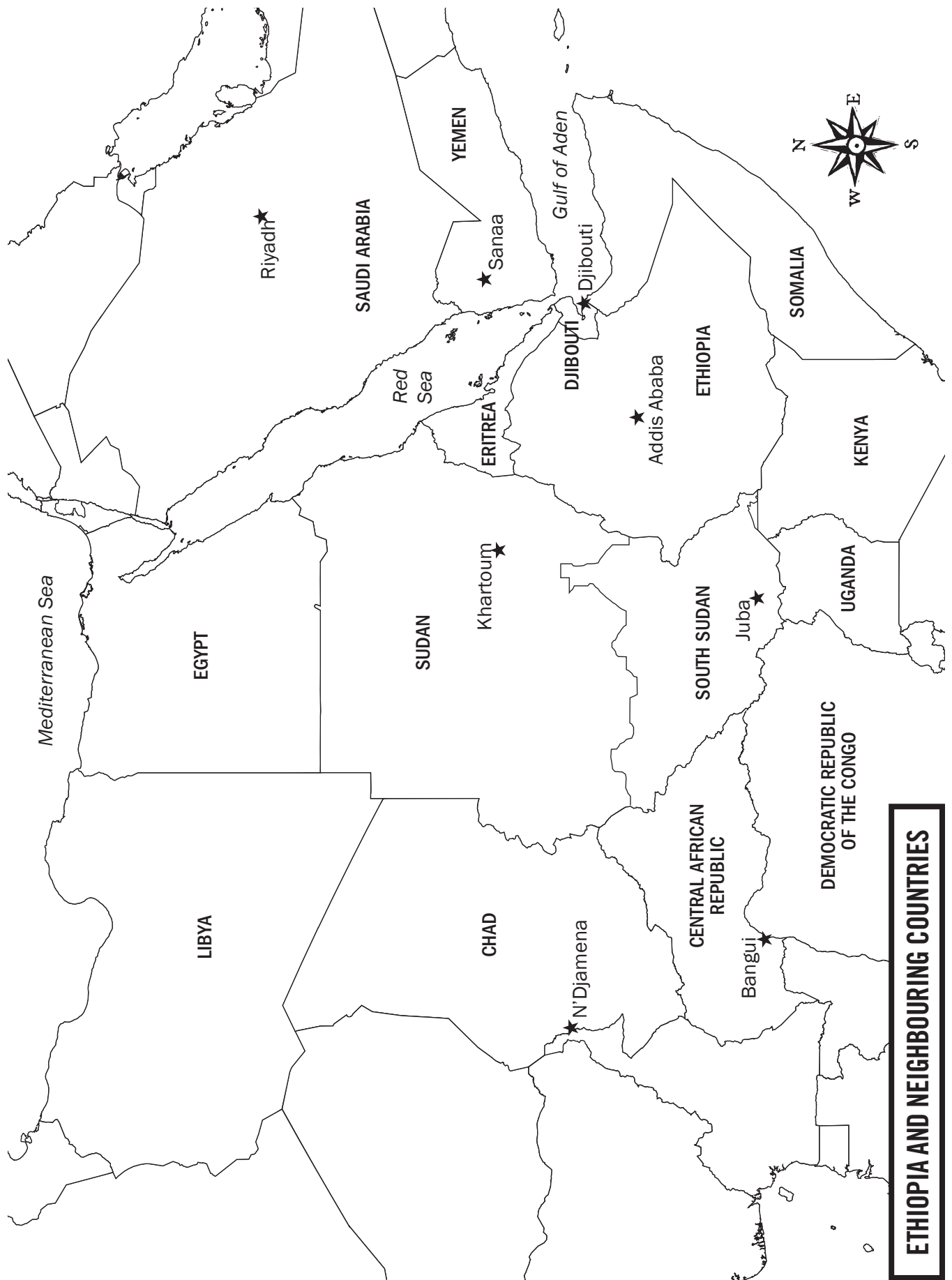
Both Egypt and Sudan fear that during dry years, Ethiopia could hold back water in the GERD reservoir, making shortages worse downstream. There is no formal agreement yet about how the dam should be managed during droughts, increasing the risk of disputes.

Word Power

1. dam
2. downstream
3. anxious
4. frequent
5. boost

Quiz

1. **The dam stretches nearly two kilometres across the river and stands about 145 metres tall, making it a massive structure that dominates the landscape.**
True
2. **Egypt aims to become a regional powerhouse in electricity generation and export.**
False – Ethiopia
3. The dam's reservoir holds up to 64 billion cubic metres of water and the plant can produce over 5000 megawatts of **ELECTRICITY**.
4. Many Ethiopians see the project as a chance to end frequent power **SHORTAGES** and boost development.
5. Egypt relies on the **NILE** for almost all its freshwater and agriculture.



ETHIOPIA AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES