

China to build Panama Canal alternative

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A Chinese company is going to build a new shipping route through Central America. Nicaragua has given the company a \$40 billion contract to construct a canal across the country. It

will join the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. This means there will be two waterways to connect the two oceans. The other one is the Panama Canal, which opened in 1914. The new waterway in Nicaragua will be bigger and longer than the 77-km-long Panama Canal. A spokesman said much bigger ships would pass through Nicaragua's canal – twice the size of those that currently use the Panama Canal. The name of the company that will build the canal is still a secret. However, it will have a 100-year contract to maintain the project.

The new canal will be a very important trade route. Shipping companies will save time and money because it will be farther north than the Panama Canal. It will take companies ten years to finish the project, but the first ships will use it within six years. It will be 22 metres deep and 286 km long. Not all Nicaraguans are happy about the canal. Congressman Carlos Langrand said: "This project affects all Nicaraguans, the future of Lake Nicaragua, our environmental resources, and the economy." He complained that the government was not being honest with the people. He told the "Nicaragua Dispatch" newspaper that: "We have many more questions than answers about this project."

Sources: *The Guardian* / *China Digital Times* / *IB Times*

Writing

It is wrong to destroy trees and rivers to make a long canal. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

build / shipping route / contract / Atlantic Ocean / spokesman / waterway / secret / trade route / save time / project / environmental resources / complained / questions

True / False

- China will build the world's longest canal through Southern China. T / F
- A Chinese company will build a canal that connects two oceans. T / F
- The new canal will be 77 km long. T / F
- Big ships will not be able to use the new canal. T / F
- Shipping companies can reduce costs by using the new canal. T / F
- The first ship will pass through the canal in ten years from now. T / F
- A politician complained that the government is full of secrets. T / F
- The politician said he had fewer answers than questions. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. build | a. touches |
| 2. contract | b. care for |
| 3. connect | c. presently |
| 4. currently | d. truthful |
| 5. maintain | e. construct |
| 6. finish | f. inside |
| 7. within | g. protested |
| 8. affects | h. agreement |
| 9. complained | i. complete |
| 10. honest | j. link |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you know about the Suez, Panama and Venetian canals?
- How will Nicaragua benefit from the canal?
- Why are Nicaraguans unhappy about the canal?
- How might your country benefit from a huge canal?
- How much damage might the canal do to the environment?
- What other huge transportation project does the world need?
- What questions do you think the congressman has?
- What questions would you like to ask the canal boss?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. build a new shipping route | a. important trade route |
| 2. a \$40 billion contract | b. through Nicaragua's canal |
| 3. two waterways to | c. within six years |
| 4. much bigger ships would pass | d. to construct a canal |
| 5. a 100-year contract to maintain | e. questions than answers |
| 6. The new canal will be a very | f. honest with the people |
| 7. Shipping companies will save | g. through Central America |
| 8. the first ships will use it | h. the project |
| 9. the government was not being | i. time and money |
| 10. We have many more | j. connect the two oceans |

Discussion – Student B

- What's the difference between a canal and a river?
- What is your experience on canals?
- What do you think of the Nicaragua Canal?
- Does the world need an alternative to the Panama Canal?
- How will we benefit from the new canal?
- Why do you think the company's name is a secret?
- Will the project be better for China or America?
- What do you know about Nicaragua?

Spelling

- a new shipping route ogtuhrh Central America
- a \$40 billion trtancco
- the Atlantic and Pacific saocen
- onetcnc the two
- those that ucyntrelr use the Panama Canal
- nntiama the project
- it will be hfraret north
- use it iinwth six years
- This project acfsfet all Nicaraguans
- environmental orecrseus
- He epcidlmano
- the government was not being shotne

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. j	4. c	5. b
6. i	7. f	8. a	9. g	10. d

Role Play

Role A – Nicaragua Canal boss

You think the Nicaragua Canal is the most important project. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their project. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): the USA-Europe Bridge, the Moon Highway or the North-To-South Pole Railway.

Role B – USA-Europe Bridge boss

You think the USA-Europe Bridge is the most important project. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their project. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): the Nicaragua Canal, the Moon Highway or the North-To-South Pole Railway.

Role C – Moon Highway boss

You think the Moon Highway is the most important project. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their project. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): the USA-Europe Bridge, the Nicaragua Canal or the North-To-South Pole Railway.

Role D – North-To-South Pole Railway boss

You think the North-To-South Pole Railway is the most important project. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their project. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): the USA-Europe Bridge, the Moon Highway or the Nicaragua Canal.

Speaking - Transport

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- ship
- airplane
- truck
- taxi
- helicopter
- train
- bicycle
- motorbike

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.