

LESSON PLAN

Site C: Examining the BCUC Report

Possible purposes:

- find out more about megaprojects in BC
- ask questions about where our power comes from and energy security in general
- delve into the November 2018 BC Utilities Commission Report on the Site C Dam project
- understand how the history and issues around the Site C dam relates to themes in Social Studies, and anticipate what the government is going to do next.

Time required:

1-2 hours

Uses:

Revised BC Social Studies 10, Social Studies 11 Explorations, Human Geography 12, Physical Geography 12

Keywords:

BC Hydro, Site C, social studies, human geography, sustainability, energy security, economy, environment, resource development, megaprojects, traditional territories

Main reference:

<http://www.sitecinquiry.com>

Other references:

Almost anything else - check files in your school library and reputable online sources that bring perspectives on Hydro power in BC, in particular the history and issues related to the Site C Dam. News searches should also be used, for instance these articles and opinions came up in November 2017:

- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/green-site-c-1.4385202>
- <https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/site-c-dam-not-needed-for-power-bc-utilities-commission-says/article36823254/?ref=http://www.theglobeandmail.com&>
- <http://journalofcommerce.com/Government/News/2017/11/BC-NDP-premier-tells-celebratory-convention-delegates-tough-decisions-ahead-1028755W/>
- <https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/cracks-in-site-c-projects-future-emerge-as-horgan-questions-if-its-in-bcs-best-interests/article36837600/>
- <https://mikedejong.com/news/sitec/>
- <https://thetyee.ca/Presents/2017/10/02/Site-C-Piling-Facts/>

Lesson:

1. Provide some background on the Site C Dam. Show one more maps of the area -- a physical map, an online map, google earth, themed map (e.g. traditional territories). Show some images of the proposed dam. Mention the context of the dam, e.g. damming the Peace River for power (Bennett Dam, peace Canyon Dam), reasons for cancelling the original plans for Site C, reasons for re-starting plans for the dam, etc. Possible sources include:

- <https://www.desmog.ca/2017/03/23/four-decades-and-counting-brief-history-site-c-dam>
- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/site-c-dam-how-we-got-here-and-what-you-need-to-know-1.2874998>
- <https://globalnews.ca/news/1728749/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-site-c-dam/>

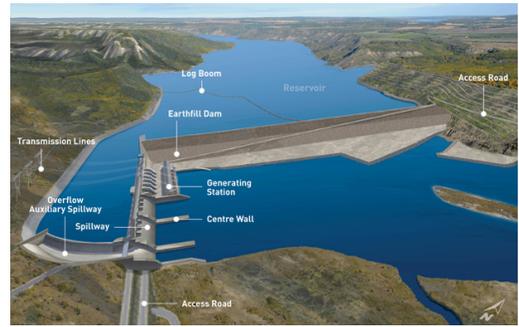


image source: <http://www.news1130.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/sites/9/2017/02/24/site-c-dam.jpg>

2. Set up the Activity. Use four pieces of chart paper with the following headings at the top:

- BACKGROUND ON THE SITE C DAM PROJECT
- EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF SITE C COMPLETION
- EVIDENCE AGAINST SITE C COMPLETION
- ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO GET POWER OR PROVIDE JOBS IN ENERGY

3. Inquiry -- Students spend some time on the BCUC website (mainly the Final Report and the Executive Summary). They should also search out other resources and articles on the Site C Dam. You may wish to provide some hard copies of the executive summary.

4. Students make observations on what they are reading. They should have an idea which of the four headings will match their observations. These observations can be facts, opinions, quotes, stats, ideas, statements, etc. and are each placed on a sticky note. The sticky notes are placed on one of the four chart papers.

5. Response activity. Students are to take a stance on Site C on “what should the government do next” and support it with evidence from each of the four charts and any additional research they wish to include. The stance will be expressed as a press release from the BC Government outlining their decision and their plan. If AGAINST completion, the students should explain alternatives and address the issue of jobs. If FOR completion, the students should counter some of the main arguments against the project. Either way, the stance (press release) should be backed up with evidence. The teacher may wish to show students examples of government press releases, e.g. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/>

Alternatives

For an individual response, it could be a written piece, a comment on a blog, a letter to the editor, or a speech/ share-out for the class.

If a group response, it could be done on chart paper or as a class presentation/share-out. If this is to be structured as a class debate, two sides or stances should be identified (as a class) before setting up the parameters of the debate.

Critical Thinking Components -- examples

1. Identify historically and geographically significant aspects of this story
2. Evaluate the evidence used to form stances on this issue
3. Identify the patterns that impact this story (society, politics, environment, economy, etc.)
4. Analyze cause/consequence chains related multiple aspects of this story
5. Examine (and take, where possible) multiple perspectives on this issue
6. Understand ethical dimensions related to decisions about this issue

These components could be used as an alternative to the four chart headings suggested above, or could be used as part of a wrap-up activity or assessment.