

Panama Canal

Directions: Read the information below on the Panama Canal, look at the images, and be able to answer the questions listed at the top of each section. Finally, complete the timeline on the back of this handout.



Map of the Panama Canal Zone.

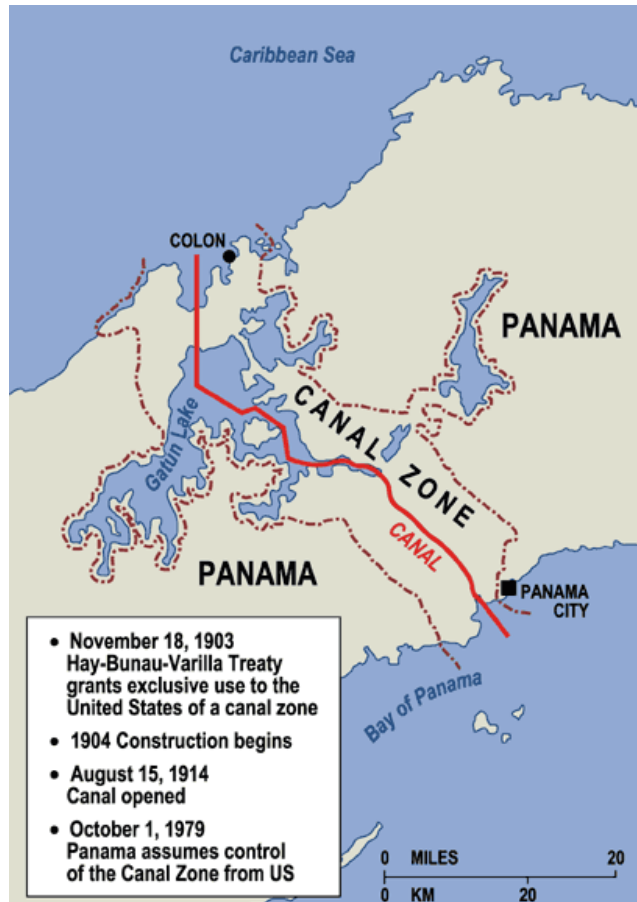
Part I: What is the Panama Canal?

The Panama Canal, completed in 1914, is a 50.7-mile marine passageway through the Isthmus of Panama, connecting Colón on the Atlantic coast and Balboa on the Pacific coast at the narrowest point of the landmass of the Americas. By navigating its locks, each of which raises or lowers vessels 85 feet, ships can move from ocean to ocean in about 24 hours, thereby saving the several days needed to sail the many thousands of miles around South America.

Part II: What is so impressive about the construction of the Panama Canal?

The Panama Canal has been a boon to commercial trade and the world economy and has been widely acknowledged as one of the 20th century's greatest engineering triumphs. Its construction and continued importance illustrates the combined skills of an international team of structural, hydraulic, geological, and sanitary engineers.

Part III: The Canal Zone



Works Cited

Longmead, Donald, and Christine Garnaut. "Panama Canal." *World Geography: Understanding a Changing World*. ABC-CLIO, 2012. Web. 25 Apr. 2012.

"Panama Canal Zone map." Map. *World Geography: Understanding a Changing World*. ABC-CLIO, 2012. Web. 25 Apr. 2012.

Part IV: Who Financed the Building of the Canal? What is the history of the Panama Canal?

At the turn of the 20th century, the United States stood to gain a great deal from a water route linking the East and West coasts. In 1903, U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt backed a Panamanian movement for independence from Colombia in exchange for exclusive treaty rights to the planned canal. Construction began in 1904. Though many Panamanians came to resent the role of the United States in the Canal Zone, the canal itself was an amazing technological accomplishment and a symbol of North American industrial strength when it opened to traffic in 1914.

After years of bitterness and international pressure, new treaties were signed in 1978 that promised to surrender control of the canal and all the surrounding lands to Panama at the end of 1999. From 1979 to 1999, the Panama Canal Commission, a joint agency of the United States and the Republic of Panama, administered the canal. On January 1, 2000, control of the canal passed completely to Panama.

Now, draw a timeline associated with the Panama Canal. (You must add 5 more dates and events to the timeline below).

1903: US President Theodore Roosevelt supported a Panamanian movement for Independence from Colombia in exchange for exclusive trading rights to the planned canal

