

WEEK 24

Taming the Colorado River

In 1901, southeastern California was the perfect place for agriculture. It had **fertile** land and a warm climate. But there was one major problem: Crops need water to grow, and the dry California climate offered very little rain. The nearby Colorado River could have been the solution, but it didn't run through the parched land. How could the water flow be changed to run through the land? The answer was a dam.

Workers first constructed a dam made mostly of dirt. They sliced **irrigation** canals into the dry land for water to flow through. The idea was a good one, but the dam wasn't strong enough. Melting snow in the Rocky Mountains sent water racing into streams and then into the Colorado River. The irrigation canals could not hold the **gushing** water, resulting in floods that destroyed farms and homes. Many farmers left. Those who stayed behind wondered how they could control the valuable, powerful Colorado River.

In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the National Reclamation Act to allow water development projects to begin. An entire city—Boulder City—was built to provide a place for the dam builders to live. The work was hard. One of the most difficult jobs was working as a high scaler. High scalers had to hang from ropes to work on the sides of the canyon. They used jackhammers and dynamite to split rocks on canyon walls.

By the time the dam was actually under construction, there was a new president—Herbert Hoover. The Hoover Dam was completed in 1935. A few finishing touches were added to the dam in 1936. The dam controlled the Colorado River and directed water to dry land. It also helped millions of people by using the force of water to **generate hydroelectricity**, the electric energy created through waterpower.



Over 720 feet tall, the **massive** Hoover Dam contains enough concrete to pave a highway from San Francisco to New York City.

MONDAY

Choose the definition that matches the **bold** word in the sentence.

1. A flood of water was **gushing** from the broken pipe.
(A) dripping (B) flowing quickly and in large amounts
2. Pioneers came to the Great Plains because they thought the **fertile** soil would be good for farming.
(A) able to produce crops (B) dry
3. The giant boulder was too **massive** to move, so the road builders simply went around it.
(A) large and heavy (B) sharp
4. The farmer built an **irrigation** system to use during the dry season.
(A) the planting of crops (B) the watering of land to grow plants
5. People have found ways to use energy from the sun, wind, and moving water to **generate** electricity.
(A) to age (B) to produce

TUESDAY

What information did you learn from the picture and caption?

WEDNESDAY

Choose the correct answer.

- Which of these is not a way the Hoover Dam helps people in the Southwest?

Ⓐ It irrigates crops.	Ⓒ It creates jobs.
Ⓑ It creates electricity.	Ⓓ It protects the surrounding land.
- What is the structure of this nonfiction article?

Ⓐ problem/solution	Ⓒ compare/contrast
Ⓑ chronological (order of events)	Ⓓ both A and B
- What made high scalers' work dangerous and difficult?

Ⓐ They hung from ropes on the canyon walls.	Ⓒ They split rocks with jackhammers.
Ⓑ They used dynamite.	Ⓓ all of the above

THURSDAY

Write the number on the left next to its matching detail on the right.

- | | | |
|------|-------|--|
| 720 | _____ | year in which farmers built irrigation canals in southeastern California |
| 1901 | _____ | year in which the Hoover Dam was completed |
| 1902 | _____ | year in which finishing touches were put on the Hoover Dam |
| 1935 | _____ | approximate height in feet of the Hoover Dam |
| 1936 | _____ | year in which President Roosevelt signed the National Reclamation Act |

FRIDAY

How do you think the Hoover Dam helped people who needed jobs?
