

Suez Canal

The Suez Canal is a 120-mile-long waterway through Egypt that connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea - which empties into the Indian Ocean. It was built so that ships could reach the Indian Ocean without having to sail around the southern tip of Africa. For ships that sail through the Suez Canal, the journey to the Indian Ocean is reduced by about 4,300 miles.

The Suez Canal took ten years to complete and tens of thousands of laborers, many of whom were forced to work on the canal by the Egyptian government with little more than picks and shovels. Eventually, heavy machinery was used, which accelerated the rate of progress in completion of the canal. Nevertheless, many workers died of epidemics such as cholera while the canal was built. The Suez Canal officially opened on November 17, 1869. It had a major effect on world trade. Not only did it drastically reduce the time it took to send and receive trade goods, but it also resulted in the colonization of Africa by European nations.

Today, thousands of ships pass through the Suez Canal each year at an average cost of \$465,000! It takes between 11 and 16 hours for a ship to pass through the canal.

Panama Canal

The Panama Canal is a 48-mile long passageway that connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through the isthmus of Panama. For ships that sail through the Panama Canal, the trip between the oceans is reduced by nearly 8,000 miles. Before the Panama Canal, ships making the same journey would have to travel through the southern tip of South America at the treacherous Strait of Magellan.

France originally won the contract to build the canal, but ultimately failed because of corruption, disease, and construction problems. The United States took over the job and completed it within ten years. The canal opened on August 15, 1914. Nearly 45,000 workers dug through Panama's mountains and jungles to complete the canal. Similar to construction of the Suez Canal, thousands of workers died of disease. Mudslides, falling rocks, and poisonous snakes also presented deadly dangers. Unlike the Suez, massive locks were built to lift and lower boats through the canal. A giant dam also had to be built that created an artificial lake through the middle of Panama. The United States controlled the dam for 100 years until ownership was transferred to Panama in 1999.

Today, over 12,000 ships travel through the canal each year. Costs of sailing through the canal depend on the weight of the ship. The average cost is \$150,000. Most ships can cross the canal in 8-10 hours compared to two weeks if they sailed through the southern tip of South America.

1. Which of the following is a similarity between the two canals?

- A. They both cost the same amount to sail through
- B. Thousands of workers died while both canals were being constructed
- C. It takes the same amount of time to sail through both canals
- D. Both canals required the constructions of locks

2. Construction of the Suez Canal...

- A. allowed for reduced travel time from the Mediterranean Sea to Pacific Ocean.
- B. allowed for reduced travel time from the Atlantic Ocean to Pacific Ocean.
- C. allowed for reduced travel time from the Pacific Ocean to Indian Ocean.
- D. allowed for reduced travel time from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean.

3. To which of the following questions would “Strait of Magellan” be the answer?

- A. What was the way to travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean before the Panama Canal?
- B. What was the way to travel from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean before the Suez Canal?
- C. What was the name of the passageway at the southern tip of North America?
- D. Where was the Panama Canal built?

4. Which of the following is true about the Panama Canal?

- A. It was supposed to be built by France
- B. In 1999, ownership of the Canal was transferred to the United States
- C. Construction of the canal was wrought with dangers such as disease, tornadoes, and hurricanes
- D. The journey from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean is reduced by 4,300 miles through the Panama Canal.

5. Which is something explained about the Suez Canal that is not explained about the Panama Canal?

- A. The date the canal opened
- B. The effect the canal had on world trade
- C. The length of the canal
- D. The distance reduced as a result of the canal

6. What does “accelerated” mean in the following sentence?

Eventually, heavy machinery was used, which accelerated the rate of progress in completion the canal.

- A. Supplied
- B. Sped up
- C. Slowed
- D. Started

7. How would ships estimate their costs for sailing through the Panama Canal?

- A. The price is calculated based on distance traveled
- B. The price is calculated based on how many people are board
- C. The price is the same for all ships
- D. The price is calculated based on the weight of the ship