

The Three Gorges Dam

Use the map of the River Yangtze to fill in the gaps and create a factsheet about the Three Gorges Dam.

The River Yangtze is the longest river in _____ and one of the longest rivers in the world. Its Chinese name – Chang Jiang – means Long River. It is 6300km long.

The river's source is in the Tanggula Shan mountain range, in the Qinghai province.

Its mouth is in the _____ Sea, north of _____.

The Yangtze is a fast, often turbulent, raging river. It is navigable for the 2400km between Chongqing (pronounced Chong-ching) and Shanghai.

The Upper Yangtze is non-navigable because of its rapids and gorges such as the famous Tiger Leaping Gorge.

The key feature of the river is the Three Gorges area which stretches for 230km between Chongqing and Yichang. It is an area of spectacular scenery.

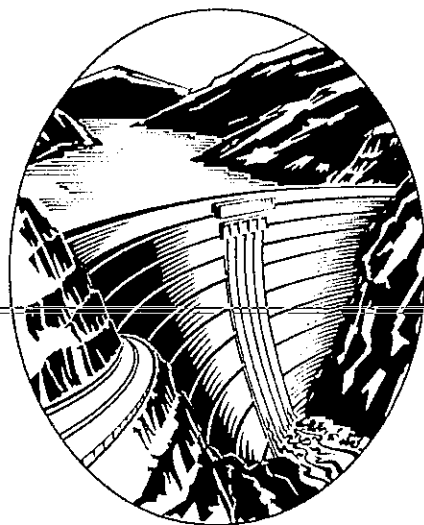
The gorges are called (from west to east): _____ Gorge (8km long), _____ Gorge (45km long) and _____ Gorge (66km long).

The Three Gorges Dam is being built at _____
(), near _____ ().

The wall will be 185m high and 2km long. It will be made from 26 million tonnes of concrete and 250,000 tonnes of iron.

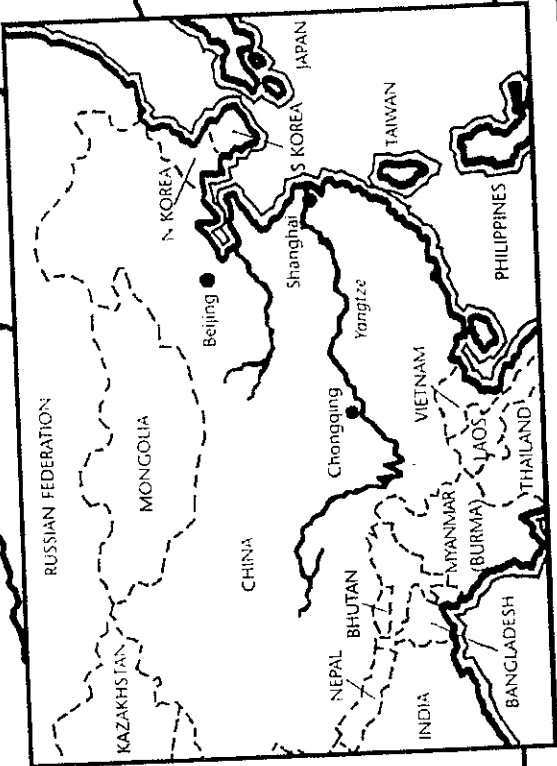
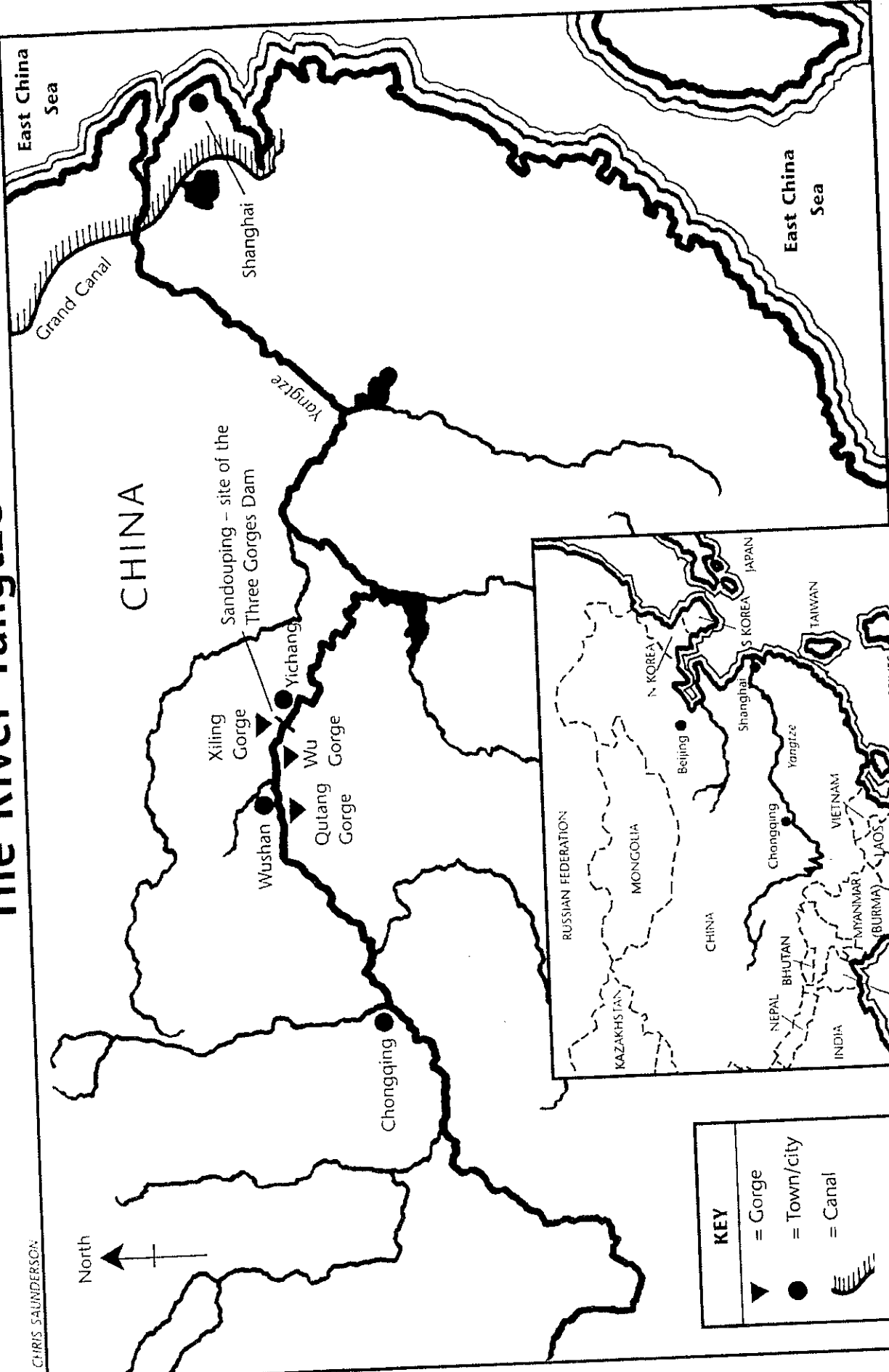
The lake formed by the dam will cover an area of 630km². It will be more than 500km long and up to 175m deep.

13 cities, 140 towns and 1352 villages will be wholly or partly submerged, as well as 8000 archaeological sites and dozens of temples and pagodas.



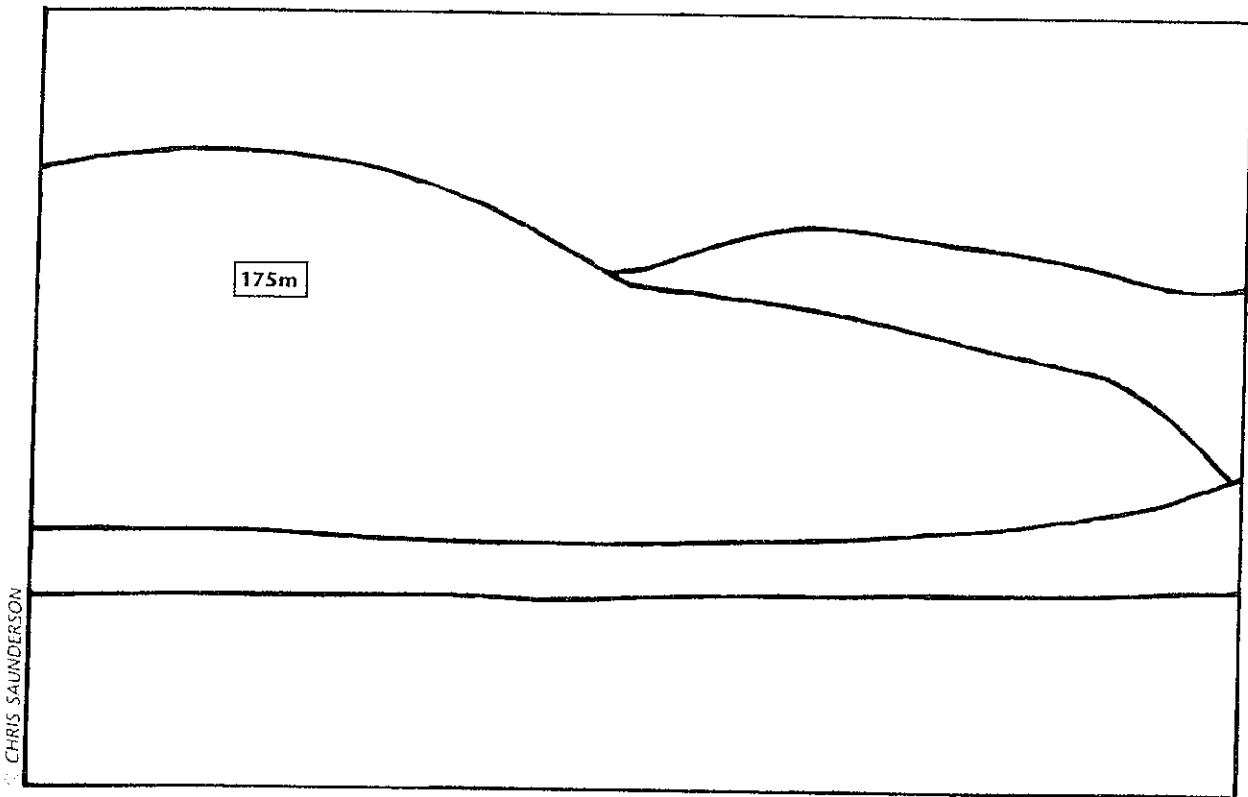
The River Yangtze

CHRIS SAUNDERSON



KEY	
▲	= Gorge
●	= Town/city
▨	= Canal
—	= River

Rising water



Look at the photo on the poster of the town on the Yangtze River between Chongqing and Yichang.

- 1 Complete the sketch by adding the buildings, boats and trees.
- 2 Write a short description of the settlement.

When the dam is finished, the water level will rise to the 175m level marked on the sketch.

- 3 Stick on a piece of tissue paper to represent the higher water level.
- 4 Describe the effects this will have on the landscape.

For or against?

Read these arguments for and against building the Three Gorges Dam.

The aims of the Three Gorges Dam project are to:

- provide up to one fifth of China's present consumption of electricity (hydro-electric power).
 - make it easier for ships to travel along the Three Gorges section of the Yangtze.
- The project will provide a constant water level and wider shipping lanes. It will eliminate strong currents, shifting sand banks and dangerous rocks.
- provide protection from floods – more than 2000 people lost their lives in the 1991 flooding.
 - bring money from business into the area.

However, many people are against the project because:

- about 2 million people will need to be relocated from the cities, towns and villages that will be submerged.
- cultural artefacts may be lost in unexplored archaeological sites.
- the environment will be affected. The river could silt up because of the loss of water flow and the huge artificial lake could become polluted.
- the dam wall could collapse if there was an earthquake.

Now imagine that you are the man on the poster looking out over the area that will soon be flooded. How will the dam affect your life? Do you want it to be built? Discuss the issues with a partner and write a passage explaining your feelings. Continue on another sheet if necessary.
