

## Watershed Updating Hoover Dam

**Estimated Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Age Range:** 5<sup>th</sup> grade

**What you need:** a pencil

### Background Information:

The city of **Las Vegas, Nevada** gets about 90% of its water for daily life from **Lake Mead**. You might know Lake Mead as the lake behind **Hoover Dam** or as the largest water **reservoir** in the United States! However, Lake Mead did not always exist. It was created by humans in the 1930's when the Hoover Dam was built to hold back water from the **Colorado River** for humans to use. Changing the flow of the river with the Hoover Dam also changed the **environment** around it.

### New Words

**Dam** – a barrier that blocks flowing water or send it in a new direction

**Reservoir** – man-made lakes built to store water

**Environment** – every living and nonliving thing in an area



Look at the two pictures below. One is of the Colorado River and the other is of Lake Mead.  
What do you notice about the two pictures? How are they similar or different?

Colorado River



Lake Mead



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Building a dam to create a lake can change the environment. You may have noticed some differences in the pictures above, like the lake does not have a lot of plants or moving water. To make the lake, all the water was stopped by the dam. The natural riverbanks were flooded, and the water stopped moving because it could not get past the dam.

**What other things do you think could happen to the environment when changing a river to a lake with a dam?**

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Dams are very important to humans because they store water for humans to use and we get to do fun activities on the lakes they create like fishing, swimming, and boating. We also want to help the environment be healthy.

**Imagine a dam that could keep the changes you wrote above from happening to the environment. Write or draw your ideas below in the brainstorming space.**

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Now, combine your ideas together to draw the dam you imagined that helps keep the environment healthy. Be sure to label the features of your dam. Maybe they can be used the next time the Hoover Dam gets updated!



**Sources:**

Hoover Dam picture:

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.aaa.com%2Ftravelinfo%2Fnevada%2Fflake-mead-national-recreation-area%2Fattractions%2Fhoover-dam-508990.html&psig=A0vVaw1cXn7vkvFIXdOBNU7c0G-&ust=1589497558776000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCKjO9oP6sekCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAO>

Lake Mead picture:

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fgraylinelasvegas.com%2Fblog%2F7-fun-facts-you-didnt-know-about-lake-mead%2F&psig=A0vVaw0Ad5ToexVy5H-YbvgCoh2t&ust=1589498105861000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCPiZnpT8sekCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD>

Colorado River picture:

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.azpm.org%2Fs%2F49023-what-is-water-banking%2F&psig=A0vVaw2g06xcJO\\_yAZNM0F38bcnx&ust=1589497956896000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCLCzt8b7sekCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAO](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.azpm.org%2Fs%2F49023-what-is-water-banking%2F&psig=A0vVaw2g06xcJO_yAZNM0F38bcnx&ust=1589497956896000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCLCzt8b7sekCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAO)