

Construction Worker

You have worked as a farmer for most of your life. You have just been given an opportunity to work on the dam project, and you are very excited to be able to have job security and decent pay. It will take a long time to build the dam – approximately 16 years. You are guaranteed a weekly paycheck and your pay will no longer be based on weather and crop distribution. With the security of the job and increase in pay, you will be able to provide for your family and improve your standard of living. Because the government has agreed to pay for housing and meals for you and your family, you'll be able to save money instead of spending it on basic needs.

You are very proud of your new position and the improvements you'll be able to make for your family. In addition, you will leave a great legacy to your family; the largest dam in the world will have been created with your help. You have nothing but positive things to say about the dam project and the great things it will do for you and your family.

Commercial Shipping Captain

You have been employed by a shipping company in China for many years. The Yangtze River has been home to you and the trip from Shanghai to the Three Gorges area has been your main focus. You have done every job imaginable on the shipping vessels. You have just been made captain of your own boat, and you are very excited. The creation of the dam has created an increase in the shipping industry and you are reaping the rewards. For the first time, you have your own boat.

Because of the dam, you'll be able to travel further west into China, which creates job security for you. With these changes, advancement in the company is inevitable, along with a better standard of living. You are very positive about the dam project and the benefits that it will bring.

Secretary of Communist Party

You are the government official whose job is to oversee the Three Gorges Dam project. Your future within the Communist Party relies on your ability to make this project a success. A promotion within the party and power await you if you are successful with the dam project. Your desire is to be the head of the Communist Party and the thought of advancement keeps you on task. The construction of the dam will increase electricity for the country, increase shipping productivity, and make billions of dollars in revenue for the economy. Many Chinese people have gained employment through this project because it has created hundreds of jobs. The jobs are more technical than most of the farming jobs they have had in the past. The construction of the dam and the increase in education will improve China's standing in the eyes of the world, and will demonstrate China's ability to compete globally.

You will also benefit personally because you have been given the power to award construction contracts for this project to companies who have placed bids. Publicly, you support the dam project for what it brings to the people of China, but you also know you will receive money from the companies who are chosen to do the construction. Behind closed doors, you have concerns about the dam's being built under budget and too quickly, but the thought of the rewards and benefits you will gain are more important to you.

Structural Engineer

Your company, Exact Measurement, Inc., has been hired to design the structure of the Three Gorges Dam. You are the lead engineer for the project. Your job is to ensure that all mathematical computations are correct and that the dam is structurally sound. You have a budget to stay within but you must also ensure the efficiency of the dam. Your crews have spent a great deal of time surveying the land and researching the scientific data on the area around the Three Gorges Dam. You must ensure that all materials purchased are of the best quality for the job. Your firm will earn a great deal of money from this job and will put a lot of time into planning it. You are determined to see the job through and are confident in your team's research and design.

You are very proud to be a part of this job that will benefit your country. You believe that the electricity generated will be worth any price – including the loss of land – because it will create economic progress in China. You respond defensively to those who oppose the dam project; because your firm has done all the design work, you take any arguments against the dam personally. You believe the opposition is uneducated and selfish because they cannot see the long-term benefits for China.

Electrical Engineer

Your main job is to oversee the production of electricity when the dam project is completed. Your job will be to select the proper turbines (devices turned by the water through the gates of the dam to generate electricity) that will be installed and oversee their production to ensure maximum output of electricity. You will also oversee the group of engineers that will design and build the grid system that will deliver the produced electricity to the communities of the Yangtze River basin. Without you, the electricity produced would not be distributed and the dam would not be effective.

You are proud of the role you play in the dam project. You are an educated person and the complaints from the local community members about their losses have not impact on you. In your opinion, the consequences for a small group do not override the benefits to the masses.

Journalist

In China, the government tightly controls the media and the flow of information throughout the country. As a result, your life could be threatened if you publish any information that argues against the construction of the Three Gorges Dam, so you are debating the dam project from an undisclosed location. You are no longer living in the country, but your informants inside China continue to feed you information that you continue to publish.

Your main objective is to convey information to the Chinese people about the dam project, even if the government disagrees with that information. The risks and negative effects, such as the displacement of 1.2 million Chinese people, have not been published nor discussed. The government has not discussed the possibility of terrorist attacks on the dam once it is built and the effects of a damaged dam on the people and the land. An important piece of scientific information has also been hidden; the dam is being built on a fault line – the division between two tectonic plates under the earth's surface. The enormous amount of pressure a concrete dam will have on the fault line could spark spontaneous earthquakes. Flooding that would follow such a quake would bring with it destruction as well as diseases of epidemic proportions. If such an event occurs, many Chinese people would be harmed or killed.

Your goal is to convey these facts to the Chinese people. You are safe outside of the country, so you are free to write the truth and you plan to reveal the information that the government has not told the Chinese people.

Farmer

Your farmland has been part of your family for three generations, and farming is the only life you have ever known. You have no skills other than farming, but the creation of the Three Gorges Dam will flood your farmland and force you and your family to relocate. At your age, you can't imagine being trained for another job after your farmland is destroyed, but your family is dependent upon you and what you bring to their survival. You and your family will probably have to move to government housing where there will be no space for the family animals. These "houses" are concrete buildings with no privacy. Where will your oxen live? With the loss of your home under water in six months and your lack of education and working skills, you will become dependent on the government for everything, which leaves you feeling helpless.

You have no other options and you are angry and desperate. This situation has been thrust upon you and your family with no consideration for how it will affect your life.

Tour Guide

You are a guide in the Three Gorges area and your job is to tell the tourists about the land around them. You are knowledgeable about the area as well as the gorges that the river travels. You tell tourists about the history of the people who have lived there for centuries as well as the many temples that dot the coastline. Once the dam has been built, this will all change. The gorges will be filled with water and their beauty will be lost. When the flooding process is finished, many of the scenic temples and historic sites that have thrilled your customers will be underwater. With this loss, you will be looking for other employment. The love and sharing of history that drew you to this job will be lost, along with the scenery you so dearly love. Not only will you lose your home underwater and forced into relocation, but you will also be leaving the area you have always loved and known in search of employment in one of China's cities.

Local Government Official

You have given 15 years of your life building a career in local government, but the construction of the Three Gorges Dam will cause your village to be flooded under 30 km of water. The national government did not contact you to inform you of the dam project, and you are offended. The dam will completely change your life. You will be relocated like the other villagers and put into simple government housing, with no consideration given to the upscale lifestyle you've grown used to over the past 15 years. You will no longer be the person everyone looks to for guidance and answers; you will be one of the masses. You are bitter about the huge changes in your life and your chance of advancement in the Communist Party will be gone, along with the land you once controlled. You want a better plan for the relocation of the villagers affected by the flooding.