

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Erie Canal

By Kate Mikoley

**T**he Erie Canal is a man-made waterway in New York State. It was built between 1817 and 1825, connecting Buffalo and Albany, New York. This gave ships a way to travel between the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean.

empties into the New York Bay. This connects to the Atlantic Ocean.

The land the canal goes through is not flat. Engineers building the Erie Canal had to



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New York City. The Hudson River



**A lock gate with boat on the Erie Canal near Lockport, New York.**

stops in a lock with gates at each end. When the gates close, water goes in or out of the lock, causing the water to either raise or lower. The boat raises or lowers with the water.

The Erie Canal was completed on October 25, 1825. It quickly became an important part of the country's economy. It allowed people and businesses to ship goods between the East Coast and the Midwest. It also

encouraged people to move west.

Early canal boats were pulled by mules or horses. These boats could carry up to 30 tons of produce, which was much more than wagons could carry. This greatly lowered the cost of moving goods between Buffalo and New York City.

The Erie Canal helped New



**A closed drawbridge on the Erie Canal in Buffalo, New York.**



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as a result of canal traffic.

As the use of railroads grew in the United States, the need for the Erie Canal as a way of shipping decreased. Today, the Erie Canal is mainly used for recreational purposes, such as pleasure boating and tours. The New York State Canalway Trail is a system of biking and walking trails that follows some of the historic towpaths of the Erie Canal.

**Look out on the Erie Canal in Buffalo, New York.**



**The Erie Canal with boats on a summer day in Fairport, New York.**

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1. List three cities mentioned in the article that are between Buffalo and Albany and thrived as a result of the Erie Canal.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Which two bodies of water did the Erie Canal help connect?
  - a. the Hudson River and New York Bay

b. the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean



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- b. gold and silver
- c. water from the canal's locks
- d. products made by farming, especially fruits and vegetables

4. What is the purpose of a canal lock?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the purpose of the final paragraph of the article?
  - a. to encourage readers to get more exercise
  - b. to show how long the Erie Canal is
  - c. to explain how the Erie Canal is used today
  - d. to teach readers how the Erie Canal was built

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

o k c l

**hint:** a structure that helps raise or lower water levels in a canal



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and used in certain place

4. \_\_\_\_\_

l e m u

**hint:** an animal used to pull early canal boats

5. \_\_\_\_\_

p t o a t w h s

**hint:** paths along a canal that were traveled by animals pulling boats

6. \_\_\_\_\_

r s e g n i e n e

**hint:** the people who design and build something

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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In the article "The Erie Canal," you learned that the Erie Canal helped connect the East Coast of the United States to the Midwest.

On the lines below, explain why it was important to have a connection between these two parts of the country. Discuss how the Erie Canal helped the United States grow and develop into the country it is today.



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## ANSWER KEY

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1. List three cities mentioned in the article that are

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5. What is the purpose of the final paragraph of the article?

- a. to encourage readers to get more exercise
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6. engineers

r s e g n i e n e

*hint: the people who design and build something*