

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

AP Human Geography

## Pebble Creek Mine, Alaska

### Part 1: The Situation

It is naïve to think of a world in which humans do not consume the Earth's bountiful resources. All corners of the globe provide us the many resources we need to live a modern life including forest products, precious metals, and various energy sources. It is this richness of resources that has lured people to explore and tame the many areas of vast wilderness from Africa to Alaska.

Although the exploitation of resources has helped many nations to become wealthy and successful, there have been many unintended consequences including wide spread environmental damage that is irreversible. Today, the state of Alaska has become somewhat of a battle ground between those who want to use the land for economic gain and those who want to protect the land and all that it contains.

### Part 2: The Question

Your task for this assignment is to make a claim (*that is supported with appropriate evidence*) related to the following question:

***“Should the state of Alaska allow Pebble Partnership to build the Pebble Creek Mine in southwest Alaska?”***

### Part 3: Gathering Your Evidence

Use the graphic organizers on the next couple of pages to collect your evidence and organize your thoughts about the question. You will use the two articles and the video clips as your evidence.

### Part 4: Making Your Claim and Establishing Your Supporting Evidence

In the spaces below, begin to formally create your claim. Also, use this as a place to identify/ organize your most powerful evidence. Remember that your claim and evidence statements should be done in complete sentences and your strongest evidence should be first.

**Your Claim Statement:**

**Your Supporting Evidence:**

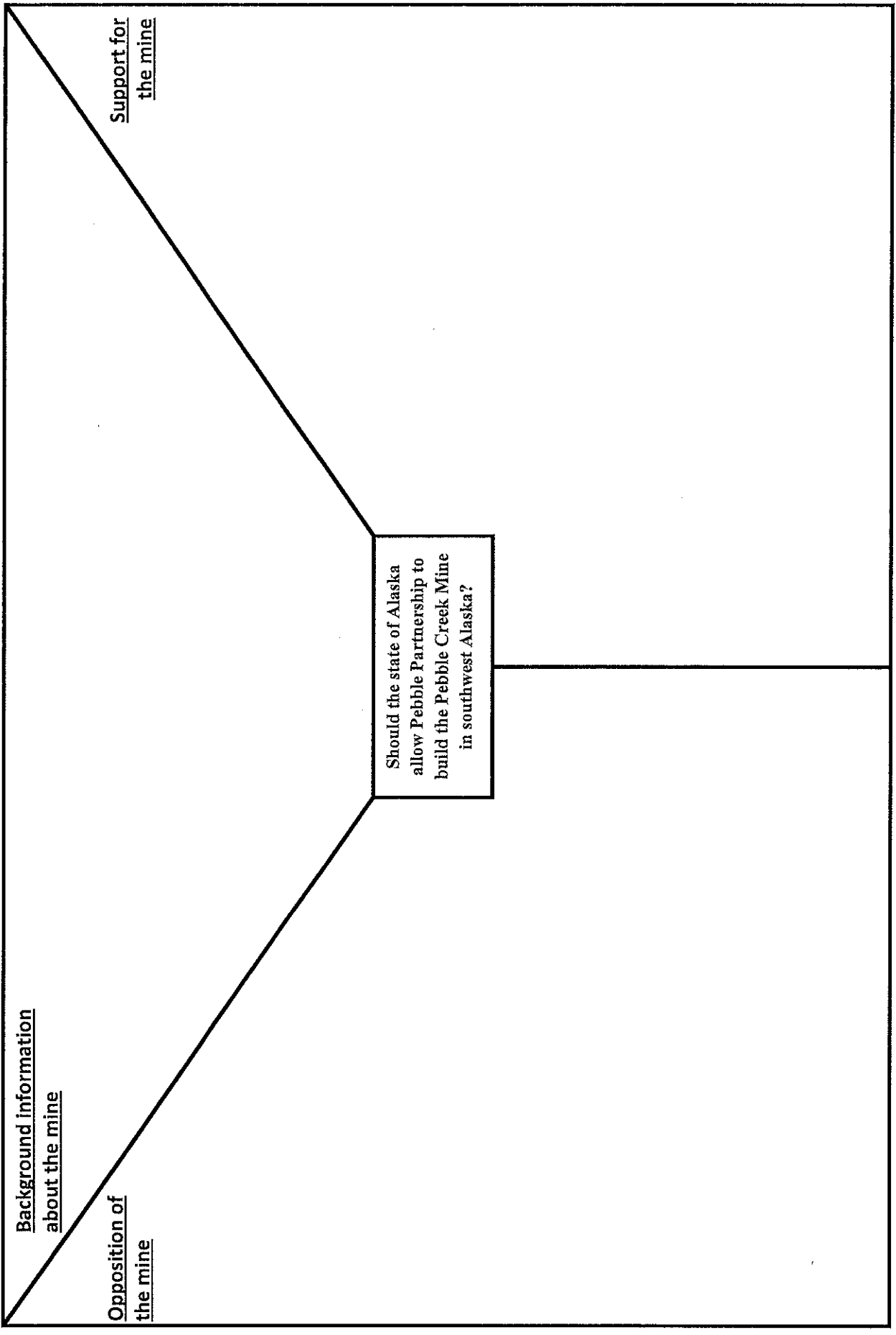
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### Part 5: Writing Your Essay

Your final task for this assignment is to write an essay that provides your answer to the question. It should be a minimum of 15 sentences in length, include your claim statement as the thesis sentence, and include your supporting evidence.

**Part 3: Gathering Your Evidence**

Use the graphic organizer below to gather evidence about copper mining, the Pebble Partnership, the Pebble Creek Mine, and the supporters and opposition of the proposed project.



Use the following spaces and the SOAPS method to source the texts we are using to answer our question.

	<b>Text 1</b> Dan Rather Reports Video- Red Gold	<b>Text 2</b> Article 1- Pebble Mine Project in Alaska	<b>Text 3</b> Article 2- Pebble mine could devastate Alaskan rivers and streams, EPA says.	<b>Text 4</b> YouTube Video 1 Ore to More	<b>Text 5</b> YouTube Video 2 Not Your Grandfathers Copper Mine
<b><u>S</u>peaker</b> Who wrote/ created this? Who are they?					
<b><u>A</u>udience</b> Who was this written to? Why them?					
<b><u>P</u>urpose</b> Why was this created/ written?					
<b><u>C</u>redibility of this source</b> (Should we believe them and why?)					

## **Pebble Mine Project in Alaska**

### **Pebble Mine Alaska**

The Pebble Mine Project located in the Bristol Bay Watershed is a major point of ongoing controversy throughout Alaska, the United States and many other countries. The location of the proposed Pebble Project could not be more disturbing to some of the people of Bristol Bay and to a number of residents in Alaska. Pebble Mine Jobs and Employment are being weighed against any potential environmental impact this mining project possibly could have on the land, wildlife and people of the region.

With huge financial interests in the copper and gold deposit discovered in the headwaters of Alaska largest salmon rearing habitat, the Pebble Partnership, mining lobbyists and Alaskan lawmakers have been mounting campaign after campaign to persuade the people to accept their vision of the situation and to discount their oppositions views.

Many questions remain unanswered as to how many jobs will actually be created; but the larger question on most Alaskan's minds surrounds the number of jobs for local residents and for residents of the state of Alaska. Time has proven that the majority of the jobs created in these large scale projects go to people outside of the state that fly back and forth to areas in the lower 48 states and even outside of the country.

With the Pebble Mine Project being a partnership of non American companies, the fear that most of these jobs will be filled by people from outside intensifies. Will they care about the lands like those that have chosen to live here will? How far will they go to protect the environment of a place as remote as Bristol Bay if they have no ties to it or no plans other than extracting it's mineral wealth for a paycheck to take back to their homes.

### **Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay**

The location of the proposed Pebble Project could not be more controversial. Opponents to the mine include many fishing lodge owners and the vast majority of local residents. They say that they only want what is best for Bristol Bay, the local people, and for the world class salmon producing streams that rely on these pristine waters for their very existence. To these people, protecting their land and livelihoods means stopping the project as proposed before it receives permitting and goes into production. The project is being prepared for permitting in 2012 with production slated to begin in 2015. Once started, any damage to this remote region where no roads, rail or other means of access other than bush planes exists would be catastrophic.

The location of the proposed Pebble Project has led to much controversy in recent years. One side is stating that the Pebble Mine opens up Alaska to large scale mining. The opposing side notes that mining has been going on in Alaska as far back as one cares to look. Regardless, the location of the Pebble Mine in a semi-remote region of the Bristol Bay watershed is the topic of controversy and is pitting friends against friends and neighbors against neighbors. As bad as the fight has been on the local communities it is bound to get much, much worse.

There currently are no roads leading to Bristol Bay or to the areas where permitting for the mine is being proposed. If nothing ever goes wrong than we would have to agree that this is a non issue. But like we have learned from most other large scale projects in Alaska, things that can, sometimes will, go wrong.

If something should happen to go awry that requires some fast and decisive action to a problem, the limited access could pose an obstacle to any efforts put forth in maintaining the incident. This was learned over and over through history and today there are response teams trained and equipped to deal with incidents should the worst case scenario be realized. The Pebble Partnership has already begun addressing this issue and response teams are being trained far in front of this mining project going into production.

## **“Pebble mine could devastate Alaskan rivers and streams, EPA says.”**

By Kim Murphy, Los Angeles Times, May 18, 2012

<http://articles.latimes.com/2012/may/18/nation/la-na-nn-pebble-mine-epa-20120518>

SEATTLE -- The Environmental Protection Agency is warning that plans for a massive mine in the hills above Bristol Bay in Alaska — home of the biggest sockeye salmon fishery in the world — could have devastating consequences for rivers and streams and wipe out habitat for fish.

A study that represents the federal government’s first significant scientific assessment of the proposed Pebble mine site concludes that extracting billions of pounds of gold, copper and molybdenum from the region could result in the direct loss of up to 87 miles of streams and nearly seven square miles of wetlands.

“We conclude that, at a minimum, mining at this scale would cause the loss of spawning and rearing habitat for multiple species of resident fish,” according to the EPA assessment released Friday. And that’s even without a failure of one of the massive tailings dams (which holds the hazardous waste pond) the agency said could be as high as the Washington Monument. In that case, agency scientists said, more than 30 miles of salmon-bearing streams would be destroyed, and others would have “greatly degraded habitat” for decades.

The EPA’s assessment has touched off a political firestorm, with Alaska’s Republican administration warning that the agency has no authority to conduct the assessment of the proposed mine. U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa issued a demand for the entire range of documents, sources and communications the EPA used in preparing its findings. The demand calls for the EPA to reveal the names of all employees who had communications with Bristol Bay residents, fishermen and tribesmen who petitioned for the agency’s watershed review; and all internal documents and communications related to the agency’s determination of whether it has jurisdiction over permitting for the mine.

The inquiry makes it clear there will be a tough political fight over the mine, not only in the Obama administration, but in Congress, where Republicans have long been gunning for the EPA. The main controversy at the moment surrounds the question of which federal agency has chief jurisdiction over granting a permit for the mine. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by law issues dredging and filling permits for mines, and generally is inclined to approve them. But EPA regulations under the Clean Water Act give the agency the authority to veto a permit if the mine would adversely impact public water supplies, shellfish beds, or fisheries.

“I remain concerned that an attempt to preemptively veto the Pebble mine would have the practical effect of halting any development in the Bristol Bay area,” U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski wrote in a recent letter. “It remains unclear to me how pollution and hazardous material from a mining operation might be substantively different from pollution and hazardous material generated from any other form of development.”

Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell from Washington state, whose district includes many of the biggest fishing companies that operate in Bristol Bay, has supported the EPA’s work. “The assessment released today is an important step towards protecting wild Bristol Bay salmon and the thousands of Washington state jobs that rely on them.” “This report validates the concerns of fishing fleets that the proposed Pebble mine could have devastating impacts to the Pacific Northwest’s fishing economy.”

The Pebble Partnership, a consortium of developers of the proposed mine, said it has budgeted \$107 million to conduct further studies and prepare a permit application for the proposed mine, whose true scope cannot be known until the application is submitted. EPA officials said they have made no decision about what action, if any, the EPA would take on any mine permit proposed.

“The agency has made no judgments about the use of its veto authority under the Clean Water Act and our study in no way prejudices future consideration of mining activities,” the agency said in a statement.

Opponents of the mine said the watershed assessment, which is only a draft and will now be presented at public hearings for comment through July 23, is a good first step. “This document gave us some historical and scientific perspective upon which to make decisions,” Tim Bristol of Trout Unlimited in Alaska, a group concerned about the proposed mine’s impacts on fishing. “Until now, no one in Alaska has been willing to listen to people in Bristol Bay about what they want. The governor has turned a deaf ear. The attorney general has been outright hostile. No one has listened to the tribes or the fishing industry, and it’s gratifying that somebody is taking seriously the responsibility to protect those resources.”

Still, there has been substantial support, in Alaska and in some quarters elsewhere across the country, for the mine and the jobs and tax revenues such an enormous project might bring.

“When it comes to critical metals and minerals, the U.S. is heavily dependent on foreign sources of supply,” Daniel McGroarty, president of American Resources Policy Network, said in a statement. “The EPA’s actions will have a chilling effect on domestic resource development, which will impact our national security, manufacturing competitiveness and ability to innovate.”

