

*If you only have 30 minutes ...*

Mostar's "Old Bridge" in Bosnia-Herzegovina symbolizes many things and goes by many names. In Bosnia's native tongue, "Old "Bridge" translates as "Stari Most", but the bridge is also known as "Starac" or "Old Man." Originally built in 1566, during the Ottoman Empire, "the city's fabric is woven into every piece, with culture and heritage inseparable from the towering arch that transcends the river Neretva." As you read the article, consider the many ways the bridge has influenced and impacted the people and culture of its city, region and country, as well as how it has touched hearts and minds throughout the world. Provide short answers, in your own words, two sentences in length, to each of the following discussion questions. Gather your answers from the information presented in the article "The Bridge of Meanings."

1. The 1992-1995 war in Bosnia was a civil war that followed the breakup of Yugoslavia and left in its aftermath a battered country that desperately needed to heal physically, socially and emotionally. Analyze the importance of the old bridge's reconstruction as it relates to reconstructing a country after a war.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Old Bridge is a historic symbol that embodies the soul of the community in Mostar. Explain why the city mourned the destruction of the Old Bridge like a grieving family that had lost a beloved family member.<sup>2</sup>

3. Following the war a mixed team of architects, engineers, stonemasons, construction workers, UNESCO workers, and others drawn from multiple cultural backgrounds collaborated to rebuild the Old Bridge. In what ways did this diverse international group become a symbol of reconciliation and hope for a war-ravaged region?<sup>3</sup>

**Common Core Standard(s) Met:**

**CCRA.R.1** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

**CCRA.R.3** Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

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1 Possible answers might include the following: In rebuilding the bridge, the people found hope. They reclaimed their cultural sense of self amid the chaos and pain. “The bridge completion became a powerful metaphor for reunification of the country still reeling from the ravages of war. As people from all over Bosnia returned to the site, relationships with the bridge emerged as people experienced the process of repairing the social fabric that had been ravaged by war.”

2 Possible answers might include the following: The destruction of the bridge meant that people could not reach one another. Mostar is synonymous with the Old Bridge. For over 400 years, the Old Bridge has “not only spanned the banks of the river but provided a meeting place for promenading couples and prospective friendships.”

<sup>3</sup> Possible answers might include the following: The mixed team that came together to reconstruct the bridge was able to put aside their differences and embrace the opportunity to rebuild an important architectural icon. They became a symbol of reconciliation and a replica of the multicultural workforce that had constructed the original bridge.