

# The Suez Canal and Other Global Trade Routes



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## Shown on the cover is the Suez Canal in Egypt.

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# What Is Trade?

Trade between countries has always been important. Trade is the exchange of objects or goods you have with items you need or want. This process is what allows people to have access to the goods they do not otherwise have. When a country is not able to grow a crop on its own land, the government can **import** it. Other countries who can provide that crop **export** it. That means they sell it to other countries.

People get food, electronics, clothing, and other **goods** from various parts of the world. Have you ever wondered how these goods are **transported**?

Trading goods takes place in many ways. Trains, trucks, planes, and ships all transport goods. Ships play a key role in transporting goods. Often, they can carry more goods than other modes of transportation. Most ships travel across wide open seas. But some of them travel through narrower passages, such as **canals**. These are human-made waterways for boats and ships. Ships can use canals to deliver goods around the world with convenience and ease.

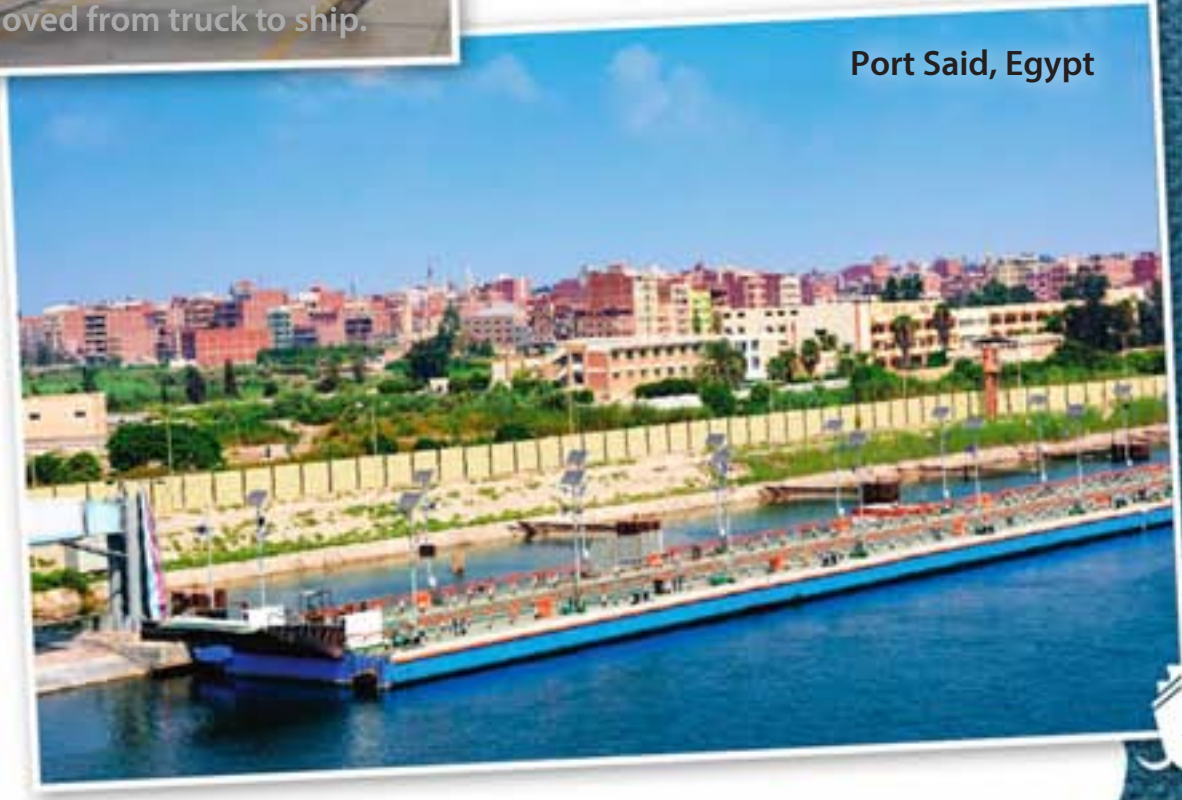
The Suez Canal is one of the most important canals in the world. It connects the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea. This means that ships do not have to sail all the way around Africa to get from Asia to Europe (or from Europe to Asia). According to the Suez Canal Authority, more than 50 ships pass through the canal daily, or thousands each year!



container ships on the  
Suez Canal



Containers are moved from truck to ship.



Port Said, Egypt

# The Importance of Trade

Trade helps people around the world get resources and items they need to live. Trade also helps countries stay connected. It helps the economies of countries thrive.

**Natural resources** are all around the world. They can be found on farms or in lakes, rivers, oceans, and forests. Not every country has the resources they need. Trade helps countries get the resources they need for survival.

Goods often need to be transported long distances. This takes place in many ways. Trains, trucks, planes, and ships all transport goods. Several factors are considered when it comes to shipping goods. Time, cost, and location are just a few. For example, certain resources are cheaper to move on a ship than on a plane. But the trade-off is time. The amount of time it takes to deliver goods depends on the destination. Planes can travel from Europe to the United States in hours. That same journey will take a ship several days!

Trucks are usually the last piece in the shipping puzzle. They are used to move goods that arrive at shipping **ports** or airports. And they carry packages that get delivered directly to a person's mailbox or front door.



A cargo plane is loaded through the front of the plane.

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