

## South China Sea: Background Information

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*Instructions:* Use information from the resources shared in class to answer the following questions. Be ready to discuss with your classmates.

### Understanding the Issues (VOX video resource)

1. (a) How has China transformed underwater reefs in the South China Sea into artificial islands?

(b) What has it built on those islands?

2. Record information about economic interests in the South China Sea.

Oil and natural gas reserves:

Fisheries:

Shipping and trade:

3. China has made an historic claim to the South China Sea based on naval expeditions in the fifteenth century. It has marked its claim using a border called the “9-dash line.” How much of the South China Sea does China claim?

4. Why is China building artificial islands in the South China Sea?

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

### Visual Data (*Economist* Daily Chart)

5. (a) Looking at China's "9-dash line" claim and the color-coded lines that outline countries' EEZ claims, which countries have competing claims to:

The Spratly Islands:

The Paracel Islands:

The Scarborough Shoal:

- (b) Look at the reef building tab (above the map). Which countries are engaging in efforts to build on reefs and claim territory?

- (c) Look at the oil and gas reserves tab. Make a prediction: where might you anticipate tension? Why?

### Dispute before International Tribunal (*New York Times* article)

6. In 2013, the Philippines filed a complaint with an international tribunal after China claimed control of Scarborough Shoal, a reef off the Philippine coast that the Philippines claimed as its territory.

- (a) What were some of the tribunal's most significant legal findings in this case (announced in 2016)? Record specific information from the article.

- (b) How did Chinese officials respond to the tribunal's finding?