Which of the following best explains why the building of the Panama Canal supported United States’ efforts to become a world power?

A. It gave the U.S. a colony in Central America

B. It prevented Japan and China from attacking Hawaii.

C. It opened up a new avenue for trade with China.

D. By providing a shortcut between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, it opened up new trading opportunities.

Answer

D. By providing a shortcut between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, it opened up new trading opportunities.

The Panama Canal is a 48-mile ship canal in Panama that connects the Atlantic Ocean (via the Caribbean Sea) to the Pacific Ocean. The canal cuts across the Isthmus of Panama and is a key conduit for international maritime trade. There are locks at each end to lift ships up to Gatun Lake (85 feet (26 m) above sea-level). The Gatun Lake was used to reduce the amount of work required for a sea-level connection. The current locks are 110 feet (33.5 m) wide. A third, wider lane of locks is being built.
Work on the canal, which began in 1881, was completed in 1915, making it no longer necessary for ships to sail the lengthy Cape Horn route around the southernmost tip of South America (via the Drake Passage) or to navigate the dangerous waters of the Strait of Magellan. One of the largest and most difficult engineering projects ever undertaken, the Panama Canal shortcut made it possible for ships to travel between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in half the time previously required. The shorter, faster, safer route to the U.S. West Coast and to nations in and along the Pacific Ocean allowed those places to become more integrated with the world economy.