

Beam Bridges

What Is a Beam Bridge?

A beam bridge is the simplest type of bridge that you may come across. Think of a plank of wood that someone might use to cross a stream: this is a simple beam bridge. The beam part of the bridge is supported at either end, where the weight of the bridge pushes down. A beam bridge is usually short in length. This is because the further apart the supports are, the weaker the bridge becomes. Imagine a ruler positioned between two tables, with an eraser at either end of the ruler. Putting a small amount of weight on the ruler will cause the bridge to collapse. By bringing the tables and erasers closer together, more weight can be put on the beam.

Famous Beam Bridges

The United States of America hosts two of the most famous beam bridges in the world. They are both found in Louisiana. One of them is the longest bridge over water in the world. It is the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway.



The Manchac Swamp Bridge is also in Louisiana and is the seventh-longest in the world. At each 250 feet point, piles have been driven into the swamp to support the massive length of the bridge.



Did You Know...?

Although beam bridges can only be a relatively short length, one beam bridge can still be joined to another to create one long stretch of beam bridges.

More Facts about Beam Bridges

The maximum length of one bridge is 250 feet.

Although beam bridges were traditionally made of wood, they are now made of concrete or steel.

Another name for a beam bridge is a girder bridge.

Some bridges that are very tall need more support. A diagonal lattice called a truss is sometimes added to support some beam bridges. A truss helps to distribute some of the weight that goes on to the bridge.

