Rivers: From Source to Sea with Finn the Dolphin

Learning objective: To understand the journey of a river and identify its key physical features.

Use your geographical knowledge to answer the following questions about the life cycle of a river. Refer to the word bank to help you use the correct terminology.

Finn the Dolphin is mapping the course of a river from the high mountains down to the vast ocean. He needs your expertise to label the features he discovers along the way.

Word bank: source · mouth · tributary · meander · confluence · estuary

1. Finn starts his journey at the 'source'. Explain what the source of a river is and where it is typically found. (2 marks)

2. Define a 'tributary' and describe how it interacts with the main river at a 'confluence'. (2 marks)

3. As the river flows across flatter land, it begins to curve in large loops. What is the geographical term for these bends, and why do they form? (2 marks)

4. Compare the 'mouth' of a river to its 'source'. How do the speed and width of the river usually change between these two points? (2 marks)

5. Imagine a river is being used for transport. If a boat hire company charges £15.50 for a trip along a meander, how much would it cost for a group of 4 people to take the trip? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a labelled diagram of a river's journey. Include the source in the mountains, a tributary joining the main river, a large meander, and the final mouth where it meets the sea.

Extension challenge: Research a major river in the UK, such as the River Severn or the River Thames. Write a short paragraph explaining one way humans use this river and one way the river shapes the landscape.