

Exploring the Journey of a River with Finn

Learning objective: To understand the physical geography of a river's journey from the source to the mouth, identifying key features and processes.

Read the questions carefully and use your geographical knowledge to explain the features of a river. Finn the dolphin needs your help to map the waterway correctly!

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

1. Finn is swimming near the 'source' of a river. Explain what the source is and describe the likely characteristics of the landscape at this high point. (2 marks)

2. Compare a 'tributary' to a 'confluence'. Why is it important for geographers to identify these two different features? (2 marks)

3. As a river travels, it often forms a 'meander'. Describe the shape of a meander and explain why the water flows differently on the inside and outside of the bend. (3 marks)

4. Justify why many ancient civilisations chose to build their settlements near the 'mouth' of a river rather than near the source. (3 marks)

5. If a river experienced a period of extremely heavy rainfall, explain what might happen to the speed of the water and how this would affect the process of 'erosion'. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a cross-section or bird's-eye view map of a river system. Label the source, one tributary, a meander, and the mouth where it meets the sea.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a raindrop falling at the source of a river. Write a short, descriptive diary entry about your journey down to the sea. Include at least four geographical features from the word bank and describe how the environment changes as you move from the upper course to the lower course. What might happen if humans built a large dam in the middle of your journey?