Finn’s Journey Down the River

Learning objective: To understand the stages of a river's journey from source to mouth.

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions below using full sentences.

Finn the dolphin is an expert at navigating water, but he loves rivers just as much as the sea. A river begins its journey at the source, usually high up in the mountains. Here, the water is cold, fast-moving, and narrow. As the river travels downhill, it gains speed and power, wearing away the rock in a process called erosion. Soon, smaller streams called tributaries join the main river, making it wider and deeper. When the river reaches flatter land, it starts to curve and bend in wide loops known as meanders. Finn loves to splash in these calm, winding sections. Eventually, the river reaches the end of its long journey, which is called the mouth. This is where the river flows into a larger body of water, such as a sea or an ocean. The land around the river, known as the river basin, provides a vital home for many plants and animals. By understanding how rivers change as they flow, we can see how they shape the landscape of our planet.

Word bank: Source · Mouth · Meander · Erosion · Tributary · Channel

1. Where does a river typically begin its journey? (1 mark)

2. What are the smaller streams that flow into a main river called? (1 mark)

3. Why does a river change its speed and shape as it moves from the mountains to the sea? (2 marks)

4. What might happen to the river's path if it encounters a large, flat plain? (2 marks)

5. Why is it important for us to protect the land surrounding a river basin? Give a reason for your answer. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a labelled diagram of a river, showing the source in the mountains, a tributary joining the middle section, and the river flowing into the sea at the mouth.

Extension challenge: Research a famous river in the UK, such as the River Thames or the River Severn. Write a short paragraph describing one major city it flows through and what the river is used for today.