

Finn's Journey: The Life of a River

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

Read the passage below carefully and answer the questions. Use full sentences where appropriate.

Finn the dolphin loves exploring the winding paths of rivers. Every river begins its journey at the source, often a small spring high up in the mountains. Here, the water moves quickly over rocky beds, tumbling downwards with great energy. As the river travels, it gathers water from smaller streams called tributaries. When two rivers meet at a confluence, the flow becomes wider and deeper. In the middle section, the river begins to curve and loop, forming beautiful shapes known as meanders. This happens because the fast-moving water causes erosion, wearing away the riverbanks over time. Eventually, the river reaches the end of its long journey: the mouth. This is where the freshwater meets the sea, often creating a broad, calm area where the river finally slows down to a gentle crawl. The journey of a river is a constant transformation, shaping the landscape and providing a vital home for thousands of plants and animals along its winding route to the ocean.

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

1. Where does a river typically begin its journey, and what is the final destination called? (2 marks) (2 marks)

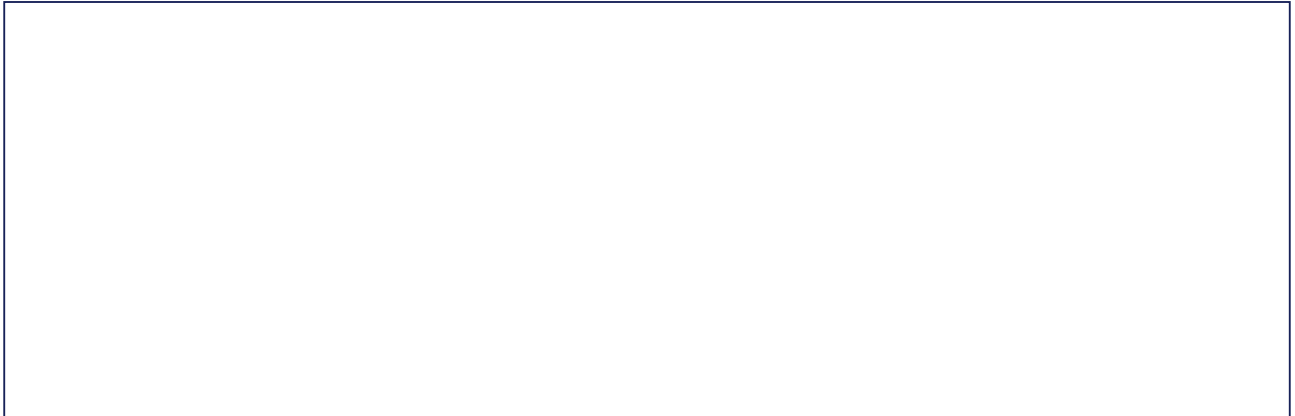
2. What is a tributary and how does it affect the main river? (2 marks) (2 marks)

3. Why does the river create meanders as it travels through the middle section? (2 marks) (2 marks)

4. Explain why the water at the source might have more energy than the water at the mouth. (2 marks) (2 marks)

5. Do you think rivers are more important for the land or for the sea? Justify your answer using examples from the text. (3 marks) (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a diagram of a river, labelling the source at the top of a mountain, a tributary joining the main river, and the mouth where it meets the sea.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a raindrop falling at the source. Write a short, descriptive diary entry about your journey down to the sea, using geographical terms like 'meander' and 'confluence'. What challenges might you face along the way?