

Rivers: A Journey from Source to Sea

Learning objective: To describe and explain the physical features of a river and the stages of its journey.

Use this scaffold to construct a detailed geographical report. Ensure you use specific technical vocabulary to explain how the landscape changes as a river flows.

A river begins its long journey as a tiny stream high in the mountains, known as the source, where water trickles from the ground or melted snow.

Word bank: source · meander · tributary · confluence · mouth · estuary · erosion · deposition · furthermore · consequently · in contrast · subsequently

1. The Upper Course: Describe how the landscape looks at the source. Start with: 'High in the mountains, the river flows rapidly because...' (2 marks)

2. The Middle Course: Explain how the river changes as it gains more water from tributaries. Start with: 'As the river travels further, it is joined by smaller streams called tributaries, which causes the river to...' (2 marks)

3. Meanders: Justify why the river begins to curve and bend. Start with: 'The river creates large loops known as meanders because...' (3 marks)

4. The Lower Course: Compare the speed and width of the river at the mouth to its source. Start with: 'Near the mouth, the river is significantly wider and slower, allowing for...' (3 marks)

5. Human Impact: Explain why people choose to build settlements near rivers. Start with: 'Historically, humans have settled near riverbanks because...' (2 marks)

6. Reflection: What might happen to the surrounding land if a river were to flood? Start with: 'If the river exceeds its capacity, the surrounding landscape would change by...' (3 marks)

Extension challenge: Imagine you are Finn the dolphin exploring a river. Write a diary entry describing the changes you notice in the water's speed, depth, and the wildlife you encounter as you travel from the source down to the estuary.