Finn’s River Expedition: A Geography Writing Frame

Learning objective: To describe the journey of a river from its source to the sea using accurate geographical terminology.

Use this scaffold to write a descriptive report about the life cycle of a river. Refer to Finn the dolphin’s map of the world to help you identify the stages of a river's journey.

High up in the rugged mountains, the journey of a river begins as a tiny, bubbling trickle at its source.

Word bank: source · meander · tributary · confluence · estuary · mouth · erosion · sediment · downstream · furthermore · consequently · eventually

1. The Upper Course: Describe the landscape near the source. What does the water look like and how does it move? Start your paragraph with: 'As the river flows away from the source, the landscape is characterised by...' (2 marks)

2. The Middle Course: Explain how the river changes as it gains more water. Use these starters: 'As the river travels, it is joined by smaller streams called tributaries. The river begins to wind in large curves known as...' (2 marks)

3. The Lower Course: Describe what happens as the river nears the sea. Use these starters: 'When the river reaches the flat land near the coast, it slows down and deposits its load of... The point where the river meets the sea is called the...' (2 marks)

4. Human Impact: How do people use rivers? Start your paragraph with: 'Rivers are vital to humans because... For example, many people use them for...' (2 marks)

5. Conclusion: Summarise the importance of rivers to the planet. Start your paragraph with: 'In conclusion, a river is a powerful force of nature because...' (2 marks)

Extension challenge: Imagine you are a salmon swimming from the mouth of the river back to its source. Write a short diary entry describing three physical obstacles you encounter on your journey upstream.