Finn’s Journey Down the River

Learning objective: To understand the key features of a river and its journey from source to mouth.

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

Finn the dolphin loves to explore the freshwater rivers that flow into the sea. A river always begins at the source, which is often found high up in the mountains or hills. As the water travels downhill, it moves quickly, carving out a deep valley. As it reaches flatter land, the river begins to slow down and curve in gentle loops called meanders. Sometimes, a smaller stream joins the main river at a place called a confluence; this smaller stream is known as a tributary. Finn enjoys swimming through these calm sections, looking for fish hiding in the reeds. Eventually, the river reaches the end of its journey, which is called the mouth. This is where the river meets the sea or an ocean. The water here becomes wider and slower before it finally joins the salty waves. Finn loves to map these journeys, noting how every river is a vital path that carries water across the land, providing a home for many plants and animals along the way.

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

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

2. What is a 'tributary'? (1 mark)

3. Why do you think a river slows down when it reaches flatter land? (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, what happens to the shape of the river as it moves away from the mountains? (2 marks)

5. Why is it important for rivers to reach the sea? Give a reason for your answer. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a labelled diagram of a river starting from a mountain source and ending at the mouth, including a meander and a tributary.

Extension challenge: Imagine you are a raindrop at the source of a river. Write three sentences describing your exciting journey as you travel towards the sea.