



TOPIC NAVIGATOR



GEOGRAPHY

YEAR 3



RIVERS & THE WATER CYCLE

KEY FACTS

A river is fresh water flowing across the surface of the land, usually to the sea. All rivers start at the highest point in an area. As the river flows downstream, it gains more water from other streams, rivers, springs, added rainfall, and other water sources. A river is freshwater flowing across the land, usually to the sea.

- Rivers flow in channels. The bottom of the channel is called the bed and the sides of the channel are called the banks.
- When one stream meets another and they merge together, the smaller stream is known as a tributary. It takes many tributary streams to form a river. A river grows larger as it collects water from more tributaries along its course. The great majority of rivers eventually flow into a larger body of water, like an ocean, sea, or large lake. The end of the river is called the mouth.
- Most settlements were built along major rivers. Rivers provide us with food, energy, recreation, transportation routes, and, of course, water for irrigation and drinking.
- The Water Cycle is the process by which water circulates between the earth's oceans, atmosphere, and land, involving precipitation as rain and snow, drainage in streams and rivers, and return to the atmosphere by evaporation and transpiration.
- The River Thames, at 215 miles, it is the longest river entirely in England and the second longest in the United Kingdom, after the River Severn. It flows through Oxford, Reading, Henley-on-Thames, Windsor and London.

ONLINE RESOURCES AND BOOKS

[Click here to watch a video about Rivers and the Water Cycle](#)
[Click here to watch videos about rivers – from source to sea](#)

A River by Mark Martin, The Rhythm of the Rain by Grahame Baker-Smith, The River Singers by Tom Moorhouse, The Where on Earth book of Rivers by Susie Brooks

NATIONAL CURRICULUM AIMS

- name and locate counties and cities of the United Kingdom, geographical regions and their identifying human and physical characteristics, key topographical features (focus: rivers & the water cycle)
- use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate countries and describe features studied

TOPIC VOCABULARY

Source – a spring from which a river or stream originates

Meander – when a river follows a winding course

Floodplain – an area of low-lying ground next to a river that is subject to flooding

Estuary – A partially enclosed coastal body of water with one or more rivers or streams flowing into it and with a free connection to the open sea

Mouth – the place where a river enters the sea

Bank – the ground beside a river or lake

Tributary – a river or stream flowing into a larger river or lake.

Spring – A place where water comes out of the ground

Stream – a small river

Valley – low land between hills (often with rivers running through)

Current – a flow of water

Evaporation – when a liquid changes into a steam or vapour

Condensation – drops of liquid formed from vapour that have touched a cold surface

Water cycle – the cycle of processes by which water circulates around the earth

OTHER USEFUL VOCABULARY

Precipitation (rain), atmosphere, clouds, climate, water vapour, canal, saltwater, delta, basin, silt, river bed.