

Rivers of the World

Rivers are natural watercourses that carry fresh water from high ground towards the sea, a lake, or another river. Every river begins at a source — this might be a mountain spring, a melting snowfield, or a glacier. The point where a river finally empties into the sea is called its mouth. Along the way, smaller streams known as tributaries join the main river, swelling its size and flow.

Rivers are classified by their length, volume, and the area of land they drain, which is called a drainage basin. The Nile, flowing through north-eastern Africa for over 6,650 kilometres, is generally recognised as the world's longest river. The Amazon in South America, though slightly shorter, transports a far greater volume of water and drains an enormous basin that includes the world's largest tropical rainforest.

Rivers have shaped human civilisation. The ancient Egyptians farmed the fertile land beside the River Nile, and great cities such as London, Paris, Baghdad, and Cairo all developed along riverbanks. Rivers provided drinking water, food through fishing, and transport routes for trade.

Geologically, rivers are powerful forces. Over long periods, they erode rock and soil, carving valleys and gorges, forming waterfalls where hard rock meets soft rock, and depositing sediment to create fertile floodplains and deltas where they reach the sea.

Questions

1. What is a tributary?
2. What is a drainage basin?
3. How long is the River Nile?
4. Through which part of Africa does the Nile flow?
5. Which river transports the greatest volume of water?
6. What type of forest surrounds the Amazon?
7. How did ancient Egyptians benefit from the River Nile?
8. Name four cities that developed along riverbanks.
9. What is a delta?
10. Why do you think rivers were more important for trade and transport in ancient times than they are today?



Text C Quiz



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