

## Rivers of the UK

Rivers are dynamic systems of freshwater that flow under the influence of gravity from their source — often a spring, lake, or area of high ground — along a channel called the river's course, until they reach their mouth, where they empty into the sea or another body of water. The UK possesses a rich and varied river network, shaped significantly by the country's geology, climate, and landscape.

The River Severn, at approximately 354 kilometres, is the longest river in the UK. Rising in the Cambrian Mountains of mid-Wales, it flows in a wide arc through Shrewsbury, Worcester, and Gloucester before discharging into the Bristol Channel via a broad estuary. The Severn Estuary has one of the highest tidal ranges in the world. The River Thames (346 km) passes through Oxford and the heart of London; it has been commercially and politically significant since the Roman occupation of Britain.

Scotland's River Tay carries more water than any other UK river and is famed for Atlantic salmon. The Clyde powered Glasgow's shipbuilding during the Industrial Revolution. Northern Ireland's River Bann links Lough Neagh — the largest freshwater lake in the British Isles — to the sea.

Rivers face serious modern pressures, including agricultural run-off, sewage discharge, and the effects of climate change, which increases the risk of flooding. Conservation organisations are working hard to improve water quality and restore natural habitats along riverbanks.

## Questions

1. What is the source of a river?
2. What is the name given to where a river meets the sea or another body of water?
3. What factors have shaped the UK's river network?
4. Through which three cities or towns does the River Severn flow, according to the article?
5. What is notable about the Severn Estuary?
6. What makes the River Tay distinctive compared to other UK rivers?
7. What major industry did the River Clyde support, and in which era?
8. What is Lough Neagh, and how is it connected to the sea?
9. Name three modern pressures facing UK rivers.
10. The article says rivers have been "commercially and politically significant" — what do you think this means, and can you suggest why a river might have political as well as commercial importance?



Text D Quiz



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