

Rivers

Big Question: What is the journey of a river from the source to the mouth?



Upper course

Rain falling on high ground collects in **channels** and flows downwards forming a **stream**. Streams run downhill and join other streams, increasing in size and speed, forming a river. The river here flows quickly and the channel has steep sides and runs through **valleys**. Features include **waterfalls** and **rapids**.



Middle course

Fast flowing water causes **erosion** making the river deeper and wider. Features include **meanders**.



Lower course

Rivers flow with less force due to being on flat land. The river **deposits** the **eroded material** that it has carried. **Riverbanks** have **shallower** sides. Features include **floodplains**, **deltas** and **estuaries**.



River Severn

One impact of **climate change** is increased rainfall which results in **flooding**. **Flood barriers** and **flood defences** are used to try and protect people, homes and businesses. The River Severn regularly floods. This image shows flooding in 2020.

		Vocabulary
1	source	The place where a river starts.
2	mouth	The end of a river, usually where it meets the sea.
3	meander	A winding bend, loop or curve in the river's path.
4	groundwater	Water that is absorbed and flows underground.
5	spring	Where groundwater naturally emerges from under the ground and flows onto the land.
6	river bank	The land on each side of the river channel.
7	river channel	The two river banks and river bed along which the river flows
8	tributary	A small river that flows into and joins a larger river.
9	confluence	The point where two or more rivers join together.
10	river valley	A U-shaped or V-shaped cut through the land, formed by erosion of many thousands of years, along which a river flows.
11	flood plain	The areas next to a river which are usually covered during times of heavy rainfall and flooding.
12	delta	Formed when the river slows down before joining the sea. Deltas are formed by deposited sediment.
13	estuary	The tidal section of a river near its mouth as it approaches the sea.
14	erosion	The wearing away of rocks and soil on the river bed and river banks.
15	sediment	Solid material that is moved and deposited in a new location.
16	deposition	When the river drops or deposits material that it is carrying.
17	oxbow lake	A C-shaped lake that forms when a meander of a river is cut off, creating a separate body of water.



