

Knowledge Organiser - Rivers

A river is a path that water takes as it flows downhill, normally towards another river, a lake, sea or ocean. Rivers come in many different shapes and sizes and often join together to make larger rivers. As rivers are a ready source of water, lots of plants and animals live near them. Most inland human settlements were originally formed around rivers. In addition to drinking and bathing, rivers were also important waterways for trade. Rivers can flood, at which point they become exceptionally dangerous and can cause widespread damage in the local communities. Water always flows downhill. This is important for understanding how rivers form and how they contribute to the water cycle. Rivers are fresh water – oceans are salt water. When rivers are flowing quickly, they take bits of earth (sediment) off banks, downstream called erosion. When there has been too much rainfall, rivers may overflow or ‘burst their banks’, causing significant flooding.

Key Information	
•	Water always flows downhill. This is important for understanding how rivers form and how they contribute to the water cycle.
•	Rivers are fresh water – oceans are salt water. ☐ When rivers are flowing quickly, they take bits of earth (sediment) off banks, downstream called erosion.
•	When there has been too much rainfall, rivers may overflow or ‘burst their banks’, causing significant flooding.
•	Silt and sediment are materials carried by running water. ☐ Sometimes rivers carry so much silt and

Key Vocabulary		
1	estuary	An estuary is an area where a freshwater river or stream meets the ocean.
2	mouth	The part of a river where the river flows into another river/ lake
3	source	Where the river begins
4	meander	Widening curve/bend in the river
5	waterfall	Where water rushes down steep hillsides and erodes rock
6	erosion	When fastest currents in the river carve into banks
7	deposition	Rocks and sediments are eroded from one part of the river and deposited to another part
8	tributary	When one stream of river meets another and they merge
9	channel	The path a river takes
10	Reservoir	Man made artificial lake



Positive Considerations of a River				
Transport	Farming		Energy	Habitat
Rivers help us to carry goods from one place to another.	Rivers and plains provide fertile soil. Farmers in dry areas are able to use water collected through irrigation.		Rivers are important energy sources.	Rivers provide habitats for many creates and
				