

# Going with the Flow: An enquiry approach to teaching rivers

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## River vocabulary

### Key vocabulary

Bank, basin, bed, canal, channel, condensation, confluence, current, dam, delta, deposition, downstream, drainage basin, embankment, erosion, estuary, evaporation, fieldwork, flood prevention schemes, flooding, flash floods, flood barrier, floodplain, flow, fresh water, gorge, groundwater, load, hydro-electric power, infiltration, irrigation, landscape, lake, load, lower course, meander, middle course, mouth, oxbow lake, plunge pool, precipitation, river, river basin, river cliff, salt water, silt, source, spring, stream, surface water, rapids, reservoir, tidal river, river leisure activities, transportation, tributary, upper course, upstream, valley, water cycle, waterfall, watershed.

### Glossary

**Bank** – The riverbank is the land at the side of the river

**Basin** – The river basin is an area of land drained by a river and its tributaries. This land collects all available water from tributaries, creeks and streams in its area

**Bed** – The riverbed is the bottom of a river. A riverbed can be made of sand, rocks or mud depending on the river

**Canal** – A human-made waterway that is used so that boats can transport goods across the country

**Channel** – Where a river flows. It has a bed and two banks

**Condensation** – The process by which water vapour changes to liquid when cooled.

**Confluence** – The junction of two rivers, especially rivers of approximately equal width

**Current** – The strength and speed of the river. Water always flows downhill; the steeper the ground is, the stronger the current will be

**Dam** – A barrier constructed across a water to control the flow or raise the level of water

**Delta** – Deltas are wetlands (muddy or sandy areas) that form as rivers slow down and empty their water and sediment into another body of water. The term delta comes from the upper-case Greek letter delta ( $\Delta$ ), which is shaped like a triangle

**Deposition** – The laying down of material carried by rivers

**Downstream** – The direction that the water flows, downhill towards the sea

**Drainage basin** – The area of land drained by a river and its tributaries

**Embankment** – A raised river bank to prevent flooding

**Erosion** – A fast flowing river can damage the riverbanks and wash bits of them downstream, making the river wider

**Estuary** – Where a river reaches the ocean and the river and ocean mix. Estuaries are normally wide and flat

**Evaporation** – The process by which liquid water changes to water vapour

**Fieldwork** – The process of observing and collecting data about people, cultures, and natural environments

**Flash floods** – A sudden and unexpected flood that can cause much damage

**Flooding** – An overflow of water onto land that is normally dry

**Flood barrier** – A flood barrier, surge barrier or storm surge barrier is a specific type of floodgate, designed to prevent a storm surge or spring tide from flooding the protected area behind the barrier

**Flood plain** – The flat area around a river that often gets flooded when the level of water in the river is high

**Flood prevention schemes** – A plan to try to stop flooding by either rivers or the sea

**Flow** – The movement of water

**Freshwater** – Rainwater that falls from the sky has no salt in it. We call this fresh water.

**Gorge** – A steep sided valley

**Groundwater** – fresh water stores in rocks and the soil. It may pass slowly through the rocks and soil back to the sea

**Hydro-electric power** – A form of renewable energy that uses the power of moving water to generate electricity

**Infiltration** – The process by which water on or above the ground surface enters the soil

**Irrigation** – The agricultural process of applying controlled amounts of water to land to assist in the production of crops

**Landscape** – The visible features of an area of land, its landforms, and how they integrate with natural or man-made features

**Lake** – A relatively large body of slowly moving or standing water that occupies an inland basin of appreciable size

**Load** – The material carried by a river

**Lower course** – The final stage or third of a river closest to its mouth

**Meander** – A river that follows a winding course

**Middle course** – The middle third of a river

**Mouth** – The end of a river where it flows into the sea, another river or a lake

**Oxbow lake** – A uniquely shaped lake resulting from the path of a meandering river. Oxbow lakes are U-shaped or curved bends in a river that are cut off from the main river flow, forming a lake

**Plunge pool** – A hollow at the base of a waterfall caused by erosion

**Precipitation** – Water in any form which falls to earth. It includes rain, sleet, hail and snow

**Rapids** – Areas of shallow, fast-flowing water in a stream

**Reservoir** – A large natural or artificial lake used as a source of water supply

**River** – A large natural stream of water emptying into an ocean, lake, or other body of water and usually fed along its course by converging tributaries

**River cliff** – The steep slope cut into the valley side by erosion on the outside of a river bend

**River leisure activities** – Rivers offer places to walk along the bank, boat or paddle, wade in the current, fish, kayak, or just sit and relax

**Salt water** – The type of water in seas and oceans

**Silt** – Small bits of dirt or sand that are carried along by a river (also called alluvium)

**Source** – The start of a river is its source. This could be a spring on a hillside, a lake, a bog or marsh. A river may have more than one source

**Spring** – A natural opening in the ground where water flows

**Spurs** – A small ridge that projects sharply from the side of a larger hill or mountain

**Stream** – A small river

**Surface water** – Water which lies on top of, or flows over, the ground

**Tidal river** – At the end of a river, near the ocean, water from the sea flows up the river when the tide comes in. This part of the river is called 'tidal'

**Transpiration** – The process by which water from plants changes into water vapour

**Transportation** – The movement of material by rivers

**Tributary** – At the end of a river, near the ocean, water from the sea flows up the river when the tide comes in. This part of the river is called 'tidal'

**Urbanisation** – The growing proportion of a people living in urban areas. Historically, many people settled near rivers

**Upper course** – A third of a river closest to the source of the river

**Upstream** – The opposite direction to the way the water in a river flows

**U-shaped valley** – A valley which has been eroded by a river so that its cross section looks like a v

**Valley** – An elongated low area often running between hills or mountains, which may contain a river or stream running from one end to the other

**Water cycle** – The never-ending movement of water between the sea, the land and the air

**Waterfalls** – A sudden fall of water over a steep drop

**Watershed** – The boundary between two river basins

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