



Understanding a river system

Key Stage/Age group KS2/3

Time needed for activity 20 minutes

Location Indoors or outdoors

Context

This activity plan outlines a game to consolidate learning about landforms typically found at different sections of a river's course, and relates this to flooding and the sustainable management of water.

Natural Resources Wales' purpose is to pursue sustainable management of natural resources in all of its work. This means looking after air, land, water, wildlife, plants and soil to improve Wales' well-being, and provide a better future for everyone.

Curriculum links

Geography

KS2 Understanding places, environments and processes

- Identify and describe natural and human features

Investigating

- Observe and ask questions about a place, environment or a geographical issue

KS3 Understanding places, environments and processes

- Describe and explain physical and human features

Investigating

- Analyse and evaluate ideas and evidence, answer questions and justify conclusions

Objectives

By the end of this activity learners will be able to:

- Label and discuss different features of a river.
- Observe and comment on how a river flows.
- Explain the differences between the upper, middle and lower courses of a river.
- Identify where flooding is most likely to occur and why.

Equipment and resources

- Diagram - A river system
- Diagram - A river system with answers
- Resource cards - Understanding a river system
- Open space to play



What to do

This activity can be carried out in several ways depending on the ability and previous knowledge of the group. Either:

- Give small groups the 'Resource cards - Understanding a river system' then allow time to match the names and descriptions to the features on the 'Diagram - A river system'.
OR
- Play it as a team game. Each group has the 'Diagram - A river system'. Played as a relay, team members have to race to find 'Resource cards - Understanding a river system' which have been scattered on the ground and then work as a team to label the diagram correctly.

Discuss the differences that you might see in each section of the river and why. For example, where would the widest part of the river be visible? Why? Would the river be flowing faster or slower in the upper course? Why? Are certain areas more prone to flooding and why?

Suggested key questions

- **What is the correct term for the start and finish of a river?**
- **What features would you typically find in the upper, middle and lower sections of a river and why?**

Adapting for different needs/abilities

Less able

- Use only the resource cards for the more commonly recognised river features e.g. estuary and waterfall.

More able

- Are there any river features or processes which haven't been listed? Ask your learners to draw diagrams and write resource cards for any features that are missing e.g. channel or interlocking spurs.

Follow up activity/extension

- Observe a local river. What section of the river is it and what features can be identified?
- Look at an aerial photograph of the area, and get the learners to identify the upper, middle, and lower sections of the river. What features would they expect to see in each section?

Additional information

Useful websites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zkrdmp3/revision>

<http://www.geography.learnontheinternet.co.uk/topics/longprofile.html>

Looking for more learning resources, information and data?

Please contact: education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk or go to <https://naturalresources.wales/learning>

Alternative format; large print or another language, please contact:
enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk
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