How does a river begin and where does it go?

Scout and Vinnie are at the source of the river. How does water get into a river and where does it go from there?

Key Question

Key Stage 1:
What can the start of a river look like?

Key Stage 2:
How does a river begin and where does it go?

Activity

Journey of a river

1. Create a river catchment, using tarpaulin or draw it on the playground using chalk
2. Students use their natural items (pebbles etc.) to represent features in the catchment for example leaves as trees.
3. Discuss where these should be placed and why.
4. Create a pile of sediment near the water source and show what happens when water is poured on it, to represent rainfall.

Equipment:

- Tarpaulin (could attach to a wall)
- Or use chalk
- Sloped area or build using sand
- Soil, grave, stones, pebbles, sand, leaves, twigs
- Containers: can/ bucket/ hose pipe
- Water

Top Tips:

- Add “pollution” using paper or food dyes as “chemicals”
- Experiment with different flows of water, “slowing the flow” and stopping water flow
- Reuse your water.

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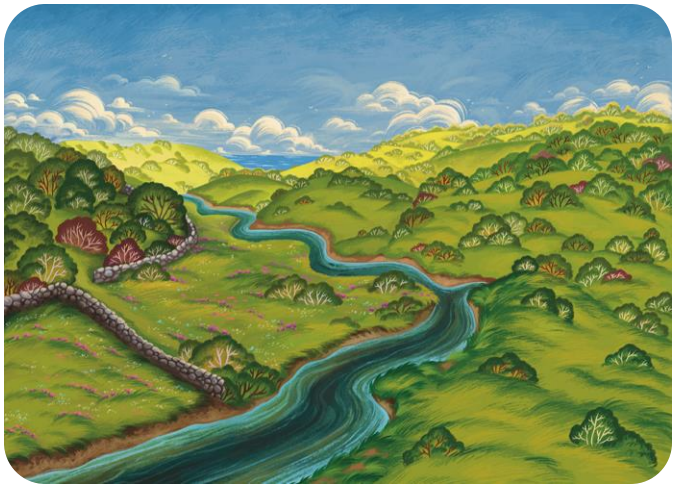
The Rivers Trust

Key Points:

- Rivers can form in different ways
- Rivers flow to the sea
- Rivers are a key part of the water cycle



More questions to ask:

1. How does rain get underground?
2. How does the volume and speed of rainwater affect the river?
3. What happens when water falls on sand, soil and leaves etc.?
4. What happens to water when it is poured on concrete?
5. How do rivers influence the water cycle?

Further Resources:

For more activities, worksheets and lessons, visit theriverstrust.org by scanning Scouts QR code!

With thanks to: Foresters Friendly Society

Apply to different learners:

1. **More support:** demonstrate how rivers are formed from rainfall by pouring water with high enough force continuously to create a channel within the sediment.
2. **Challenge:** Students could change their catchments. For example, change the slope angle, pour more water on it, use different sediment types and discuss how water affects each sediment type. Can they work out what run off is and how does it get into rivers? They could also add barriers.

Other activities you could try:

1. Visit a river or show different courses in the river online
2. Try the rain gauges activity
3. Make a waterwall

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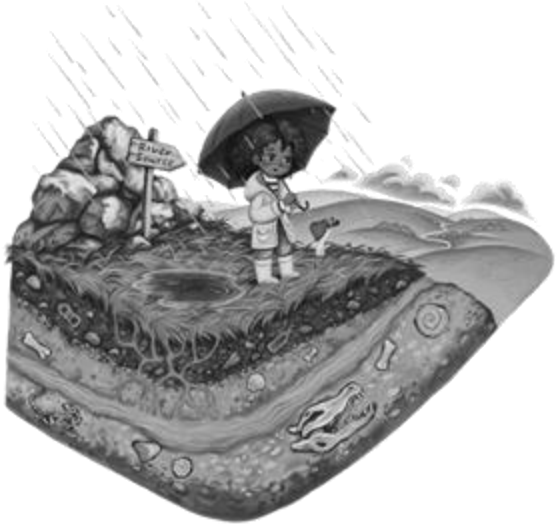

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