

Rivers of the World

The Nile

The Nile is traditionally considered to be the longest river in the world. It is 4132 miles (6650 km) long - that's nearly seven times the distance from John o' Groats at the top of Scotland to Land's End at the bottom of England! When most people think of the Nile, they think of Egypt but surprisingly, only 20% of the river is in Egypt - it also flows through other countries including Uganda and Ethiopia before ending at the Mediterranean Sea. Some people disagree about where the river starts, but it is now believed to be in the hills of Burundi.

The River Nile makes the land nearby good for growing. This is why the ancient Egyptians settled there, living and farming along the river producing food for themselves and their animals. The river became important for water and transport.

The Rhine

The Rhine flows through Germany and is 766 miles (1233km) long. It also travels through another five countries before reaching the North Sea in the Netherlands. Its source is a small stream coming from a glacier in the Swiss Alps (the mountains in Switzerland).



The Rhine has been used to transport food and other goods since Roman times and there are many castles found on its banks, such as Maus (mouse) Castle.

Many years ago, the Rhine was labelled one of the most polluted rivers in Europe. It was also badly affected by a chemical factory fire in 1986. Since then, a lot of effort has been put in to clean it up including making the drinking water safe.

The Volga

This river runs from its source in the hills in North-West Russia to the Caspian Sea. It is the longest river in Europe and is 2294 miles (3692 km) long. In places, the Volga is so wide that you can't see the other side! Its name in Russian means 'moisture' or 'wetness'.

Huge sturgeon fish can be found living in the water. However, the river is quite polluted due to factories dumping waste there which has a bad effect on the people who make caviar. (Caviar is a very expensive food made from fish eggs.) The river is also used for taking goods all over Russia but is frozen for around three months of the year.

One of the biggest battles of the Second World War, the Battle of Stalingrad, happened on the banks of the river at Volgograd, the city named after the river which used to be called 'Stalingrad'.

The Danube

This is the second largest river in Europe. It is 1785 miles (2680 km) long and its source is in the Black Forest Mountains in Germany, flowing to the Black Sea. This river flows through, or along the border of many different countries including Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania to name a few. It also flows through the capital cities of Belgrade, Budapest, Vienna and Bratislava.

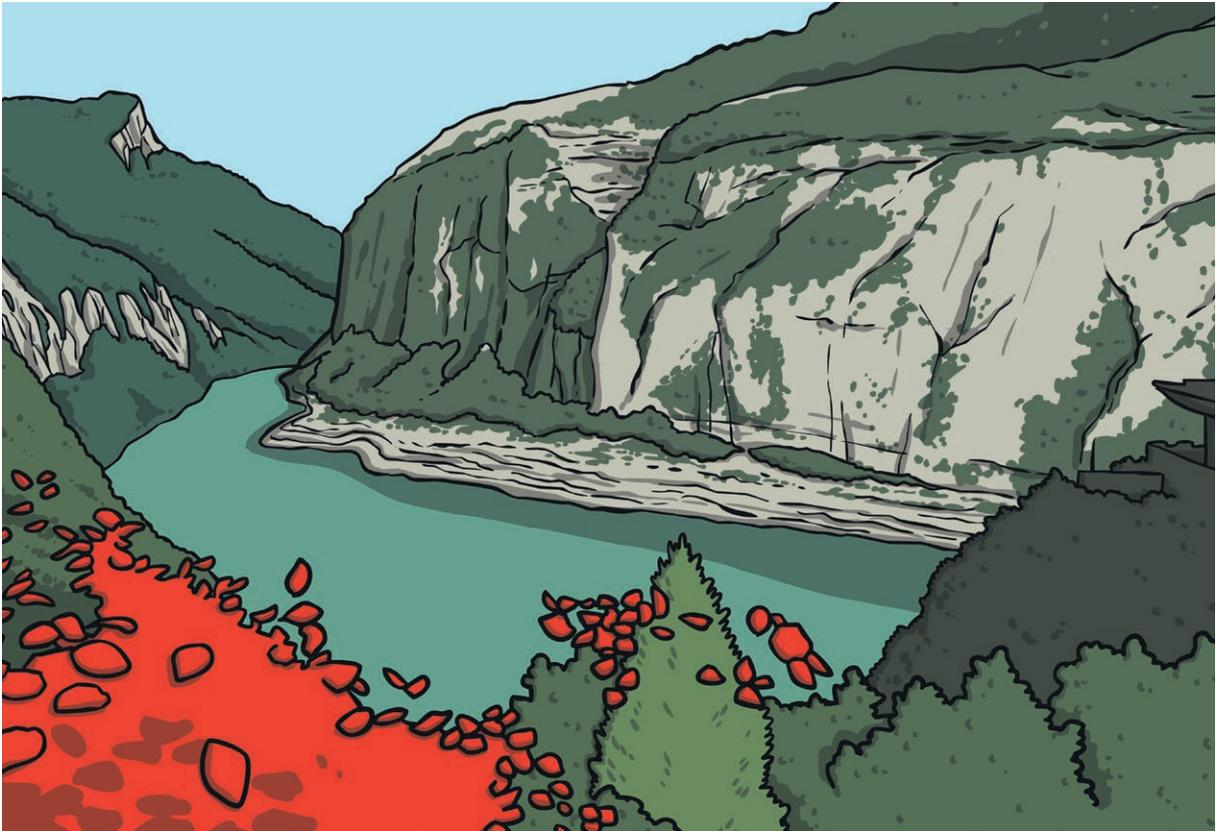
The Danube has many tourists who enjoy the river cruises and the river has also inspired artists and composers through history. One of the most famous pieces of classical music written is The Blue Danube, by the Austrian composer Johann Strauss II.

The Amazon

The Amazon is the second longest river in the world, stretching 3944 miles (6347 km); however, recent studies indicate that it is longer than the Nile. Its source is in the Andes Mountains in Peru and it flows through many countries before it finishes at the Atlantic Ocean. (Why not look at it on a map?)

Somewhat surprisingly, there are no bridges that cross the river although during the wet (rainy) season, the Amazon rapidly fills with more water and can reach over 120 miles (190 km) in width.

Many species of fish live in the river (including piranhas) and one of the largest snakes in the world, the anaconda, lives in the shallow waters. (Anacondas can attack larger animals as big as goats!)



The Yangtze

Its Chinese name means 'long river' which is a good name for the longest river in Asia, measuring 3915 miles (6300km). Its source is in the mountains in western China and it flows into the East China Sea. The river is one of the busiest in the world, filled with cruise ships and ships taking goods in and out of China.

More than 50 bridges cross this huge river and it is home to many different species of animals, including the Chinese alligator and the Chinese paddlefish. However, these species are now endangered because of pollution and all the ships that use it.

Questions

1. What is the length in miles of the shortest river here?

2. Name one place that the Danube flows through.

3. If Johann Strauss II is Austrian, which country is he from?

4. Why can't you cross the Amazon easily?

5. What percentage of the Nile is in Egypt?

6. Which famous historical event took place on the banks of the Volga and when was it?

7. In which mountain range does the Rhine begin?

8. Find all the conjunctions in 'The Yangtze' paragraph.

9. Find two adverbs in 'The Amazon' section.

10. Which of these rivers might you most like to visit and why?
