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European Rivers

Comprehension Exercise

The Rhine

The Rhine mainly flows through Germany, but starts as a small stream in the Swiss Alps. It is 1233km in length and flows into the North Sea.

Its waterways have been used to transport food and other goods since Roman times and there are many castles located on the banks, such as Maus (mouse) Castle.

Years ago, the Rhine was seen to be one of the most polluted rivers in Europe. Since then, a great deal of effort has been put in place to clean it up.

The Volga

This river runs through Russia and is the longest river in Europe at 3692 km in length. In places, the Volga is so wide that you can't see the other side! The Volga flows into the Caspian Sea.

Huge sturgeon fish can be found living in the water, however the river is quite polluted due to factories dumping waste there. It is used for transporting goods all over Russia but freezes up during very cold weather spells.

One of the biggest battles of World War 2 was fought on the banks of the river, the Battle of Stalingrad.

The Danube

This is the second largest river in Europe, after the Volga. It is 2680 km in length, beginning in the Black Forest Mountains in Germany and flowing into the Black Sea. This river flows through, or along, the border of several 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 river has inspired artists and composers through time. One of the most famous pieces written about this special landmark is called 'The Blue Danube' by Johann Strauss. Today, tourists can enjoy cruising on the River Danube.

European Rivers

Comprehension Questions

1. Which of these rivers is the longest?
2. How have the waterways of the Rhine been used for many years?
3. Name one of the major capital cities through which the Danube flows. In which country can this city be found?
4. Who did the River Danube inspire? What did this person create?
5. Which famous historical event took place on the banks of the Volga River?
6. Where is the source of the Rhine?
7. Which of these rivers might you most like to visit? Give reasons for your answer.
8. What might happen if the Volga River becomes increasingly polluted?



European Rivers

Comprehension Answers

1. Which of these rivers is the longest?

The Volga River is the longest at 3692 km in length.

2. How have the waterways of the Rhine been used for many years?

Its waterways have been used to transport food and other goods since Roman times.

3. Name one of the major capital cities through which the Danube flows. In which country can this city be found?

Answer could include: Belgrade (Serbia), Budapest (Hungary), Vienna (Austria) or Bratislava (Slovakia).

4. Who did the River Danube inspire? What did this person create?

The river inspired a musical composer called Johann Strauss who composed a piece known as The Blue Danube.

5. Which famous historical event took place on the banks of the Volga River?

One of the biggest battles of World War 2 was fought on the banks of the river, the Battle of Stalingrad.

6. Where is the source of the Rhine?

The Rhine starts as a small stream in the Swiss Alps.

7. Which of these rivers might you most like to visit? Give reasons for your answer.

See individual answers.

8. What might happen if the Volga River becomes increasingly polluted?

See individual answers.