

#11921 THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER

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Grade Level: 4–8

25 Minutes



Hernando de Soto



Pierre Le Moyne
d'Iberville

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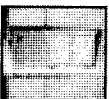
RIVERS OF NORTH AMERICA

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Consider Visiting These Web Sites:

www.greatriver.com
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Rivers of North America

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INTRODUCTION TO SERIES

Rivers of North America Series brings a unique perspective to the role great rivers have played in the early development and subsequent settlement of a region and a nation. Each river has its own unique story to tell, it's own geology, geography and history.

As a complementary device with each video, an instructional guide suggests exercises to help teachers, parents and students. These interactive exercises will reinforce and further develop a student's level of comprehension.

The instructional guide provides:

Vocabulary

Chronology / Q & A

Native People / Explorers

Discussion Points / Activities

Geography / Geology

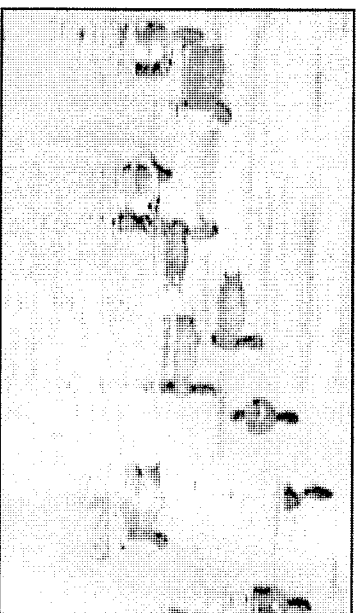
River / Cities Development

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Environment of *The Lower Mississippi River*

Because of chemicals from farming and pollutants from industry the wetlands and river bank forests are disappearing along the banks of the Mississippi River. Review the video and on the solid black lines write the names of the animal species which have been affected by these environmental changes.

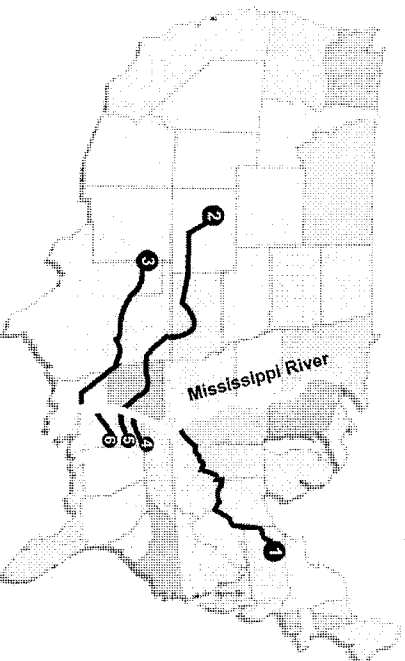


Tributaries of *The Lower Mississippi River*

The video mentions 6 tributaries joining the **Lower Mississippi River**. On the solid black line name each of these tributaries. If needed view the video again.

Tributaries:

- 1** _____
- 2** _____
- 3** _____
- 4** _____
- 5** _____
- 6** _____



THE *Lower* Mississippi River

The Mississippi River can be divided into two parts, the Upper River Valley and the Lower River Valley. The Upper River Valley was created about 12,000 years ago, at the end of the last ice age. However, the Lower Mississippi has been around for at least a million years. The Lower Mississippi River Valley begins near the confluence of the Ohio River, which joins the Mississippi at the southern tip of Illinois. From there, the River travels 700 miles south before it reaches the Gulf of Mexico.

Home to one of the most complex ecosystems in the world, the lower Mississippi River Valley has sustained a remarkable environment for a variety of fish, wildlife, and plants. Each year during the spring and fall millions of birds migrate north and south along the river's rich habitat.

Beside its nature and wildlife, the Lower Mississippi is also the home to ancient Indian cultures. Over 12,000 years ago, an early Indian culture called "mound builders" constructed huge mound platforms for religious ceremonies. By 1500, this enduring Indian culture mysteriously disappeared for reasons unknown. However, 150 to 200 other Native American groups known as the "five civilized tribes" began to inhabit the area.

Also during the early 1500's European explorers arrived onto the scene. These early explorers, mostly from France and Spain began to map out the territories of the New World. Because of its strategic location, the lower river region became a large battleground for European nations claiming new territory. Through time major city ports like Memphis, New Orleans and Baton Rouge began to develop. These port cities became the major shipping grounds to transport goods through the river's channels.

From Indians to explorers, fur traders to Civil War soldiers there have and continues to be millions of stories told about this "Great River". However told, these stories will forever turn the pages about . . . The Mighty Mississippi . . . an incredible river.

VOCABULARY of *The LOWER MISSISSIPPI*

BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS: A battle fought between British and American troops four months after the War of 1812. The American troops, who eventually won the battle, were lead by Gen. Andrew Jackson. However a pirate by the name of Jean Lafitte offered himself and other pirate soldiers to fight in exchange for full pardons for crimes of piracy.

CONFLUENCE: The point where two rivers join together. i.e. The Ohio & Mississippi Rivers.

FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES: The main Indian tribes living in the Lower Mississippi River region during the arrival of the Europeans. The five tribes included in this group are: Choctaw, Natchez, Chickasaw, Creek, Cherokee

FLOODPLAIN: The land area located next to a river. When the water begins to rise this land is the first to be submerged under water.

HEADWATERS: The mixture of melting snow and rain form into the little creeks and streams which become the initial water source for larger bodies of water i.e. The Mississippi River.

HERNANDO DE SOTO: Spanish explorer credited with the discovery of the Mississippi River Delta. Claimed all the Mississippi River region territories for Spain.

LE MOYNE BROTHERS (The): Established the city of New Orleans for France.

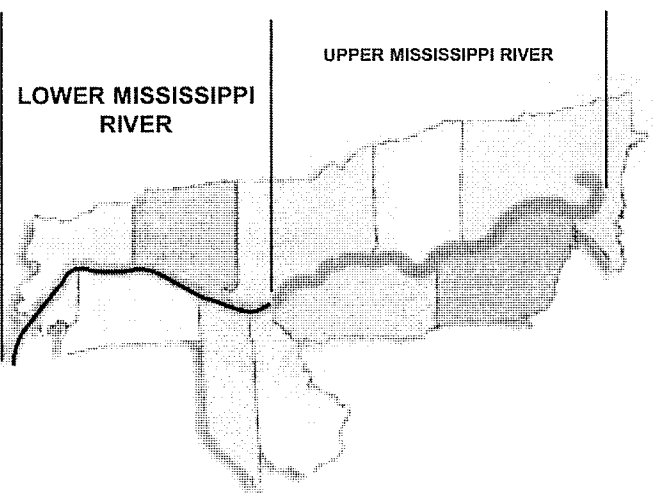
LEVEE: An earthen embankment to prevent flooding.

Letters A thru C describe three **Lower Mississippi River** Cities. Write the name of the city on the solid black line. Then with a Black Marker write the letter **A, B, C** to indicate where on the Lower Mississippi River map each city is located.

A) _____ is considered the birth place of Jazz music.

B) Well known as the official "Home of the Blues"
Elvis Presley's Graceland. _____ is also the location of

C) _____ is the capital city of Louisiana.

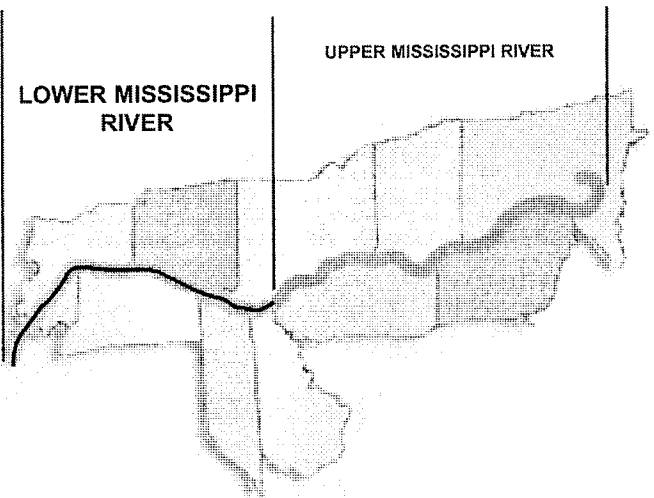


GEOGRAPHY of *The Lower Mississippi*

The **Lower Mississippi River** journeys in or around 6 states. On the solid black line name each of these states.

STATES:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____



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LOUISIANA PURCHASE: In 1803 French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte sold 800,000 square miles of territory for 15 million dollars to the United States. The agreement included land west of the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains, and south to New Orleans, Louisiana.

LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER (THE): Entire Mississippi River approx. 2,300 miles and is the longest river in the United States. The Lower Mississippi (approx. 700 miles long) begins at the confluence of the Ohio River which joins the Mississippi at the southern tip of Illinois.

MISSISSIPPI DELTA: Area where the river meets the Gulf of Mexico. Tons of river sediment causes both the Mississippi Delta and River to expand each year.

MOUND BUILDERS also known as MISSISSIPPIANS: Name given to a Native American culture who between 800 and 900 CE lived in Illinois, Missouri and territory further south. During this time, these tribal people built mound platforms mostly used for religious ceremonies.

NEW MADRID EARTHQUAKE: In 1811 one of the river's most significant geological events occurred in New Madrid, Missouri. This earthquake changed the river's elevation and land contour in several places.

SEDIMENT: Soil, rocks and organic material moved along by a river's currents.

TRIBUTARY: A smaller river or stream which flows into another larger body of water (i.e. Lower Mississippi River).

U.S. ARMY CORPS. OF ENGINEERS: Engineers who find solutions to the complicated problems of navigation and flood prevention on the Mississippi River.

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CHRONOLOGY of The Lower Mississippi

- 75,000 years ago:** The headwaters area of the Upper Mississippi River was covered by a glacier.
- 12,000 years ago:** The glacier covering the headwaters area begins to melt. As it recedes the glacier carves out different land formations into the earth creating what is now known as the Mississippi River Valley.
- 800-900 C.E.:** Tribal people called the Mound Builders develop ancient cities (Cahokia). These cities include famous mound platforms used for religious ceremonies.
- 1500:** Mound Builders disappear from the Upper Mississippi River region.
- 1519:** Spanish explorer Alvarez De Pineda becomes the first European to see the Mississippi River Delta.
- 1539:** Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto credited with the discovery of the Mississippi River Delta.
- 1682:** French explorer, Robert Cavelier Sieur De La Salle claims Louisiana Territory for France.
- 1718:** The Le Moyne Brothers establish the city New Orleans.
- 1803:** During an agreement known as the Louisiana Purchase French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte sells 800,000 square miles of territory for 15 million dollars to the United States.
- 1815:** The Battle of New Orleans.
- 1859-61:** 11 states secede from the Union. The Civil War begins at Ft. Sumter, South Carolina. Jefferson Davis of Mississippi is elected president of the Confederate States.
- 1860:** Abraham Lincoln elected president of the U.S.
- 1862:** Admiral David G. Farragut leads a fleet of 17 warships up the Mississippi to capture New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Natchez for the Union.
- 1950's:** Elvis Presley and rock and roll invade the Memphis rhythm and Blues.

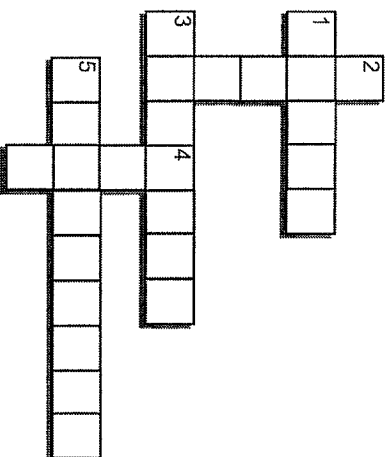
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Discussion Points / Activities

1. If possible visit some of the locations along the banks of the Mississippi River as discussed in the video. SEE Pg. 5 of this guide. Also checkout the internet for web sites about the rivers rich heritage. SEE BACK PAGE.
2. Like a science project, build a model river using paper mache', clay, dirt / mud etc. to illustrate the characteristics of the Mississippi River. Perhaps use charts and maps to explain what happens to the river environment and its surrounding nature and wildlife during floods or the building of dams etc.
3. Discuss how each of the following events have affected the past and present-day conditions of the Mississippi River:
 - 1) Building of dams, locks and levees
 - 2) Glaciers
 - 3) The arrival of Indian cultures & European explorers
 - 4) Development of cities
4. The ecosystems along rivers and other bodies of water sustain many different life forms. If possible visit a river (the Mississippi River) and imagine you are an ecologist. Study these different life forms and document their relationships with the river environment. i.e. bring binoculars, take photographs, paint a river scene, write a poem, sample various vegetation to view under a microscope, enjoy a riverboat ride etc.

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Use the words described in this guide on pgs. 2, 3, 4 & 5 to complete the crossword.



ACROSS:

DOWN:

- 1) Area where Mississippi River enters the Gulf of Mexico.
- 2) Earthen embankment to prevent flooding.
- 3) Brothers who established New Orleans for France.
- 4) Lower Mississippi River begins at the confluence of this tributary.
- 5) Smaller river flows into another larger body of water.

Ohio (4) 'avee (2) - **Down**
 Delta (3) - **Across**
ANSWERS:

Explorers of The Lower Mississippi

ALVAREZ DE PINEDA: Spanish explorer, who in 1519 became the first European to see the Mississippi River Delta.

ROBERT CAVALIER SIEUR DE LA SALLE: Claimed many land territories along the Mississippi for France. However these same territories were previously claimed 130 years earlier by Hernando De Soto for Spain.

HERNANDO DE SOTO: Claimed all the Mississippi River region territories for Spain.

LE MOYNE BROTHERS (The): Established the settlement of New Orleans for France.

PLACES OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGION:

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA: Founded by the French in 1718 and is located in Southeast Louisiana. Well known for its origins in Jazz Music, Mardi Gras celebration and creole culture.

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE: Located in southwest Tennessee and is a major port on the Mississippi River. Well known for its Blues Music and Graceland, home of Elvis Presley.

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA: Capital City of Louisiana and a major port on the Mississippi River.

RIVERBOATS: Consider taking a riverboat ride down the Mississippi while visiting any of the famous Lower Mississippi River cities.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER DELTA: Area where the Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico. Home to some of the most unique wildlife habitat in the world.

Q & A for *The Lower Mississippi*

1. The Lower Mississippi River (approx. 700 miles long) begins at the confluence of the Ohio River. This confluence is located at the southern tip of what state?
2. What is the name of the point at which two rivers join together?
3. The Mississippi River ends its journey by emptying into what body of water?
4. What is the longest river in the United States?
5. In 1803, the United States doubled in size as 800,000 square miles of land was sold by the French to the United States for 15 million dollars. What was the name of this land agreement?
6. In 1811 near New Madrid, Missouri, this geological event changed the river's elevation and land contour in several places. Name this geological event.
7. An ancient Indian culture named the "Mound Builders" constructed large mound platforms. These land mounds were used for what purpose?
8. From 1859-1861, eleven states seceded from the Union. Define what seceded means and what famous war followed this action? Why did the Mississippi River become a major battleground during this war?
9. Name two city ports located along the Lower Mississippi River region.

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Fill in the blank by selecting the words from the answers list:

ANSWERS LIST :

South River • Flood Prevention • Debris • Five Indian Nations
Pollution • Five American Tribes • Sediment • River Sewage
Hernando De La Salle • Five Civilized Tribes • Hernando Alverez
Lower River Valley • Hernando De Soto

10. **A)** The Mississippi River is divided into two parts, the Upper River Valley and the _____.
- B)** Soil, rocks and organic material moved along by a river's currents is called _____.
- C)** The Choctaw, Natchez, Chickasaw, Creek, and Cherokee are the main Indian tribes given the name the _____ by the Europeans.
- D)** _____ a Spanish explorer, is generally credited with the discovery of the Mississippi River Delta.
- E)** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was assigned to solve complicated problems for navigation and _____ on the Mississippi River.

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