



Geography
Age 8-11

Journey of a river

- Course of a river
- River features



Learning
through
Landscapes

Previous learning required

- Descriptions and vocabulary around river features, e.g. transportation, erosion, deposition, tributary, source, estuary, mouth, delta, etc.

Learning outcomes

- To understand the features of the upper and lower course of a river
- To understand how different factors can influence the flow of a river

Equipment

- Large waterproof tarpaulin
- Large bucket of mixed soil, small gravel/grit/organic matter, sand, pebbles, etc.
- Sloped area with space around it for the water to flow. If necessary, create a slope by fixing the tarpaulin over a high point (e.g. a seat or low wall)
- Hosepipe or watering can
- Camera or other way to record observations

Activity

1. Place the tarpaulin over the slope, and pile the mixture of sediments at the top (tightly packed for a hosepipe or loose for a watering can).
2. In small groups, ask pupils to concentrate on one of the sediments in the mixture (e.g. sand, pebbles, grit, soil) and predict what might happen to it when the water starts to flow. For example:
 - Will it move or not?
 - How might it move?
 - How far might it travel?
 - Where might it end up?
 - Will the speed of the water flow change things?

3. Place the end of the hosepipe into the top back side of the sediment pile. Create a reasonable trickle of water to create a flow from the mound down the slope.
4. Observe what happens to the sediment carefully. Remember, rivers take many years to form so it may take a while.
5. Discuss where sediment is transported or deposited and why this happens. Were pupils' predictions correct?
6. Experiment with different flows of water, creating a dam, building model houses on the floodplain, and stopping the flow altogether. Observe how the river course changes because of these outside influences.

Check for understanding

1. Ask pupils to label the river and name the features that form as the river runs.
2. Ask pupils to present their findings about how different factors affect the course of the river.



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