LO: To identify the characteristics of the three stages of a river.
Vocabulary – Try to match the word to the definition:

1. channel
   a) Small particles of a solid material (e.g. sand).

1. sediment
   b) An area of low ground next to a river which sometimes floods.

2. altitude
   c) The height of an object, normally measured from sea level.

1. floodplain
   d) A groove in the land along which a river flows.
Vocabulary – answers:

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Water is really powerful. Over millions of years, it shapes the Earth’s surface and creates landforms including...

Did you know?
The Grand Canyon took 17 million years to form!

This process is called erosion. Click here to learn more.
Rivers are split into three stages:

At each stage a river has different characteristics:

- altitude
- channel width
- water speed
- amount of erosion
Describe the characteristics of the upper course. Think about:

- altitude
- channel width
- water speed
- amount of erosion

The upper course of a river starts at the source. This is a stream in the Alps mountain range in Austria.
You often find these features in a river’s **upper course**. Can you identify them?

- **rapids**
- **waterfall**
- **V-shaped valley**
- **canyon or gorge**
This is part of the **middle course** of the Vitava River in the Czech Republic.

Describe the characteristics of the **middle course**. Think about:

- altitude
- channel width
- water speed
- amount of erosion

Why do rivers get wider as they flow from source to mouth?

*Tributary* streams contribute water, making the river wider and bigger.
After heavy rain, the river water level rises. Sometimes a river ‘**bursts its banks**’ and overflows on to the floodplain.

River Waveney, Norfolk, UK
This is the lower course of the River Rhine flowing through Düsseldorf in Germany.

Describe the characteristics of the lower course. Think about:

- altitude
- channel width
- water speed
- amount of erosion

What do we call the place where a river meets the sea?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upper course</th>
<th>Middle course</th>
<th>Lower course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The river flows at its fastest.</td>
<td>The river is slowing down.</td>
<td>The river flows at its slowest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activity:** Your challenge is to cut out the descriptions saved on the website and put them in the correct columns.

The first ones have been done for you! Do not click on to the next page until you have had a go – you can place them and then check your answers before you glue them in ☺️
<table>
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<td>The river starts in hills or mountains.</td>
<td>The river travels through its floodplains.</td>
<td>The river reaches the sea at its mouth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The river channel is at its narrowest.</td>
<td>The river channel is getting wider.</td>
<td>The river channel is at its widest.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The river mostly erodes sediment and rocks.</td>
<td>The river both erodes and deposits in different places.</td>
<td>The river deposits its remaining sediment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The river is at its highest altitude.</td>
<td>The river is getting closer to sea level.</td>
<td>The river is at sea level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plenary – The Three Stages Game:

Close your books! Ask someone in your family to read out a description of one of the characteristics of a river from your book.

If you think the description matches the:

- **Upper course** – put your hands in the air
- **Middle course** – put your hands on your head
- **Lower course** – put your hands on your lap

How many did you get correct?
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