Guidebook

Sapphire, Level 29, 860L

Text Type: Report

Summary: These pages explore the Tibetan Plateau (the origin of many Asian rivers). The Ganges and Brahmaputra River are discussed, specifically utilisation and concerns for long-term sustainability.

Themes/Ideas: Importance of river systems to human life; how human actions effect river systems

Text Features: maps, photos, headings, labels, bold text within paragraphs

Vocabulary:

- glacier: slow moving river/ mass of ice
- monsoonal rain: seasonal reversing of wind direction that brings rain
- plateau: an area of fairly level high ground
- river basin: land that water flows across on its way to a river
- river delta: a fertile area developed from sediment deposited by a river
- sili: fine sand/clay carried by running water, then left as sediment on the bottom of the river
- tributary: a river or stream that flows into a larger river or lake

Rivers of the World: Asia



Focus Question: What is the Tibetan Plateau and which Asian rivers originate from there?

PREPARE & READ

- Explain that these pages are from a guidebook on rivers of the world.
- Note that the first page provides an overview of Asian rivers, while the second page concentrates on two of these rivers.
- Ask students to read the card.

READ CLOSELY

Vocabulary

On the first page, look at the three nicknames for the Tibetan Plateau (in bold text). How do these names help you visualise the importance of the plateau? Why are these nicknames featured with inverted commas around them? 2 3

Author's Purpose/Intention

The author has used different maps on the front and back of the card. Why do you think they did this? Why does the second map show more detail? 0 0

... The map on the front of the card shows the major rivers that originate on the Tibetan Plateau, showing the basic/main structure of the river system. The second map shows the tributaries that flow into two of the large rivers. This is helpful because the text states that "along with its tributaries, it [the Ganges] spreads across a quarter of India". Without the detailed map, it would be hard to visualise how the smaller rivers cover so much land.

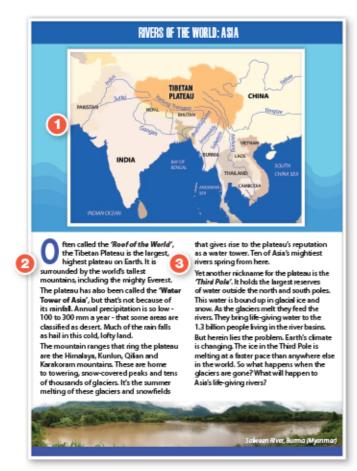
Illustrations and Text

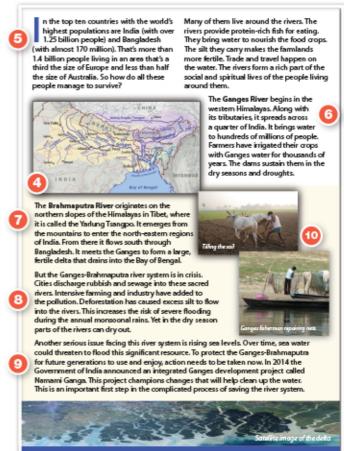
The card includes photos of a farmer tilling the rich soil near the banks of the river and a fisherman from the Ganges River. How do these illustrations indicate the essential role the river plays for the people living there? There is one very important use of the river which is not illustrated. What is it? 3

Draw Conclusions

The author highlights several issues that currently threaten the Ganges, and identifies one way that India is trying to protect the Ganges. Why does the author label this as "an important first step" in saving the river system?

... The author states that India is implementing strategies to encourage people to reduce pollution in the Ganges. Although cleaning up the river would be beneficial, there are many other things affecting the river. Fixing one problem may not be enough to help the river survive into the future. Farming and industry practices may need to change. The effects of deforestation—increasing silt—may need to be halted and somehow reversed. Rising sea levels and a changing climate will need to be taken into account. These are complex problems that will need creative solutions.





DISCUSS

These questions can be used for paired discussion. Ask students to use the text to support their reasoning. Then ask them to share their conclusions with the group.

- The author uses rhetorical questions at the bottom of page one. Why are these effective tools to engage a reader?
- The card mentions that the Brahmaputra River runs through Tibet, India and Bangladesh. How does this fact make it difficult to implement conservation measures?
- What surprised you most about the Tibetan Plateau? How could you find out more about these critical river systems?

WRITE

Have students choose either one of the following options for writing, or do both.

- Make a table that lists the important human uses for the Brahmaputra and Ganges Rivers in one column, and the challenges currently facing these rivers in another column. Tick those challenges that may be able to be influenced by human intervention in a positive way. (Information/Explanation)
- Why is the care and maintenance of the Brahmaputra and Ganges Rivers important globally and not just for people living in Tibet, India or Bangladesh? Use facts from the card to support your answer. (Opinion)

Extension Question: The second page deals with the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers together. Why did the author do this?