

# ESSENTIAL QUESTION: WHAT IS A RIVER?

## Introductory Lesson #1: What is a River? What does it mean to me?

Explore the essential questions first in a local context by collecting students' memories and experiences with local rivers. Begin nature/human interaction observation journal. Ask how this river compares to other rivers in the world. Explore the many ways that humans interact with "our river" and how that relationship has changed over time.

## Formative Lesson Ideas:

**Rivers around the world. What do rivers mean to people around the world?** What are the different ways that people and rivers interact? OUTCOME: Identify initial categories of interactions: commerce, sustenance, travel, pleasure, energy etc.

**World Rivers: What role have rivers played in human history?** OUTCOME: Illustrated Timeline of World Rivers

**Human Impact: How do people value, use, harm and celebrate rivers around the world? How do we treat our river?** OUTCOME: Portrait of a Riverkeeper (local or global)

**Our River—Stories over Time:** Ethnographic research of community members and their relationship with local river. OUTCOME: Vignette: A Time in History that portrays how humans interact with river.

**Rich Text and the River of Love:** How writers and artists communicate their feelings about rivers. Invite local artist to exhibit their work in school. Individual inquiry about other artistic expressions around the world. OUTCOME: Personal/Artistic Expression of "What is a river?"

**Exemplary River Research:** Case Study: Learning about a River: Explore one river as a whole class to present exemplary research practice as model for group projects. OUTCOME: Model of River Research Final Project. Consider what makes an excellent research project.

**Begin River Research: Groups** of students will focus on one river and explore the different questions set forth in Lessons 1-6; OUTCOME: Criteria for Research Project developed with class.

**River Keepers:** Guest Presentation by Local Citizen/Stewardship Group: How do people take care of their rivers and waterways? OUTCOME: Begin to define what a community plan for celebrating local river might look like.

**Nature Journal of River Spot.** Compiled throughout unit. OUTCOME: Each student contributes a page with their own personal expression of "what is a river?" to class digital "River Book."

**Planning for the Culminating Activity:** Research Learning Circles: Students Share Research in near Final Drafts. Critique and Revision. Jigsaw discussion on how to host Public Event to share Findings and stimulate community involvement in river.

## CULMINATING ACTIVITY: Summative Assessment to Essential Question

### CULMINATING ACTIVITY:

**EVENT:** Students share research and community portraits in public event. Students host dialogue in which community responds to the question: What is a River? What does it mean to us? In what ways might our actions preserve and celebrate this river?

**RESEARCH SUMMARY:** Students record, compile, interpret and present a plan for community participation. OUTCOME: Community Action Plan.

**PERSONAL RESPONSE:** Student Reflection: Written piece on "What is a River?" "What does it mean to me?"