

# Rivers of the World

## The Nile

The Nile is traditionally considered to be the longest river in the world at 4132 miles or 6650 km in length. When most people think of the Nile, they think of Egypt but surprisingly, only 20% of the river is in Egypt - it also flows through other countries including Uganda and Ethiopia before ending at the Mediterranean Sea. There is also some debate about the river's source. Some believe it to be Lake Victoria (Africa's biggest lake while others believe that its source is one of the many streams that lead to the lake. The biggest of these- the Kagera River- is now taken to be the true source, with its beginning in Burundi.

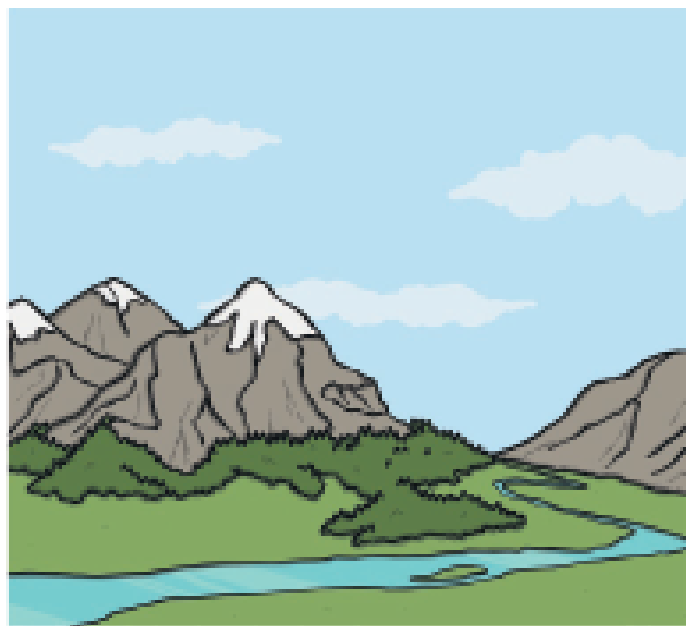
The River Nile makes the adjacent land fertile. This is why the ancient Egyptians created settlements there, living and farming along the river in order to produce food for themselves and their animals. The river became an important source of water and means of transport.

## The Rhine

The Rhine flows mainly through Germany, but its 766 miles (1233km) flows through another five countries before reaching the North Sea at Rotterdam. Its source is a small stream coming from the Rheinwaldhorn Glacier, 3353 m above sea level in the Swiss Alps.

Its waterways have been used to transport food and other goods since Roman times and there are many castles located on the banks, such as Maus (mouse) Castle.

Previously, the Rhine has had a bad reputation in terms of pollution being labelled one of the most polluted rivers in Europe. It was even badly affected by a chemical factory fire in 1986. Since then, a great deal of effort has been put in place to clean it up including drinking water safeguards.



### The Volga

The river runs from its source in the Valdai Hills, through Russia to the Caspian Sea and is the longest river in Europe at 2294 miles or 3692 km in length. In places, the Volga is so wide that you can't see the other side! Its name is derived from the Slavic word meaning 'moisture'.

Huge sturgeon fish can be found living in the water. However, the river is quite polluted due to factories dumping waste there which greatly affects the caviar industry. It is used for transporting goods all over Russia but is frozen for around three months of the year.

One of the biggest battles of Second World War, the Battle of Stalingrad, was fought on the banks of the river at Volgograd (then named 'Stalingrad'), the major city now named after the river.

### The Danube

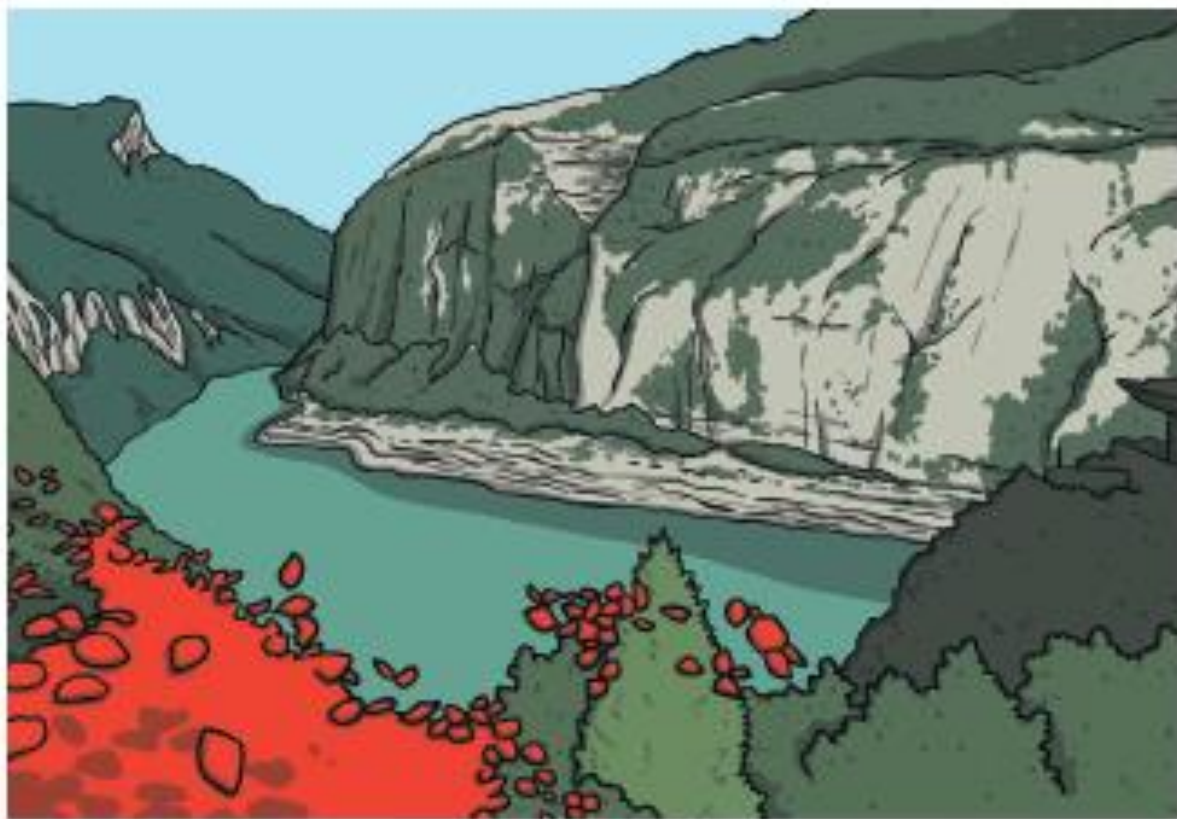
This is the second largest river in Europe, after the Volga. It is 1785 miles or 2680 km in length, with its source in the Black Forest Mountains in Germany and flowing to the Romanian coast of the Black Sea. This river flows through, or along the border of several different countries including Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania to name a few. It also flows through the capital cities of Belgrade, Budapest, Vienna and Bratislava.

The river plays host to many cruising tourists and has inspired artists and composers through time. One of the most famous pieces of classical music written is The Blue Danube, by the Austrian composer Johann Strauss II.

### The Amazon

With its source over 5000m above sea level in the Andes Mountains in Peru, the Amazon is the second longest river in the world, stretching 3944 miles or 6347 km. However, some recent studies, measuring from the adjacent Pará estuary to the connecting tidal canal indicate it is longer than the Nile. The river runs through the countries of Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Guyana, Peru and Bolivia with the largest city being Manaus in Brazil. Somewhat surprisingly, there are no bridges that cross the river although during the wet season, the Amazon rapidly fills with more water and can reach over 120 miles (190 km) in width.

3000 species of fish live in the river (including piranhas) with new species being discovered all the time. One of the largest snakes in the world, the anaconda, lurks around in the shallow Amazon Basin and is known to attack larger animals, such as goats, that get too close to the water's edge.



### The Yangtze

Its Chinese name 'Chang Jiang' means 'long river' which is apt, as this is the longest river in Asia, the third longest in the world, measuring 3915 miles or 6300km. Its source is 5042m up in the Tanggula Mountains in western China and flows into the East China Sea. The river is one of the busiest in the world, filled with cruise ships and freight transportation.

More than 50 bridges span this epic river and it is home to many different species of animals, including the Chinese alligator, the Finless porpoise and the Chinese paddlefish. However, these species are endangered due to river pollution and high traffic levels.

# Questions

1. What is the length in miles of the longest and shortest rivers here?

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2. Name three of the major capital cities through which the Danube flows.

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3. If Johann Strauss II is Austrian, which country is he from?

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4. Why might you have to be careful when deciding which side of the Amazon to start your journey?

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5. List the six rivers from longest to shortest.

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6. Which famous historical event took place on the banks of the Volga River, when was it and what was the name of the city at that time?

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7. Where is the source of the Rhine? (Give as much information as possible.)

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8. In 'The Volga' paragraph, why has the author used the word 'affects' rather than 'effects'?

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9. What does the word 'apt' mean in the second to last paragraph?

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10. Which of these rivers might you most like to visit and why?

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# Answers

1. What is the length in miles of the longest and shortest rivers here?  
**4132 miles (Nile) and 766 miles (Rhine)**
2. Name three of the major capital cities through which the Danube flows. Any three from:  
**Belgrade, Budapest, Vienna or Bratislava.**
3. If Johann Strauss II is Austrian, which country is he from?  
**Austria.**
4. Why might you have to be careful when deciding which side of the Amazon to start your journey?  
**There are no bridges across the river.**
5. List the six rivers from longest to shortest.  
**Nile, Amazon, Yangtze, Volga, Danube, Rhine**
6. Which famous historical event took place on the banks of the Volga River, when was it and what was the name of the city at that time?  
**The Battle of Stalingrad. World War 2. City named Stalingrad at the time.**
7. Where is the source of the Rhine? (Give as much information as possible.)  
**A stream coming from the Rheinwaldhorn Glacier 3,353m above sea level in the Swiss Alps.**
8. In 'The Volga' paragraph, why has the author used the word 'affects' rather than 'effects'?  
**'affects' is a verb and 'effects' is a noun.**
9. What does the word 'apt' mean in the second to last paragraph?  
**'apt' means appropriate, suitable or well fitting.**
10. Which of these rivers might you most like to visit and why?  
**Open ended for discussion.**