

# River Ganges Sort Information Gap

This is an elderly activity that has been used on and off in various forms since 1994.

This activity is quite heavy on the printing. If this is an issue we could produce the texts without images and just sort words. I do find the pictures helpful.

There is a notetaking grid to complete from the text. Once children have done this they will be equipped to sort the description cards and photographs into the parts of the river. Ideally you would draw a large map of the Ganges and let them add things.

There is a prior knowledge sheet which may be necessary.

Like all information gaps you can either give different groups the same text to work on together and then jigsaw so that the new groups have all the texts, or you can give groups of 4 the different texts to start with.

First version developed with Marilyn Sullivan in Leicester, second version with Sharman Bailey in Loughborough this version developed with Rachel Owen, Ray Capper and the lovely Year 6 children at Camelot Primary School Southwark, drawing on prior work.

The webaddress for this activity is <http://www.collaborativelearning.org/rivergangesinfogap.pdf>

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## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

We support a network of teaching professionals to develop and disseminate accessible talk-for-learning activities in all subject areas and for all ages.

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## BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies that promote talk across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to develop and use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We want to encourage you to change them and adapt them to your classroom and students. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project posts online many activities in all subject areas. An online newsletter is also updated regularly.

\*These activities are influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in non selective classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of oracy. They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of talk.

\*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

\*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in pupils' first languages and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

\*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

\*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

\*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work more effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

# The River Ganges

## Text A

The River Ganges begins high in the Himalayas 3,892 metres above sea level, and flows down the mountains, meeting other rivers as it goes. The river flows through the Ganges Plain, fed by other Himalayan origin rivers and streams. At the lower end, just before it meets the sea, it is joined by the Brahmaputra river and together they create the largest river delta in the world, (322km long).

At its source the River is called the Bhagirathi River, created where the ice of the Gangotri Glacier melts. The place Gaumukh means cow's mouth and the ice cave is believed to look like a cow's face. Gaumukh is a place of pilgrimage for Hindus able to manage the steep rocky climb. The river is fairly narrow here and rushes down the stony mountainside.

The river flows for 250km through the Himalayas.

Very few people live here, as there is little soil for growing crops.

The Bharal (a cross between a sheep and a goat) has adapted to life at the higher altitudes. Its coat is blueish coloured which provides camouflage against the mountains.



Mountain stream

The river does not take the name Ganges until Devaprayag.

From here it flows for nearly 2000km across the Plain to Pakur close to Bangladesh.

At Pakur it begins dividing and the Hoogly goes off towards the South.

It changes its name again as it reaches the delta; it becomes the Padma soon after entering Bangladesh.

After entering Bangladesh the river begins to fan out into many channels.

Here you find the Bengal Tiger and the long nosed crocodile called the Gharial.

You can also see colourful birds and Marsh Deer.

Jute is grown in the delta and used to make rope and sacks.

This is one of the things that made Kolkata so important to the British, who called it Calcutta.



Jute farming



Hardinge bridge across the Padma (Ganges)

# River Ganges

## Text B

As it crosses the plain, the river becomes much slower moving and widens. It passes through the city of Kanpur. Kanpur is famous for leather production as well as cotton and wool. Kanpur has one of the biggest railway stations in the world. Just outside Kanpur is Shivrajpur - the site of beautiful and peaceful old temple beside the river. Many people live along the river here and the fertile soil makes it a good place for growing sugarcane, rice and wheat. Most of India's sugarcane is grown here.

At Allahabad the Ganges meets the Yamuna river, which flows from the mountains in the south. There is now lots of water in the river. The river is spanned by a huge cabled bridge, the longest of its kind in India. This is an extremely holy place, the site of the major Meha Kumbh Mela when millions gather to bathe in the water. This happens once every 144 years and last took place in January 2013. So many people come they make special long bridges for them to queue on.

After Allahabad the river is extremely wide and this marks the start of the lower plain. The most notable place in the lower plain is Varansi, famous for making beautiful silk. Many Indian brides have their red and gold wedding saris made here. Varansi is also where many Hindus are cremated and have their ashes scattered. The Ganges is believed to have special powers and ending up here guarantees a place in heaven.



Silk in Varanasi

The river flows east until the end of the plain at Bhalagpur where it changes direction and flows south east. This is just before it enters Bangladesh where the river begins to fan out into many channels, to form the delta. It flows as the Padma and eventually meets the Brahmaputra ; a long river which has flowed along the edge of the Himalayas through China.

The Brahmaputra changes its name to the Meghna, so when Ganges finally flows into the sea it is called the Meghna river. Pilgrims come to this spot and collect water to take home.



# River Ganges

## Text C

After Haridwar the land becomes flatter and the river becomes much slower moving and widens as it crosses the plain - the Son, the Gomati, the Ghagera and the Gandaki, all join it and add to its flow.

The Ganges water was always thought to be extra clean; British trade ships always carried barrels of Ganges water for the long journey back because it stayed sweeter.

Scientists in the past found that it had higher levels of oxygen than other rivers, but they do not know why.

400 million people live in the Ganges basin (area around the river) it is the most densely populated river basin in the world. In fact 1 in 12 people on Earth live in this area. Once the plains were densely forested, but now, as the land has to support so many people it is all farmland. On the plain rice, sugar cane and wheat are grown

As the river continues its 1500km journey across the plain it passes through Patna, famous for rice growing.

Just across the river from Patna is Sonapur, where they hold a huge animal fair every year. you can buy anything from an elephant to a parakeet.



rice fields



Sonapur animal fair



At the Delta river ends in a National park and a UNESCO protected site called the Sundarbans.

The delta rivers run through mangrove swamps and forest. Many species of animal live here, including rare ones such as the gharial, a kind of crocodile.

Here there is frequent flooding, the farmers all catch fish as well as growing crops.



# River Ganges

## Text D

At 2,525 km the River Ganges is the longest river in India, and the most important in Hinduism. The River Ganges is believed to have descended from heaven, using Shiva's flowing hair to gain a safe path down.

In its early sections, as it travels down the mountain, the first notable place it comes to is Devprayag where it meets the Alakanada river.

Devprayag is a small town perched in the mountains, its main industry is tourism/pilgrimage.

This is a very holy place for Hindus and there is a large temple right at the confluence.



Devprayag

The two rivers look very different, the Alkanada is larger and slower moving while the Bhagirathi (as the the Ganges is called to start with) is turbulent and fast moving.

It flows though the narrow mountain valley to Rishikesh. Rishikesh is also a holy place and there are many temples and monasteries. The river is spanned by a high narrow pedestrian bridge. It is difficult to go in the water here as the sides are so steep. Statues of Shiva and other gods sit on the rocky riverbanks.

The river leaves the mountains and begins its journey across the plain at Haridwar.

The water here is still fast moving but thousands of pilgrims bathe in it.

The town has many temples and *ghats* - steps going down to the water to allow easy access.

The Ganges was once famous for having especially sweet water.

Sadly, this is no longer the case and it is one of the most polluted rivers in the world.

Scientists and politicians are trying to save the river, but it is hard to change people's behaviour.



Haridwar



Varanasi

Millions of pilgrims bathe in the river at the sacred cities of Allahabad and Varanasi, further along the plain, where they believe that they will be helped to heaven. People also choose to be cremated at Varanasi and have their ashes scattered in the water.

**Source  
and  
Early Stages**

**Source  
and  
Early Stages**

**Source  
and  
Early Stages**

**Plain**

**Plain**

**Plain**

**Later Stages  
and  
Delta**

**Later Stages  
and  
Delta**

**Later Stages  
and  
Delta**

*print onto card and cut up to provide headings for the card sorting (3 groups per page)*

River Ganges Grid - write notes from the text you have read then teach the rest of your group. Some examples have been done for you.

section	landscape	tributaries	places	plants and animals
source beginning upper reaches	What is the landscape like along the upper reaches?	What other rivers join the Upper River?  <i>Devrajag - famous for two rivers meeting.</i>	What places are along the upper reaches?	What plants and animals are found along the the upper reaches?
plain middle	What is the landscape like along the plain?	What other rivers join on the plain?  <i>Son</i>	What places are along the plain?	What plants and animals are found along the the plain ?  <i>farm animals - oxen</i>  <i>sugar cane</i>
delta end lower reaches	What is the landscape like at the delta?	What other rivers join at the delta?  <i>changes name to Padma</i>	What places are at the delta?	What plants and animals are found at the delta?

Glossary Language associated with rivers.

Banks - the edges of the river

Delta - at the mouth of the river when it spreads out and makes a wide triangle shape with lots of streams

Distributaries - rivers that leave the river

Fertile - soil that is very good for farming

Flood - when a river has too much water and rises up and wets the land around

Glacier - sheets of ice, high up in mountains or in the far north or south.

Lower reaches - the part of the river as it gets towards the sea or lake.

Mouth - where the river meets the sea or lake

Plain - large area of flat, or nearly flat land

River basin - the land around a river before the next set of hills or mountains (London is in the Thames basin )

Source - where the river is believed to begin

Tributaries - other rivers that join along the way

Upper Reaches - the early parts of the river - usually higher up.

Valley - lowland between higher areas, mountain valleys are very steep sided

Glossary

Background information about India and Bangladesh

Hinduism - the largest religion in India. There are many gods and goddesses. Natural features are an important part of the religion, and have god-like status (The Ganges is the goddess Ganga)

Mela - a big festival

ghat - steps

temple - place of worship, often built to honour one god

monsoon - the annual rainy season when it is very wet

jute - a plant used to make rope

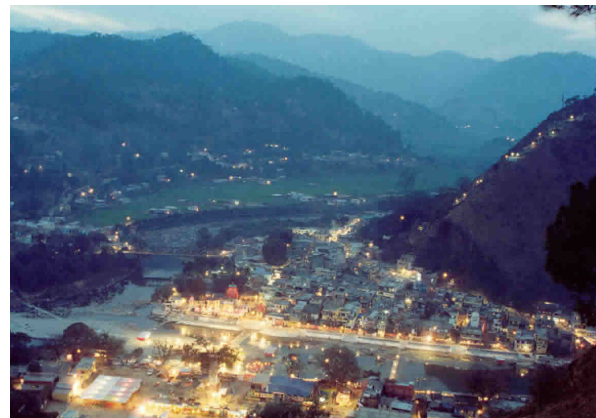
mustard - a spice

Indian brides wear red.

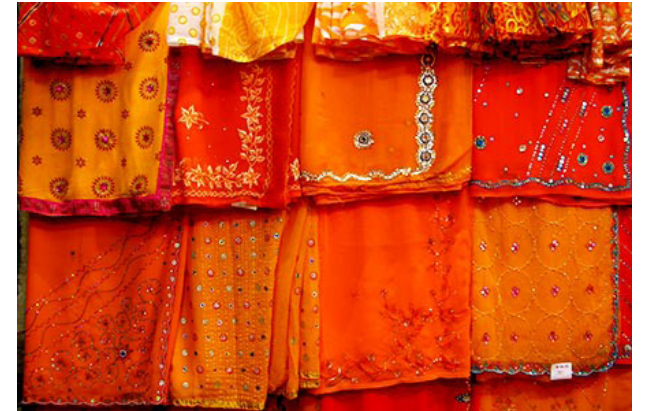
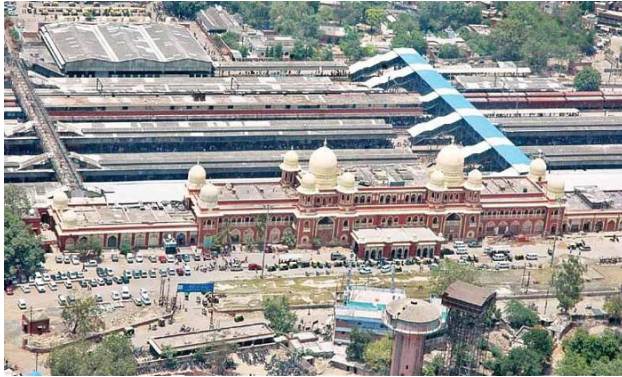
Sugar is carried in huge loads on carts pulled by oxen.

Pilgrimage - a journey to a holy place  
(most religions have pilgrimage sites)













<p>rivers:</p> <p>Gangotri Glacier Bhagirathi Alaknanda</p>	<p>rivers:</p> <p>Yamuna Son</p>	<p>rivers:</p> <p>Gomti Ghaghara Gandaki</p>	<p>rivers:</p> <p>Padma Hoogly Brahmaputra Meghna</p>
<p>places:</p> <p>Devprayag Rishikesh Haridwar</p>	<p>places:</p> <p>Kanpur Shivrajpur Allahabad</p>	<p>places:</p> <p>Varanasi Patna Bhagalpur</p>	<p>places:</p> <p>Pakur Kolkata</p>
<p>landscape:</p> <p>steep mountains rocky fast flowing water</p>	<p>landscape:</p> <p>farmland wide plain slow wide river</p>	<p>landscape:</p> <p>forest and swamp low lying river breaks up into small streams</p>	<p>economy:</p> <p>tourism/pilgrimage fishing</p>
<p>animals:</p> <p>Bharal</p>	<p>animals:</p> <p>Marsh Deer Gharial Bengal Tiger</p>	<p>animals:</p> <p>buffalo and oxen to work in the fields</p>	<p>economy:</p> <p>tourism/pilgrimage</p>
<p>crops:</p> <p>none</p>	<p>crops:</p> <p>sugar cane rice wheat</p>	<p>crops:</p> <p>millet jute</p>	<p>economy:</p> <p>tourism/pilgrimage textiles (cotton and silk) leather</p>
<p>special fact:</p> <p>Gamaukh means cow's mouth</p>	<p>special fact:</p> <p>the Meha Kumbh Mela happens here every 144 years</p>	<p>special fact:</p> <p>the Sundarbans are a unique mangrove swamp and some species only live here</p>	<p>what to do:</p> <p><i>sort the cards and pictures onto the right part of the river</i></p>