

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# The Mighty Mississippi

If you look at a map of America, you will notice a long, wiggly line that runs right down the middle of the country. This is the Mississippi river. It is the biggest river in the United States. The beginning of a river is called its headwaters. At the headwaters of the Mississippi, in the northern woods, the river is less than three feet deep. You could wade right in because that's only a little bit higher than your desk! But near the south end of the river, before it reaches the ocean, the river is 200 feet deep. That's a big change, but it's a slow one. If a raindrop fell into the river near the headwaters, it would take 90 days to reach the ocean. Along the way that raindrop would float through ten states. It would meet many different kinds of fish and birds. It would see enormous barges carrying things like oil, corn, and coal. It would pass all the cities built along the river banks. The Mississippi is important to America and has been important since people first fished its muddy waters. Hundreds of years ago, Native Americans used the river for trade and travel. The name Mississippi comes from their word meaning "Father of Waters." Later, men from Europe explored the river. As America grew, the river gave people a way to travel and a way to move things over long distances. The Mississippi river helped make America a great country. Author Mark Twain wrote, "The Mississippi is well worth reading about. It is...in all ways remarkable."

**Directions:**

Read the story. Answer the questions. Be sure to use complete sentences on question #4.

1. A river's headwaters is where \_\_\_\_\_.
- it runs into the ocean
  - a river or stream starts
  - it flows the fastest

2. At its deepest the Mississippi is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 200 feet deep
  - 90 feet deep
  - 3 feet deep

3. What is the main idea of this article?
- The Mississippi river starts in the north.
  - The Mississippi is an important river.
  - Many fish live in the Mississippi river.



4. Can you spell the word *Mississippi* without looking? Close your eyes and give it a try!