



THEWELL™

AMERICA'S RIVER ROOTS

Sail through America's River Roots using art, science, history, poetry, music, movement and mindfulness. This journey invites you to explore, reflect, and imagine—discovering nature, history, and yourself along the way.

Adventure awaits on every current.

NAME _____

AMERICA'S RIVER ROOTS

America's River Roots Workbook is brought to you by The Well in collaboration with the America's River Roots Festival, a signature event to kick off America's 250th celebration, scheduled for October 08-12, 2025 on the Cincinnati, Covington and Newport riverfronts.

The festival will showcase the uniquely diverse cultures, cuisine and music of America's inland waterways that distinctly shaped our nation through this wondrous ecological region. The origins of roots music will be celebrated with national, emerging and local artists across multiple stages and highlight the Ohio Valley's unrivaled river culture.

Regardless of where you live, this workbook combines art, science, history, poetry, music, movement and mindfulness to enliven student creativity and curiosity.

This workbook is generously supported by the Nellie Leaman Taft Foundation.



Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it.
- Norman Maclean

River Of Life Meditation

*Imagine you are standing along the banks of a river
on a warm sunny day with a cool breeze in the air*

What do you see around you?

People, animals, a bridge creating connection?

What do you hear?

The rushing current, birds chirping, cars passing by

What smells are in the air?

Blooming flowers, earthy moss, lunchtime aromas?

How do you feel in your body in this moment

surrounded by Nature and human construction?

Now, gaze out across the water and wonder—

how does this river represent MY life?

Is the river deep or shallow?

Is the current pushing me forward or backward?

Are there obstacles blocking the natural flow?

When I hit rough waters, what do I do to get through?

Who is there for support or to throw me a life raft?

Rivers constantly flow, redirect, and create new pathways

How can you be more like a river in your life?

What or who do you want to carry with you along the way?



What makes a river so restful to people is that it doesn't have any doubt - it is sure to get where it is going, and it doesn't want to go anywhere else.

-Hal Boyle

River Breathing

*Find a comfortable position either sitting or lying on your back
with your legs long on the floor*

*Place one hand on your low belly
and the other on the middle of your chest*



*Close your eyes and imagine you are floating on a calm river
with its gentle tide supporting you*

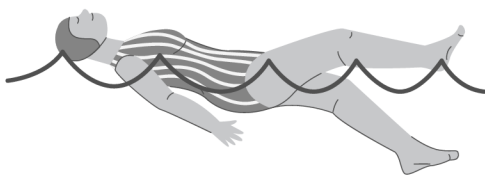
*Inhale, feel your breath expand your belly and begin to rise
up through your diaphragm to your chest*

*Exhale, feel the breath travel back down
your body like the push and pull of a river current*

*With each breath in, the water is rising
and flowing into you*

*With each breath out, the water is flowing out
of you, carrying away any stress or tension*

*Continue to focus on the flow of the river
and the rise and fall of your breath*





Sounds From The River

Scan the QR code to access the music playlist on YouTube.
First, allow the music to fill your body, moving and dancing to each piece.

After, research each genre of music and write your own definition reflecting on how each piece made you feel in your body.



African Roots (*African Dawn*, by Ravi): _____

Spirituals (*Deep River*, arranged by Anders Paulsson): _____

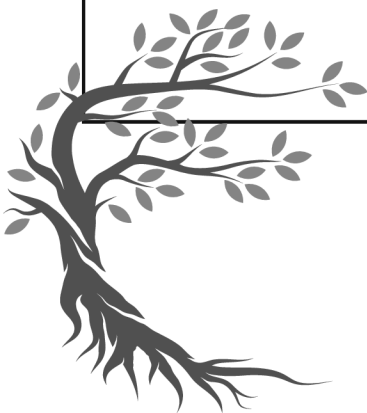
Ragtime (*A Mexican Serenade*, by Scott Joplin): _____

Jazz (*Serene Sunday*, by Dr. Isidore Rudnick): _____



Where Do Your Roots Grow?

Draw a picture of a tree with roots. On the roots, write what grounds and nourishes you and on the branches, write goals you have for your life.



Love is the river of life in the world.
-Henry Ward Beecher

What Do You Wonder About America's Rivers?

I wonder if rivers are as...

deep as _____

mysterious as _____

peaceful as _____

alive as _____

strong as _____

endless as _____

twisty as _____

old as _____

busy as _____

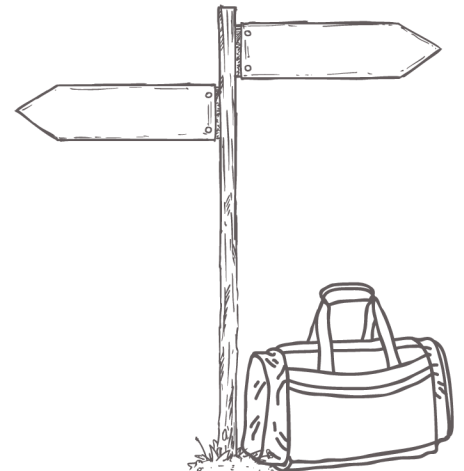
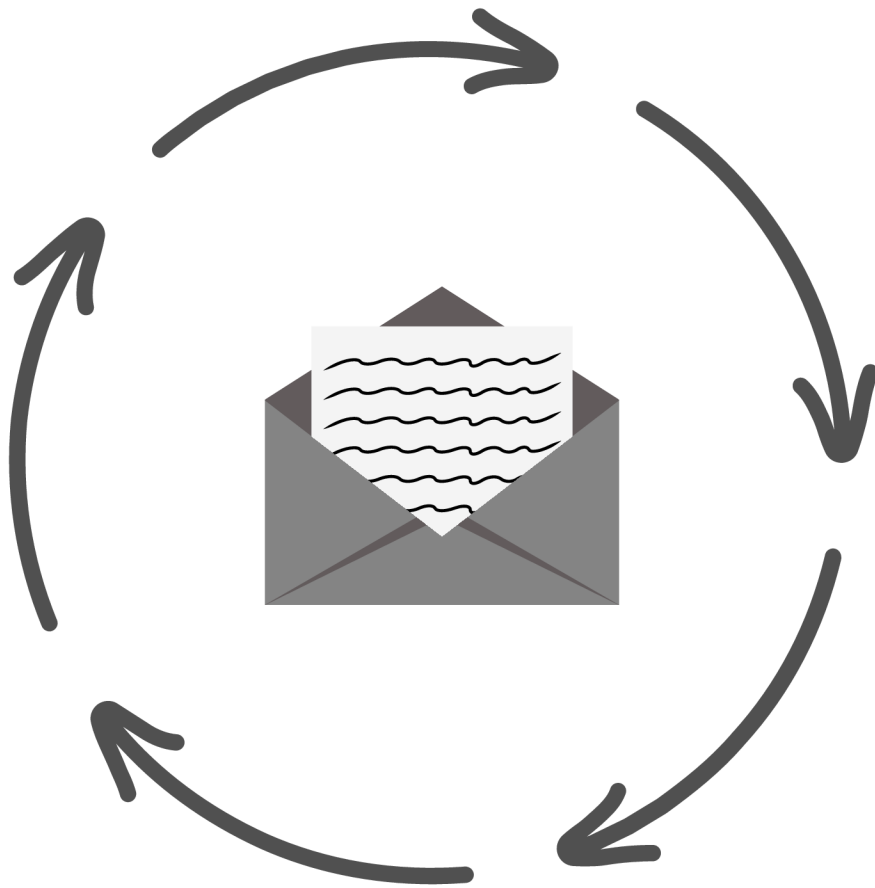


FACT

During the Civil War, letters written by black individuals to their families often involved a collaborative process, where one person would write the main body and others would add their own messages. These "chain letters" provided a way for families to stay connected and share news, especially when separated by distance or conflict.

Group Activity! Chain Letter

Sit in a circle. Have one student begin the story by saying, "Once upon a time" and then completing the sentence. The student next to them adds another sentence continuing the story. Do this until everyone in the circle has contributed to the story.





Fun Fact Fill In

Use the word bank below to fill in each sentence about America's amazing rivers.
(Answer key on page 14).

160
ALASKA
FIVE
FREEDOM

GRAND CANYON
MISSISSIPPI
MISSOURI
RED

SEVEN
UNDERGROUND
UNITED STATES
WEST VIRGINIA

1. The _____ River is the longest river in North America and the United States. It stretches for 2,540 miles.
2. The Colorado River runs through the _____ and it is recognized as one of the _____ Natural Wonders of the World.
3. Rivers can be all kinds of colors – not just blue, clear or muddy brown. Some waters flow bright blue, _____, black, yellow and green.
4. The Ohio River supports _____ species of fish.
5. The Ohio River flows through or borders six states: Pennsylvania, Ohio, _____, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois.
6. There are over 250,000 rivers in the _____ that combine for a total of more than 3,500,000 miles.
7. The Ohio River is a source of drinking water for more than _____ million people.
8. _____ has the most rivers out of any US state.
9. The _____ River runs through or along 10 states, Minnesota, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Iowa, Missouri, and Arkansas.
10. The Ohio River was important for the _____ Railroad, with many enslaved people escaping to _____ by crossing the river.

"The river is constantly turning and bending and you never know where it's going to go and where you'll wind up. Following the bend in the river and staying on your own path means that you are on the right track. Don't let anyone deter you from that."

- Eartha Kitt

River Walk Meditation

Using your 5 senses, quietly go on a walk near a river or any body of water.

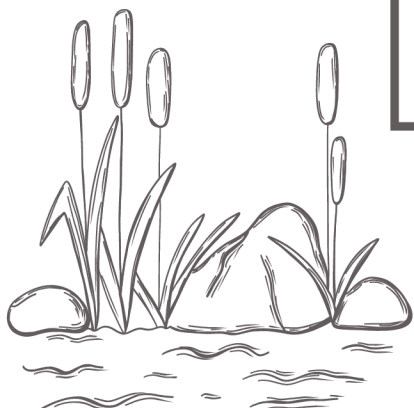
What animals or insects did you see?

What surfaces did you feel?

What sounds did you hear?

What did you smell?

What did you taste in the air?

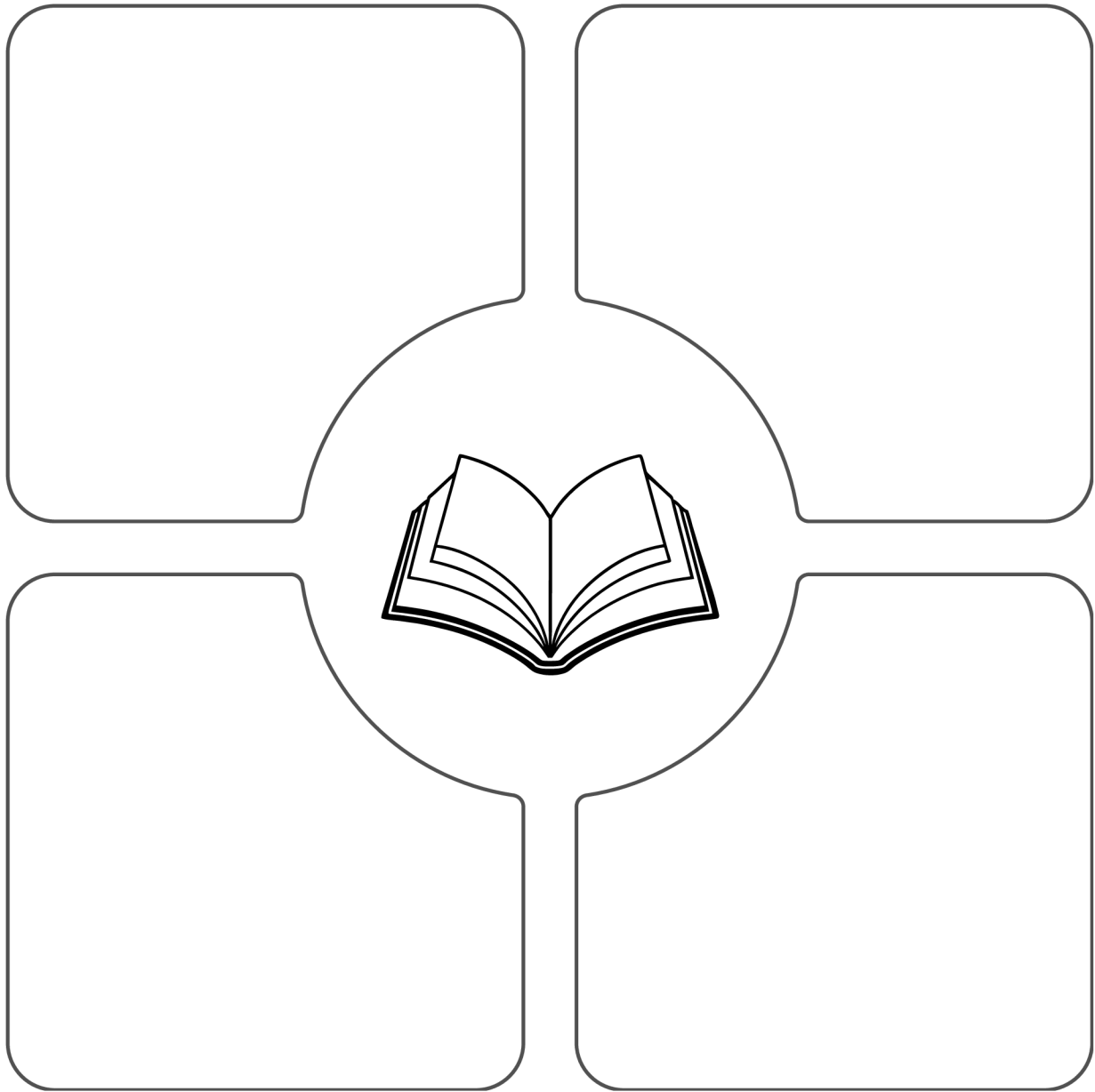


FACT

The Green Book was a vital resource for black travelers from 1936-1966, offering a sense of safety and community during a period of intense racial segregation. The guide listed hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and other businesses that were known to be welcoming to African Americans.

Where Do You Find Safety?

Draw or write about four places you feel the most safe.



FACT

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) was a renowned American author, abolitionist, and women’s rights advocate. Best known for her novel “Uncle Tom's Cabin,” which depicted the harsh realities of slavery, resonated deeply with readers and is believed to have fueled the anti-slavery movement and contributed to the start of the Civil War.

Interview A Partner

Switch workbooks with a partner and have them write down your answers.

- 1. How do you define being a leader? _____

- 2. Who is a leader or someone you look up to in your life? _____

- 3. Why do you see them as a leader? _____

- 4. Describe a time when you were helped during a challenging moment. _____

- 5. What emotions arise now when you think back to that time? _____



Continue questions to next page >>>

FACT

Harriet Beecher Stowe was born into a prominent family, the seventh of thirteen children, residing in Litchfield, Connecticut. In 1832, the Beecher family moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where Harriet began publishing her work. The Harriet Beecher Stowe House is now a historic home and museum in Cincinnati.

Interview A Partner Continued

- 6. Describe a time when you helped someone else during a difficult moment. _____

- 7. How did you feel afterwards? _____

- 8. How can you show up for the people in your life? _____

- 9. Why is it important to stand up for what's right? _____

- 10. What is something you believe in and will stand up for? _____



Research A Body Of Water

Research a body of water near you and fill out the questions below.

1. What body of water did you choose and where is it located (city, state)? _____

2. What species of fish are common? _____

3. Does it provide drinking water to the population? If so, how many people? _____

4. What pollutants are commonly found? _____

5. Describe the history of the body of water or an event that took place on it. _____

6. What can you and your community do to keep this body of water thriving? _____



“The human body is a river of intelligence, energy and information that is constantly renewing itself every second of its existence.”

-Deepak Chopra

Your Body Is A River

Like a river your body can become polluted, messing up the natural flow. How can you incorporate what is listed below into your routine to keep your body and mind healthy?

1. Nourishment (food, water)_____

2. Movement/ Exercise_____

3. Meditation/Mindfulness_____

4. Nature _____

5. Arts Practices_____

6. Community/Friendships_____

Ohio River Fish Word Search

These fish are either commonly or notably caught in the Ohio River.



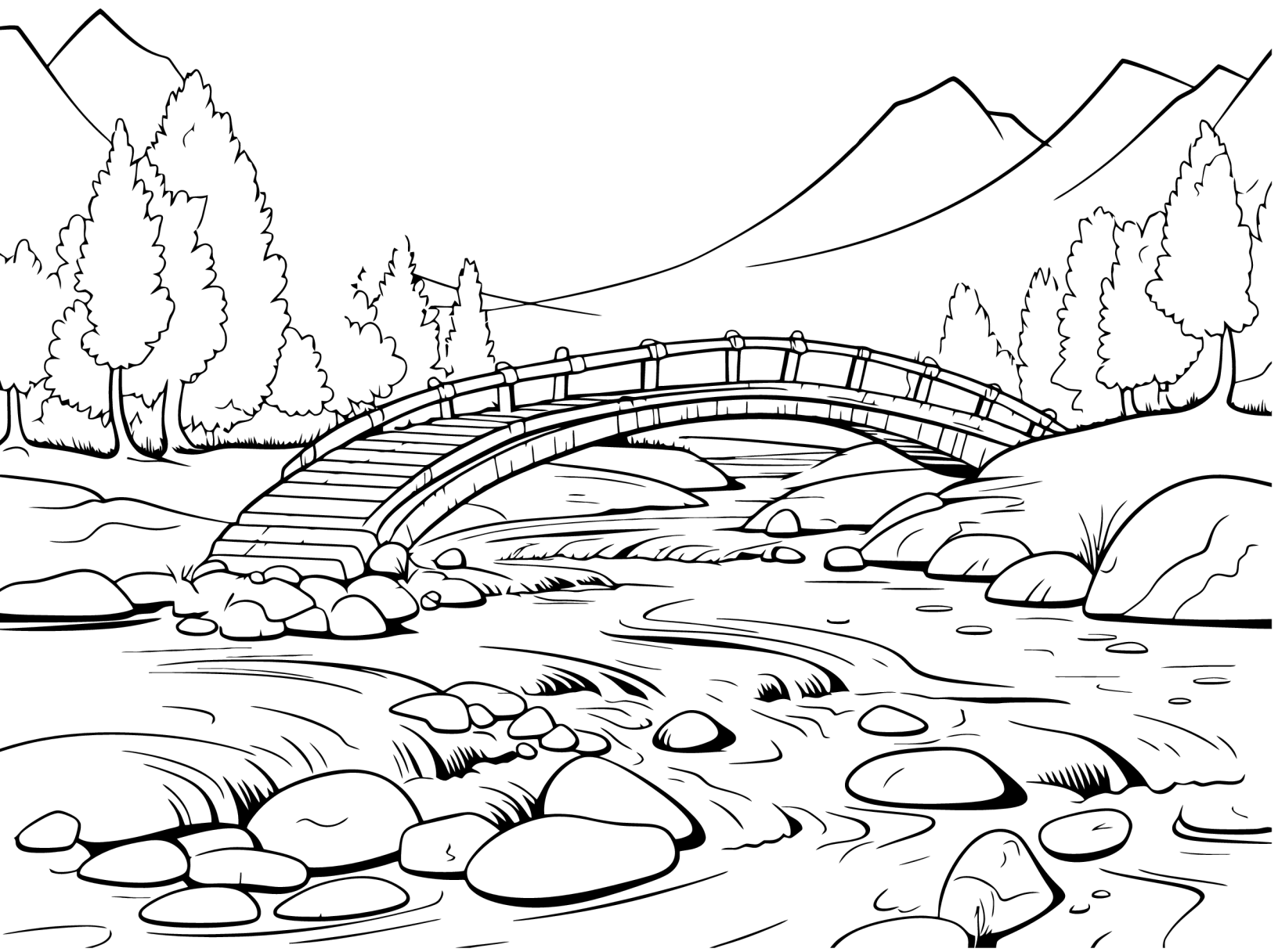
F F V G H V D F E E M E R A L D S H I N E R P J T
X C B A M X V B Q O Y X C Q M Y E M Q N F G F U Z
I O L F B C H B I B C Q M C N H C C V F K N C I F
Y Q A U R W L R W M N H L F V G R F Y V A R F N C
T B C R E E F H V O S E A K K W M X M T U H H N R
O O K I O F S X N J Z I W N M C Y J X D K R J F B
P Y B V Y F D H I Z W R L Y N Z M H K L D X O F F
Z N U E H F J R W U V T J V F E F C J H W Y A X R
N U F R E V S O D A M F G M E A L E F V M P M U X
N W F R V D K U V P T N V A V R W S O L R F T D K
Z C A E A H H V J K N E W W C M J O H R G L R P D
O Z L D E D E I P N P P R M S Q J A U I K P X A D
G U O H V M U X J Y O S I D V Q Z F W J N S M X T
I C M O Q X R A V H G T P M R W C Q V M N E W J I
Z G O R T D S C E C E R G I Z U R T E O I N R Y T
Z K L S P I M W P B A K W Y E S M O R G M N M T B
A A D E U A G L E Z H N D B A T U W L Y M R N J I
R W M I S S I S S I P P I S I L V E R S I D E O E
D U N U I S W Y P M E F I C W B L N W G D T A Z W
S V U M K H Q E T B G E Y S B X A J I G H P O M N
H P R P Y Z K Y Z M X H X L U G O G I R F Z M U P
A W R L F R L J V K Y G M I Z D N T M V G L P Y Q
D K H J Y D N K X M U W P P P Q U P E O V E R P B
G N C E V G O E V L O N G N O S E G A R E S J M E
N G J I R U P V F S T M X H J N A Q W S H C X Y F

BLACK BUFFALO
CHANNEL SHINER
EMERALD SHINER

FRESHWATER DRUM
GIZZARD SHAD
LONGNOSE GAR

MISSISSIPPI SILVERSIDE
RIVER REDHORSE
SILVERJAW MINNOW

*Data collected from THE FOUNDATION FOR OHIO RIVER EDUCATION (FORE) in 2022





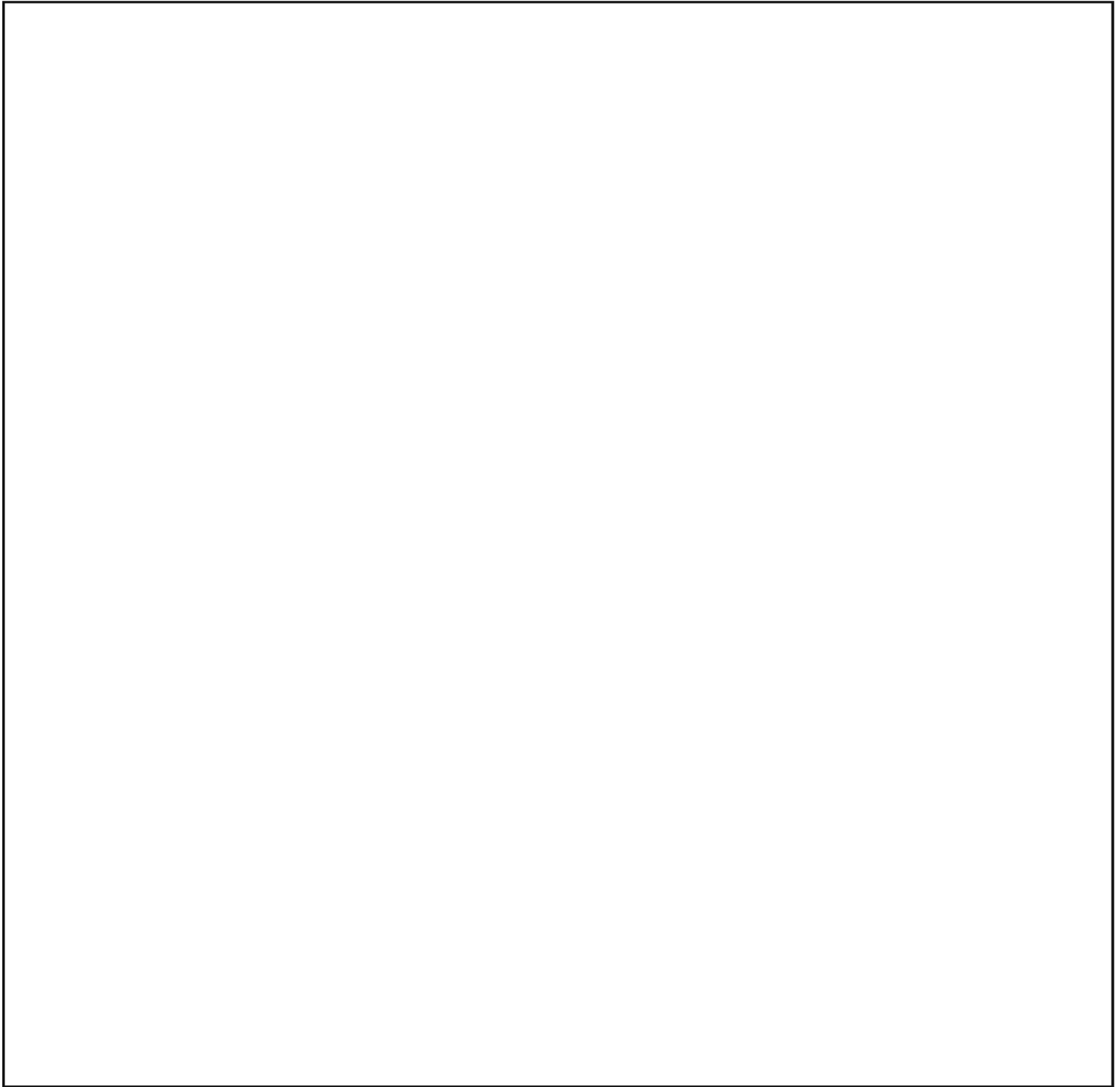
Answer Key Page 7

1. MISSOURI 2. GRAND CANYON, SEVEN 3. RED 4. 160 5. WEST VIRGINIA 6. UNITED STATES 7. FIVE 8. ALASKA 9. MISSISSIPPI 10. UNDERGROUND, FREEDOM

FACT

Artists use rivers to represent the flow of energy, growth, and renewal. Rivers naturally flow and change over time, symbolizing the passage of time and the transformative nature of life.

Create Your Own River Landscape

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing or artistic creation of a river landscape.



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