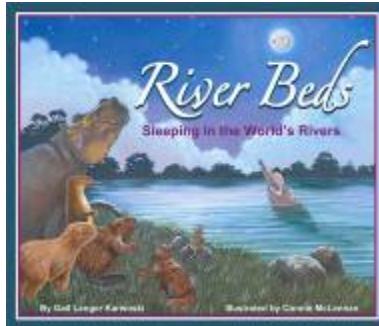


Teaching Activities

for



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Teaching Activities are intended for use at home, in the classroom, and during story-times.

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Questions to ask children before reading the book

- What do you think the book is about by looking at the cover (or one or two of the inside illustrations)? *Sometimes it is easy to tell from the cover, other times it is not.*
- What does the cover illustration show?
- Does the title tell you what the book is about?
- Is there a subtitle to give more information?

What do children already know?

- Young children are naturally inquisitive and are sponges for information. The whole purpose of this activity is to help children verify the information they know (or think they know) and to get them thinking “beyond the box” about a particular subject.
- The children should write down their “concepts” (or adults for them if the children are not yet writing) on the provided chart found on the next page.
- Use the questions to get children thinking about what they already know. Feel free to add more questions or thoughts according to the child(ren) involved.

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What do children already know?—activity chart

Ask children to write down what they think they know before reading the book. If the information is verified while reading the book, they check “yes.” If the information is wrong, they mark “no” and cross it off, then write the correct information. Have the children note how the information was verified.

<u>What do I think I know?</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Verified</u>
Why do animals need to sleep?			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other
Do all animals sleep in beds like we do?			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other
What are some mammals that live in or around rivers?			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other
How do some mammals that live in or around rivers sleep?			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other
What are some mammal behaviors that help them live around rivers?			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other
What are some physical adaptations that help mammals live in or around rivers?			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other

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Use this chart for any other thoughts the children might have.

What do I think I know?	Yes	No	Verified
			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other
			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other
			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other
			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other
			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other
			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other
			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other
			Text Illustration Info in FCM Other

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After reading the book – writing prompts & thinking it through

- Did the cover “tell” you what the book was about?
- What does the word “riverbed” mean? Is that what the author meant when she titled the book “River Beds?” Why or why not?
- What animals are on the cover of the book?
- Would you be able to find all those animals in one place like that? Why or why not?
- Draw your own cover.
- Write a song about sleeping by a river.
- Can you think of another title for the book?
- Some of the illustrations have buildings that might be found in that geographic area. Do the buildings look the same as buildings where you live? Why or why not?

Re-read the book looking for more information

Go back and re-read the book studying each page carefully.

- What, if any, facts are mentioned in the text?
- What can be seen or inferred from the illustrations that is not or are not mentioned in the text?
- Pause during second readings and ask the child(ren) if they remember how each animal sleeps.

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What do children already know—activity conclusion

- Do the children have any more questions about mammals that live and sleep in and around rivers? If so, write them down on the chart.
- Identify whether the information was verified and how.
- If the concept is correct, make a note of how the information was confirmed (illustration, in text, or the “For Creative Minds” section)
- If the concept was not correct, what IS the correct information – with confirmation notes as above.
- If the concept was neither confirmed nor denied, look the information up in a reliable source and note where it was confirmed.
- Wrap it all up by adding notes with new information that the children learned either through the reading or the research while looking up something else.

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Language Arts

Developing a vocabulary “word wall”

If using the book as a way to introduce a topic or subject, this is also a great way to introduce subject-related vocabulary words. If you don't have the time (or the inclination) to develop the “word wall” by playing the Vocabulary Game (below), we have provided a vocabulary list for you.

Vocabulary words for the “word wall” may be written on index cards, on a poster board, or on a chalk board. If writing on poster board or chalk board, you might want to sort into nouns, verbs, etc. right away to save a step later. Leaving the words posted (even on a refrigerator at home) allows the children to see and think about them frequently.

Vocabulary game

This activity is designed to get children thinking of vocabulary words which will then be used as the beginning vocabulary list for a science lesson.

Select an illustration and give children a specific length of time (five minutes?) to write down all the words they children can think of about the particular subject. *If you do not have classroom sets of the book, it is helpful to project an illustration on a white board. Check Web site (www.SylvanDellPublishing.com) for book “previews” that may be used for this purpose.*

The children's word list should include anything and everything that comes to mind, including nouns, verbs, and adjectives. At the end of the time period, have each child take turns reading a word from his/her list. If anyone else has the word, the reader does nothing. If however, the reader is the only one with the word, he/she should circle it. While reading the list, one person should write the word on a flashcard or large index card and post it on a bulletin board or wall.

At the end, the child with the most words circled “wins.” And you have a start to your science vocabulary list. *Note if a child uses an incorrect word, this is a good time to explain the proper word or the proper usage.*

Putting it all together

The following activities may be done all together or over a period of several days.

- Continue to add words to the vocabulary list as children think of them.
- Sort vocabulary words into nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. and write what they are on the backs of the cards. When the cards are turned over, all you will see is “noun,” etc. *(These can then be used to create silly sentences, below.)*
- Now sort the vocabulary words into more specific categories. For example, nouns can be divided into plants, animals, rocks, minerals, etc. They can be divided into living/non-living, or into habitat-related words.
- Have children create sentences using their vocabulary words. Each sentence could be written on a separate slip of paper.
- Have children (individually or in small groups) sort and put sentences into informative paragraphs or a story.
- Edit and re-write paragraphs into one informative paper or a story.

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Suggested vocabulary list

<u>Nouns</u>	<u>verbs</u>	<u>adjectives</u>
air	adapt	Asian
animals	breathe	biggest
bank	burrow	blind
beavers	buzz	cold
bed	click	cool
belly	crawl	cozy
boto	curl	dark
burrow	dream	dense
capybara	flow	dry
coat	groom	fast-moving
dens	listen	flat
dolphin	lumber	front
fish	nap	full
flipper	nibble	grey
fur	nurse	heavy
grass	nuzzle	hind
herd	rest	hollow
hippo	search	hot
ice	sleep	little
lodge	slumber	long
mammals	soothe	narrow
otters	stretch	nearly
platypus	swim	pink
reed	touch	quiet
river	tuck	rich
riverbeds	waddle	river
rodent	yawn	short-clawed
stream		slow-moving
tail		snug
tunnel		stubby
water		tea-colored
whiskers		tender
		underwater
		warm
		young

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Silly sentence structure activity

This is a fun activity that develops both an understanding of sentence structure and the science subject. Use words from the "word wall" to fill in the blanks. After completing silly sentences for fun, have children try to fill in the proper words by looking for the information in the book.

All ______{noun}s have behavioral or physical traits that help them ______{verb} to their environment.

______{noun}s use their long, thick ______{noun}s to warn others of danger.

______{noun} dolphins can turn their necks so they can look 90° in any direction.

______{noun} have eyes and ears close to the top of their heads so they can see and hear while ______{verb}ing

______{noun} have their eyes, ears, and nostrils high on their heads so they can stay in the ______{noun} most of the day

The ______{noun} bill is both a nose and a mouth.

River otters have very ______{adjective} ______{noun} to keeps them warm in cold water.

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Riddle me this—Who am I?

I sleep by the side of a stream that flows into the Mississippi and play chase with my brother before going to sleep. I am a(n) _____.

I have a long, flat tail that I use to slap the water to warn my family of danger. I sleep in a lodge. I am a(n)_____.

I am a dolphin that lives and sleeps in the rich-colored waters of the Amazon. I am a(n) _____.

I am the world’s biggest rodent and live in the same area as the boto dolphin. I am a(n) _____.

The entrance to my grass-lined, warm, cozy den is from the Thames river. I am a(n) _____.

I move around and use other animals’ dens to sleep. I am a(n) _____.

I am almost blind and only sleep a few seconds at a time. I am a(n) _____.

I like to sleep while lying in the Nile River. I keep my eyes, ears, and nose above water while I sleep. I am a(n)_____.

I crawl into my warm cozy den on the side of the Brisbane River in Australia to sleep. I am a(n) _____.

I like to curl up in my own warm, cozy bed. I am a(n) _____.

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River Beds

Sleeping in the World's Rivers

Word search

Find the hidden words. Even non-reading children can try to match letters to letters to find the words! Easy – words go up to down or left to right.

For older children, identify the coordinates of the first letter in each word (number, letter).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	H	A	T	B	O	T	T	E	R	D
2	I	S	L	E	E	P	N	A	P	M
3	P	I	C	A	P	Y	B	A	R	A
4	P	O	Z	V	L	H	I	P	I	M
5	O	B	R	E	A	T	H	E	V	M
6	M	L	A	R	T	A	Q	D	E	A
7	I	O	V	S	Y	E	S	E	R	L
8	N	D	O	L	P	H	I	N	S	S
9	K	G	L	F	U	R	T	A	I	L
10	T	E	O	M	S	N	O	O	Z	E

___, ___ RIVERS
___, ___ OTTER
___, ___ DEN
___, ___ DOLPHINS
___, ___ VOLE
___, ___ PLATYPUS

___, ___ SLEEP
___, ___ BEAVERS
___, ___ LODGE
___, ___ MINK
___, ___ FUR
___, ___ BREATHE

___, ___ MAMMALS
___, ___ SNOOZE
___, ___ TAIL
___, ___ CAPYBARA
___, ___ HIPPO
___, ___ NAP

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Science

Classifying animals

Animals can be sorted too. What are some attributes you might use to sort animals?

- By habitat
- Do they have a backbone?
- Do they have arms or legs?
- How many legs do they have?
- Do they have stripes or patterns on their bodies?
- Do they walk, swim, jump, or fly?

Some things are very easy for scientists to sort or classify, other things are not so easy. The first question they will ask is whether the item is (or was) alive or not. Both plants and animals are living things.

If the item in question is an animal, like the animals in the story, scientists will then ask other questions:

- Does it have hair or fur, feathers, or dry skin or scales?
- Does it get oxygen from air (lungs) or water (gills)?
- Are the babies born alive or from eggs?
- Does the baby drink milk from its mother?
- Is it warm or cold-blooded?
- How many body parts does the animal have?

By answering these (and other) questions, scientists can sort or classify the animals into “classes” such as mammal, bird, reptile, fish, amphibian, or insect.

All of the animals in this book are mammals. Even though they may live in or around water, they still breathe oxygen from air, not water.

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River Beds

Sleeping in the World's Rivers

Activity or sorting cards

Sort the animals by different attributes such as:

- webbed feet or not
- flippers or not
- fur or blubber
- live only in water or land and water

 <p>otters</p>	 <p>beaver</p>	 <p>capybara</p>	 <p>vole</p>
 <p>mink</p>	 <p>dolphins</p>	 <p>hippo</p>	 <p>platypus</p>

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Animal card games

Memory Card Game Make two copies of each of the sorting card pages and cut out the cards. Mix them up and place them face down on a table. Taking turns, each player should turn over two cards so that everyone can see. If the cards match, he or she keeps the pair and takes another turn. If they do not match, the player should turn the cards back over and it is another player's turn. The player with the most pairs at the end of the game wins.

Who Am I? Copy or download the cards. Poke a hole through each card and tie onto a piece of yarn. Each child should put on a "card necklace" so that the card is on his/her back. Children should ask "yes/no" questions to guess the animals.

A day in the life of . . .

- Pick an animal from the book and pretend that you are that animal.
- Explain where you live (habitat).
- What do you eat?
- What animals might eat you?
- How do you protect yourself from those animals?
- Where do you sleep or rest?
- Write a paragraph about what you do during the day (or night if nocturnal).

Life Cycles

Pick an animal from the book and research the life cycle of that animal.

- What are the babies called?
- How are the animals born? (hatched from eggs, born alive, etc.)
- How many brothers and sisters might be born at the same time?
- How big is the baby (length, height, weight, etc.) when born?
- What is the "house" like, if applicable (nest, den, burrow)?
- Where is it found (underground, in trees, etc)?
- Which parent(s), if any, are involved in raising the young?
- What does the baby eat and for how long?
- How long will the babies stay with the parent (if parents are involved)?
- When is the "baby" considered an adult?
- How will it find a mate and have babies?
- Who prepares the nest/den and how (if applicable)?
- Some animals are only born at specific times of the year (to coincide with food availability). Is the animal born any time or just during special times of the year?

Adaptations

Adaptations help animals to live in their habitat: to get food and water, to protect themselves from predators, to survive weather, and even to help them make their homes.

- Physical Adaptations include body shape. (teeth, feet, body covering, hair, blubber, ability to move, climb, etc.)
- Camouflage: color of skin or pattern to blend into background.
- Mimicry: Pretending to be something else to fool predators (Katydid)
- Behavior: opossum plays dead, social groups
- Migration: the seasonal movement of animals from one location to another
- Hibernation: a long, deep sleep in which the animals breathing and heartbeat are lower than usual.

Pick an animal from the book and try to figure out some of the animal's adaptations.

- How does it move and what parts of its body does it use to move?
- How does it see?
- How does it hear?
- How does it get its food?
- What parts of its body does it use to gather the food?
- How does it eat its food?
- What parts of the body does it use to eat the food? (teeth are different for carnivores than herbivores...)
- How does it hide from predators or prey (so it can catch the prey)?
- How does it protect itself from predators?
- In what habitat does it live?
- What adaptations does the animal need to help it survive in that habitat? (heat, cold, land, water, underground, high altitude, et.)
- Where does the animal live and does it make a "house?"
- Does it live alone or with a group?
- How does it "communicate" with others of its kind?
- How does it sleep?
- When does it sleep?
- Is food readily available all year?
- How does the animal deal with seasonal changes (if applicable)?

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Science journal

Have children draw a picture to define the vocabulary word or concept.

get oxygen from air through lungs

sleep

burrows

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beaver lodge

webbed feet with claws

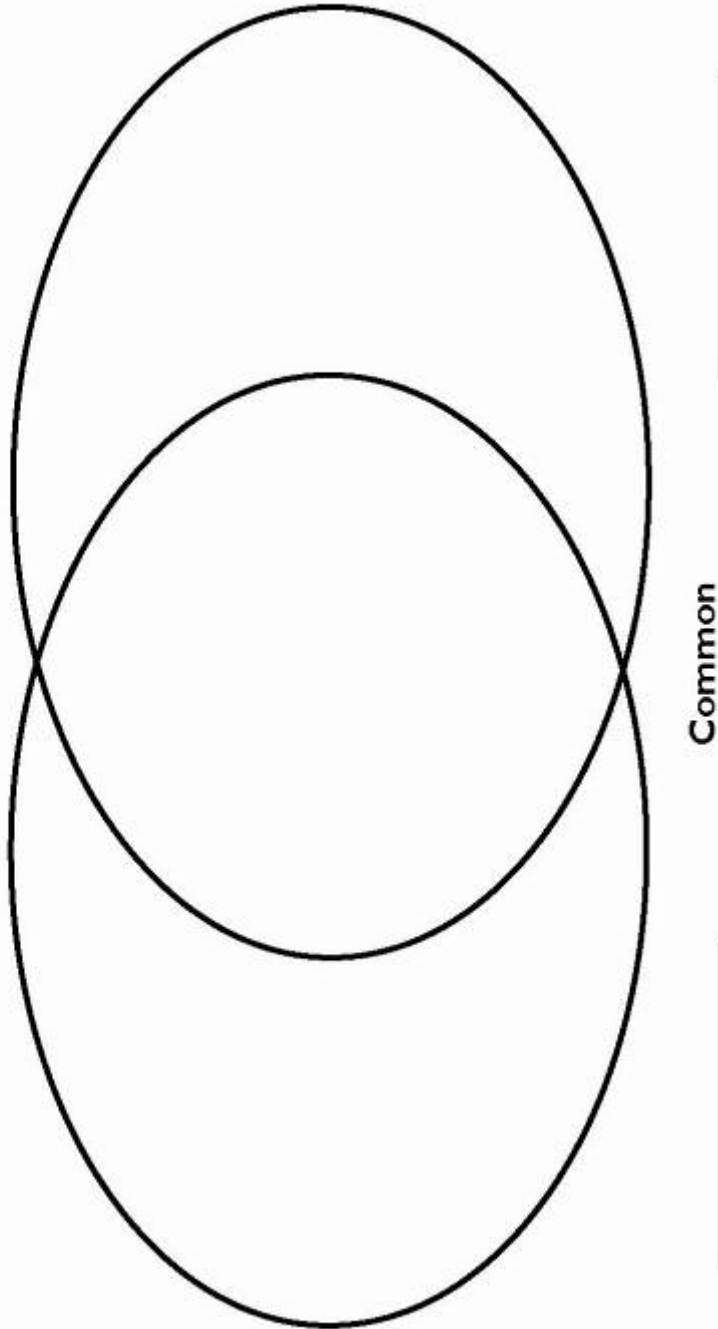
flippers

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Venn diagram

Two Animal Comparison

Pick any two animals and compare and contrast them.



Math

Measuring (comparing and contrasting)

Animals come in all shapes and sizes. Some animals are so small, they can only be seen with a microscope. Other animals (blue whales) are so big that they are the size of a school bus when they are born!

animal	average length/height (Male)	average weight (Male)	stay under water to hide up to
Beavers	41 to 46 inches	35 pounds	3 or 4 minutes
Capybaras	42 to 53 inches 13 feet long, 4 1/2 feet high	75 to 145 pounds	5 minutes
Hippos Indus River	5 to 8 feet	up to 8,000 pounds	5-6 minutes
Dolphins	27 1/4 inches	180 to 200 pounds	?
Minks (European) Pink River	6 feet	3 pounds	?
Dolphins	20 inches	up to 350 pounds	?
Platypus	40 inches	5 pounds	14 minutes
River Otters Short Clawed	26-37 inches	25 pounds	4 minutes
Otters	5-9 inches	up to 10 pounds	?
Water voles		less than 1 pound	?

Using the chart above, answer the following questions:

- Which animal is longer: a river otter or a short-clawed otter?
- Which river dolphin is bigger: an Indus River or Boto? Does it depend on anything? If so, what?
- Which animal is similar in its length to your height?
- Which animal is the closest to you in weight?
- Which of the animals weighs the most? The least?
- Which animal can stay underwater for the longest period of time?

Use the length or weight information to put the animals in order on a number line.

Comparing and contrasting by size and weight

It is easy to say that a hippo is 13 feet long or a boto dolphin is 6 feet, but what does that really mean?

What standard measuring tool would you use to measure something in:

- Inches or centimeters
- Feet or meters
- Pounds or kilograms

Try to imagine how big or small the animal is compared to something you know:

If it is small, what are some other things about the same size? *How many pennies, paperclips, quarters, hands, shoes, etc.)*

If it is very big, how many “things” would equal it?

How big is that 13-foot hippo?

- Using the right measuring tool (yard stick or measuring tape) and chalk, mark off how big 13 feet is on the playground, sidewalk, or driveway.
- If you were to lie down on or next to the line, how many times would you have to lie down in order to equal the size of the hippo?
- If someone shorter or taller than you did it, how many times do they have to lie down?
- How many times would an adult have to lie down?
- What does it weigh?

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Research and geography

Using the information in the book, draw a line from the animal to the river where the animal lives.



River otter



Beaver



Voles



Mink



Short-clawed otter



Boto dolphin



Capybara



Hippo



Indus River Dolphin



Platypus



The Mississippi River runs from the north to the south on what continent?

The Thames River is in Great Britain. This island nation is off the west coast of what continent? _____

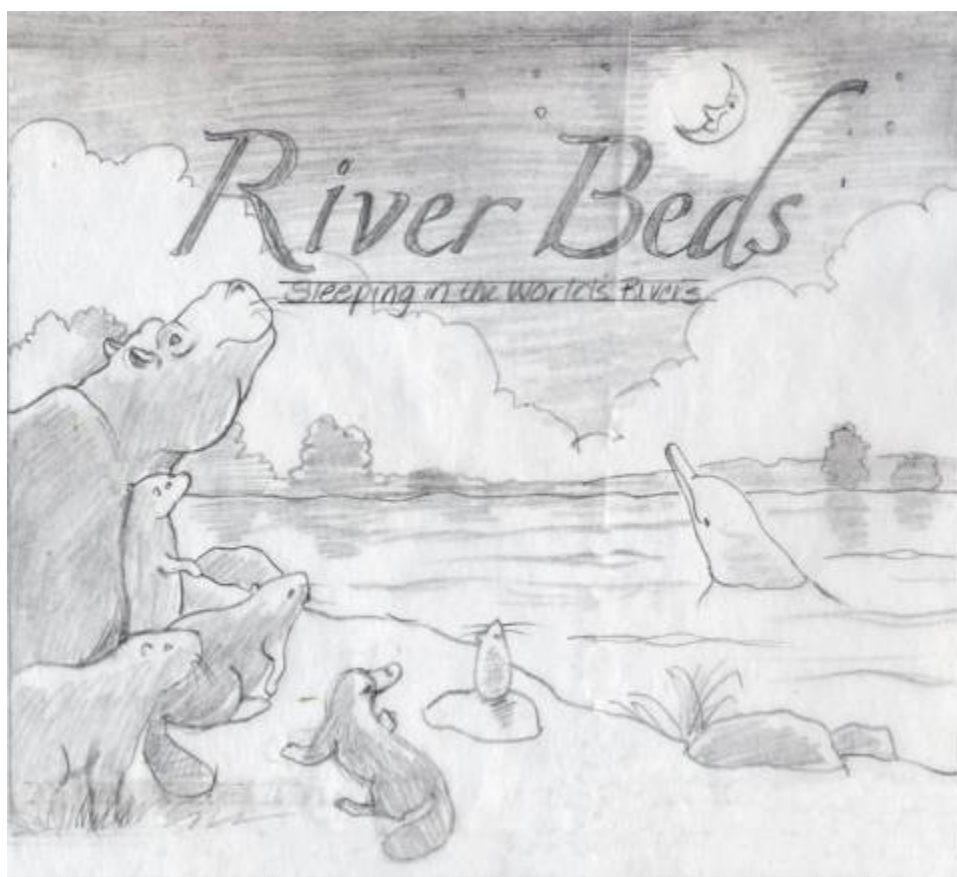
The Amazon River flows through what continent? _____

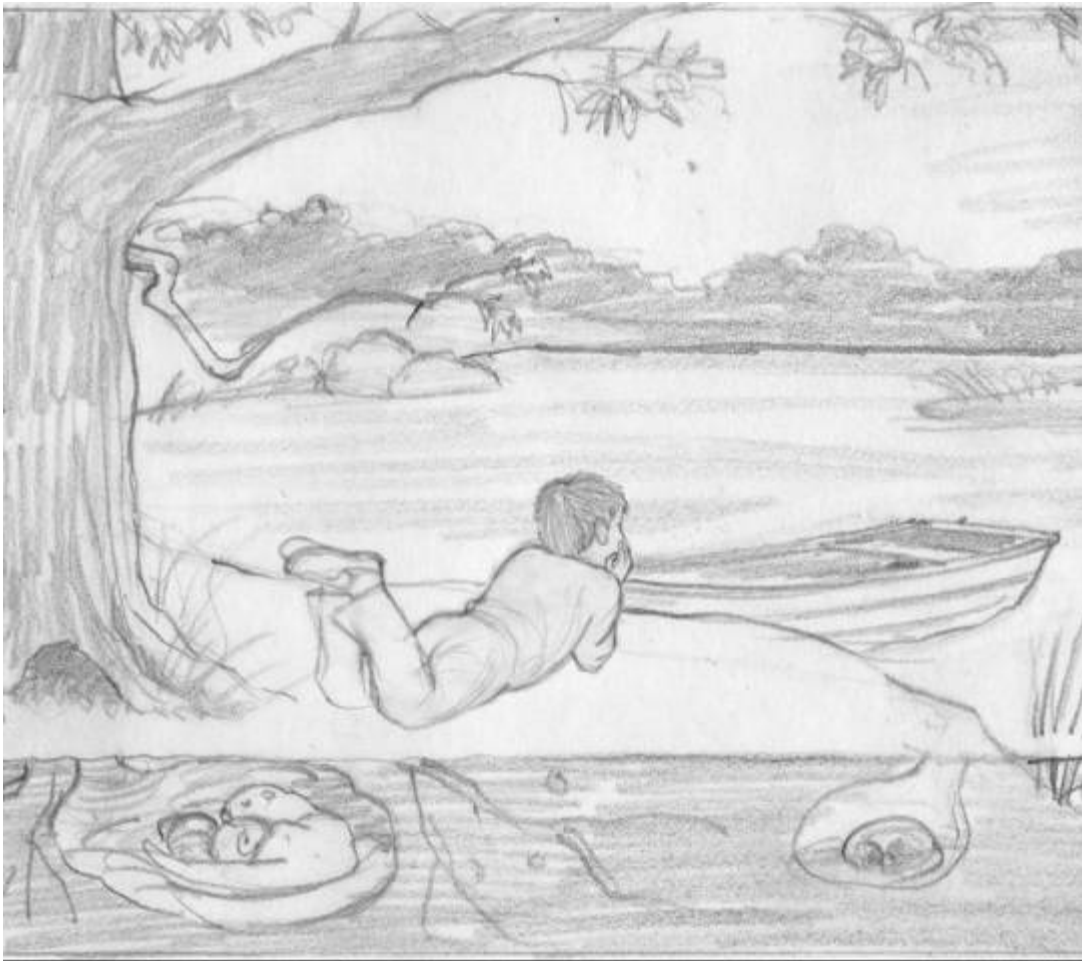
The Nile River flows south to north in what continent? _____

On what continent is the Brisbane River? _____

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Other—Coloring Pages
Sketches by Connie McLennan





River Beds sketches by Connie McLennan

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