

SECTION 2-1**SECTION SUMMARY****Streams and Rivers****Guide for Reading**

- 2**
- ◆ What is a river system?
 - ◆ How does a river change the land around it?
 - ◆ What conditions can cause a flood?

A river begins when trickles of water flowing over the ground join together to form streams. The water that flows over the ground is called **runoff**. **Tributaries** are smaller streams and rivers that feed into a main river. **A river and all its tributaries together make up a river system.** The land area that supplies water to a river system is called a **watershed**. One watershed is separated from another by a ridge of land called a **divide**.

Rivers wear away landforms through erosion and build new landforms through deposition. **Erosion** is the process by which water breaks off pieces of soil and rock from the ground and carries them away. **Deposition** is the process by which pieces of soil and rock settle out of the water in a new place. The pieces of soil and rock that are moved by erosion and deposition are called **sediments**.

A river is made up of several parts, each with its own characteristics. The streams at the river's source are called the **headwaters**. As the river flows downhill, its channel becomes wider and deeper. Farther along, the river flows through a wide, flat valley called the **flood plain**. Looping curves called **meanders** and crescent-shaped **oxbow lakes** form in the flood plain. At its **mouth**, the river flows into a larger river, a lake, or an ocean. Here, the river deposits most of its sediments. These deposits build up to form a **delta**. Factors that affect how fast a river flows include the slope of the land, the volume of water, and the shape of the river channel.

A river provides habitats for many living things. Some organisms live in the river. They obtain nutrients and dissolved gases from the water. Other organisms find shelter and food on the river's banks.

A flood occurs when the volume of water in a river increases so much that the river overflows its channel. Flooding can be controlled with dams and levees. **Levees** are deposits that build up into long ridges next to a river's channel. Sometimes people build up natural levees to provide further protection against floods. However, built-up levees can make flooding worse for areas farther downstream.

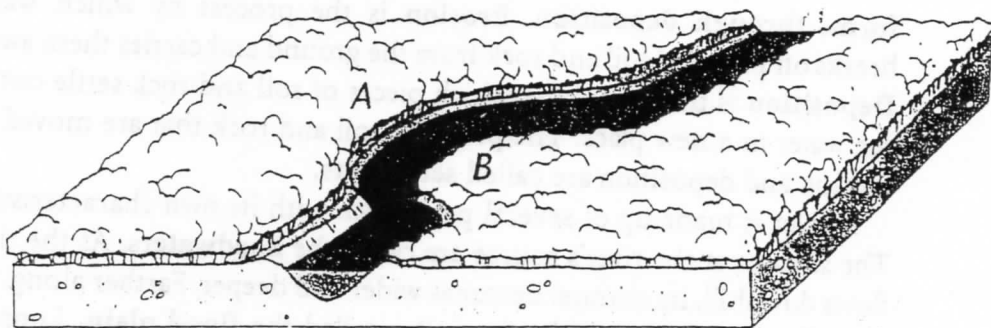
SECTION 2-1 REVIEW AND REINFORCE

Streams and Rivers

◆ Understanding Main Ideas

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What factors determine whether water soaks into the ground or flows over the ground as runoff?
2. Draw a simple sketch of a river system. Include and label the following: headwaters, tributary, oxbow lake, meander, flood plain, delta, and mouth.



3. This picture shows a river meander. Name and describe the process that is occurring at Point A and the process that is occurring at Point B.
4. How can building up natural levees with stone and concrete often make flooding worse downstream?

◆ Building Vocabulary

Choose the word that best completes each sentence.

5. The land area that supplies water to a river system is called a(n) _____.
6. Water that flows over the ground surface is called _____.
7. The broad, flat valley through which a river flows is a(n) _____.
8. A ridge of land that separates one watershed from another is a(n) _____.
9. A looping curve in a river is a(n) _____.
10. The process by which fragments of soil and rock are left behind as moving water slows down is called _____.

2

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