

# Unit 5 Great rivers

## Reading

1 Read the article below.

### Passage A: Amazon facts

What makes the Amazon the greatest river in the world is the volume of water that it carries; it **produces** 20% of the world's river water. Although the Nile river in Africa is the longest river in the world (at 6650km long to the Amazon's approximate 6280km), the Nile does not carry a 60th of the amount of water that the Amazon does, because the latter river drains the

entire northern half of the South American continent. The torrential tropical rains deluge the rainforests with over 10 metres a year, and rainfall in the region is a near daily **occurrence**. The Amazon is also the world's widest river (6–10km), and the mouth of the Amazon, where it meets the sea, is so **deep** as well as wide that ocean-going ships have navigated its waters far inland. It becomes even wider when it floods in the wet season.

The precise source of the Amazon was only recently discovered, although the **origins** of most of the Earth's great rivers have been known for some time, and the quest to find the Amazon's origin in the most inaccessible part of the world had intrigued **explorers** for centuries. Determining the source of the Amazon has been so difficult because of a combination of unfriendly terrain, high altitudes, cold winds and the large number of potential headwater streams that needed to be investigated. What defines a river's origin is the most distant point from the mouth (as **measured** along the river's course and not by the way the crow flies) from which water flows year round along the main trunk of the river, not including the tributaries.

In 2001 a 22-member international team of mappers and explorers, **sponsored** by the National Geographic Society, claimed to have pin-pointed the source of the Amazon river. The team explored five different headwater streams in the Andes before they were **convinced** that they had **definitely** discovered the place where drops of water first collect to form the mighty Amazon. According to the team, the Amazon's origin is a small mountain stream that flows from the sides of Nevado Mismi, a 5600 metre mountain in southern Peru. A global positioning system (GPS), linked to a network of satellites, was employed to precisely locate the source, which is less than 160km from the Pacific Ocean.

Famously, the Amazon river is home to many exotic and **extreme** tropical creatures, such as cafish, anaconda (biggest snake) and piranha (most ferocious fish), as well as the macaws and tapirs which add their colours and sounds to the jungle.



# Language and Style

2 Fill in the parts of speech table below, which contains the words in bold from Passage A. In some cases you may be able to find more than one word, and in others none. Be careful with spelling!

noun	adjective	verb	adverb
		produces	
occurrence			
	deep		
origins			
explorers			
		measured	
		sponsored	
		convinced	
			definitely
	extreme		

3 Circle all the commas in Passage A and study their usage. Work out and define the four ways in which commas are used, giving an example of each.

a \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

For example: \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_  
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For example: \_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_  
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For example: \_\_\_\_\_

d \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

For example: \_\_\_\_\_

4a Complex sentences are constructed by linking subordinate clauses to a main clause using connectives or participles (present or past, with or without a preposition). Underline examples of different types of linking in Passage A.

b Link the three simple sentences below into one **complex** sentence in as many ways as you can. You may need to make changes to the grammar or word order. (Note that *and*, *but* and *so* make **compound** and not complex sentences.)

i The source of the Amazon has only recently been discovered.

ii The source is located 160 km from the Pacific Ocean.

iii Explorers tried for centuries to discover the river's source.

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## Comprehension and Summary

5 In two sentences, using connectives and/or participles, summarise the information in the first paragraph of Passage A.

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# Reading

6 Read the article below.

## Passage B: Life and death on the Nile

For Egyptians, farmers and fishermen, the Nile is not just a beautiful view, it is a gift, without which there could be no Egypt, only a scorched wasteland. In a country which does not receive much rainfall, the river is their livelihood. It covers only 4% of the country but its banks are where almost all of the 67 million Egyptians live. The Nile irrigates corn crops and citrus orchards, and provides water for herds of cows and for doing the laundry. Its seasons are the rhythms of the Egyptian way of life; when it floods every July, locals move to higher ground until it subsides three months later.

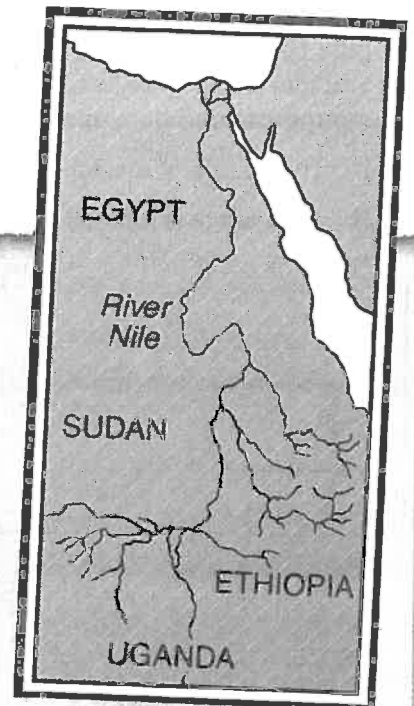
The waters of the Nile flow for nearly 7000 km, from the jungles of Uganda through the deserts of Sudan to arrive at Cairo, Africa's largest city. For centuries no one knew where it began, and the whereabouts of its source was a legend and a quest – a dangerous one, as the Nile contains crocodiles – and intruders into the heart of Africa were often not welcomed by the natives. The source was finally discovered in the mid 19th century.

The world's longest river is a personality in myth as well as in reality. It features in many memorable scenes in the Bible and in literature, ancient and modern. It was assigned to the god Isis, to be honoured with offerings of food, and it was believed that the pharaohs could control it through their magical powers. The pyramids could not have been built without the means of transport provided by the great river.

There is a superstition among the locals that the river is inhabited by creatures – half-human and half-fish – who sometimes take a fancy to humans and take them to live with them at

the bottom of the river. They also believe that the river is owned by 'djinnns' who must be fed and kept happy or they will cause harm. The Egyptian queen Cleopatra was nicknamed the Serpent of old Nile, and it was believed that the river mud had creative powers and produced snakes. Many films and books have used the romantic and threatening setting of the river, including the famous Agatha Christie detective novel *Death on the Nile*.

Since the advent of cruise liners and the invasion of tourists, however, life on the riverbank has changed, and Egyptians say that the Nile is no longer theirs. Although it is, in fact, chemical fertilisers which are largely responsible, the locals believe that the leisure boats have polluted the water. And they watch as the great city of Cairo continues to spread its garish hotels and grey apartment blocks along the banks in a ribbon development which shows no signs of ever stopping.





9 The extract on page 51 describes the River Congo. Choose five words or phrases which convey the feeling of:

a mystery

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b threat

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## Comprehension and Summary

10 List the facts and the fictions about the River Nile from Passage B.

**facts**

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**fictions**

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**11** List the similarities and differences between the Nile and the Amazon from Passages A and B.

**similarities**

**differences**


**12** You are the presenter of a television holiday programme. Chair the discussion between two studio guests who are comparing their impressions and experiences of recent river cruises, one on the Amazon and the other on the Nile. Base what they say on what you have read in **both** passages.

**Presenter:** So, can you each tell us what struck you most about your recent holiday?

**Amazon cruiser:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Directed Writing

13 Look at the following adverts for trips.

Explore the cultural sights and sites of Europe! Prices include scheduled flights, three- or four-star hotel accommodation including breakfast, sightseeing itinerary and guides, and the services of a tour manager.

## **Classical Spain**

- Seven days from just €479

*Departs 29th April, 15th May, 12th June, 7th October*

This tour begins in Malaga, where you will stay for one night. The next day you travel to Ronda, a town split by an impressive gorge. The two halves of the town are joined by a huge 18th-century stone bridge. On to Jerez, famous for its sherry, and then to the beautiful city of Seville for three nights. On day five you will go on to Cordoba, famous for its bullfights and the Mezquita, the grandest mosque constructed in the Moorish world. You will then continue to Granada for the next two nights to view the extraordinary Alhambra Palace.

## **Berlin, Prague and Dresden**

- Seven days from just €499

*Departs 27th May, 22nd July and 16th September*

Visit the Czech Republic and Germany, and experience the diverse cities and cultures of three famous antique cities. You will fly to Berlin and travel on to Dresden for a two-night stay, where you can view the superb Baroque architecture and the many art treasures on display. Travel on to Prague, where you will spend two nights. Your walking tour of the city will introduce you to six centuries of stunning architecture and the magnificent River Vltava. Finally, you will return to Berlin for the last two nights. Once the cultural capital of Europe, this city has much of historical interest to offer the visitor, including the remains of the former Berlin Wall.

## **Undiscovered Paris**

- Five days from just €499

*Departs on selected days from March to November*

An unusual and interesting range of visits and excursions is included in this tour. You will see the Marais district, where the French Revolution began; the Île de la Cité, home of Notre Dame and the original city; rue Mouffetard in the Latin Quarter; and the Père Lachaise cemetery, final resting place of Edith Piaf, Oscar Wilde, Gustav Eiffel and Chopin. You will visit other famous landmarks on a coach tour by night, when they are beautifully illuminated. As well as these guided tours, you will have plenty of free time to explore, to go shopping in the Montmartre district, to visit the Louvre and other famous art galleries, and to walk by the River Seine.





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