

What is a river?

A river is a moving body of water that flows from its source on high ground, across land, and then into another body of water, which could be a lake, the sea, an ocean or even another river.

A river flows along a channel with banks on both sides and a bed at the bottom. If there is lots of rainfall, or snow or ice melting, rivers often rise over the top of their banks and begin to flow onto the floodplains at either side.

How are rivers formed?

Rivers usually begin in **upland** areas, when rain falls on high ground and begins to flow downhill. They always flow downhill because of gravity.

They then flow across the land - **meandering** - or going around objects such as hills or large rocks. They flow until they reach another body of water.

As rivers flow, they **erode** the land. Over a long period of time rivers create **valleys**, or gorges and canyons if the river is strong enough to erode rock. They take the **sediment** and carry it along with them.

Small rivers are usually known as streams, brooks or creeks. If they flow from underground they are called springs.

Facts about the River Thames

Length	356km
Source of river	Thames head, Gloucestershire
Mouth of river	Thames Estuary, Southend-on-Sea
First bridge built	AD 50
Number of bridges	200+
Last time the river froze	1814



The Millennium bridge is one of the newest crossings across the River Thames in London. It opened in the year 2000.

Key Vocab

River	a moving body of water that flows from its source into another body of water
Source	the beginning of a stream of water e.g. the source of the River Thames
Meander	A winding curve or bend in a river
Upland	an area of high or hilly land
Erosion	When rocks and sediments are picked up and moved to another place by ice, water, wind or gravity
Sediment	Sediment is solid material that is moved and deposited in a new location. Sediment can consist of rocks and minerals
Valley	A long depression in the land surface, usually containing a river, formed by erosion or movements in the earth's crust.
Mountain	areas of land that are much higher than the land surrounding them
Volcano	A volcano is an opening in Earth's crust.

What are mountains?

Mountains are areas of land that are much higher than the land surrounding them. They are higher and usually steeper than a hill and are generally over 600 metres high.

They are often found together in a group called a mountain range.

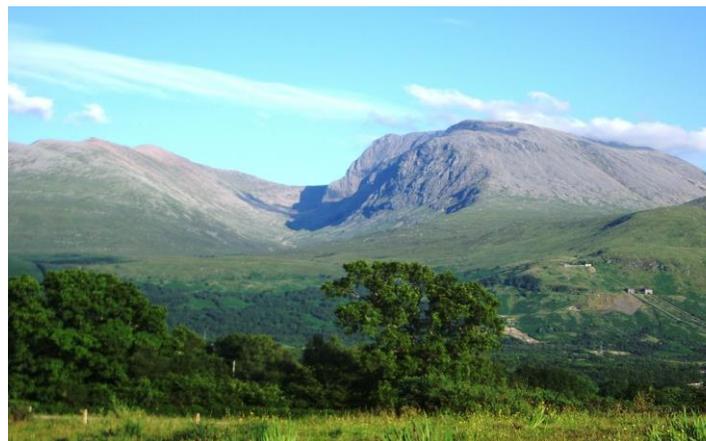
Some well-known mountain ranges in the four countries that make up the UK include:

the Grampians in
Scotland

the Pennines in England

Snowdonia in Wales

the Mourne Mountains
in Northern Ireland



Ben Nevis in Scotland was once a very large **active volcano**. It last erupted millions of years ago and the eruption was so violent that it caved in on itself.



The highest mountains in the UK are:

Ben Nevis in Scotland (also the highest in the UK)

Scafell Pike in England

Slieve Donard in Northern Ireland

Snowdon in Wales



Photograph taken on the Pennine Way

The Pennines

The Pennines are the longest mountain range in the UK and largest mountain range that is in England.

The Pennine way is a popular hiking trail that runs the entire length of the Pennines.

The West Pennine Moors is an area of the Pennines. They are separated from the main Pennine range by the Irwell Valley.

Rivington Pike is in the West Pennine Moors.