

## **L.O.: To explore different rivers in South America**

About 71 percent of the Earth's surface is water-covered, and the oceans hold about 96.5 percent of all Earth's water. Water also exists in the air as water vapor, in rivers and lakes, in icecaps and glaciers, in the ground as soil moisture and in aquifers, and even in you and your dog.

**There are 76 rivers in the world over 1000 miles long. A lot of people think that rivers always flow south, but 4 of the 10 longest rivers in the world flow north.**

South America is the 4th largest continent in the world by land area. While it is often considered to be its own continent, it is by some definitions a sub-continent of Americas. The continent has many notable features including Angel falls, the Amazon River (the longest river in the world), the Amazon Rainforest, the Atacama Desert and the Andes mountain range. South America is notable for being home to some of the most biodiverse places on Earth.

### **The 6 Longest Rivers in South America**

#### **1. The Amazon River**

The 4,345 mile long Amazon River was considered to be the 2nd longest river in the world until recently, when some Peruvian and Brazilian studies confirmed that it is longer than the Nile. The most distant source of the Amazon is the Mantaro River in Peru.

#### **2. Parana-Rio de la Plata**

Situated in the southern central part of the continent, the Parana River runs through Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil for approximately 3,030 miles. The 3,030 mile long river is the 2nd longest river in South America, and it merges with the Rio-de-la-Plata (which is made up of the Uruguay and Paraguay rivers) before emptying into the Atlantic Ocean.

#### **3. Tocantins-Araguaia**

This 2,270 mile river is composed of two Brazilian rivers which are considered to be the tributaries of the Amazon (which is not the case). The Tocantins drains into the Atlantic alongside the Amazon. The Tocantins is a Tupi language term which refers to Toucan's break while "Araguaia" refers to the River of macaws.

#### **4. Madeira-Mamore-Grande-Caine-Rocha**

The Mamore is a large river in Brazil and Bolivia which merges with Beni to create the Madeira. The Madeira, which is approximately 2,020 miles long, is the most significant Amazon tributary which accounts for over 15% of the Amazon water.

#### **5. Purus River**

The fifth longest river in South America is the Purus River. The Purus River is an Amazon River tributary with a drainage basin which is about 24,389 square miles. The 1,995 mile long river originates in Peru and helps define the Brazil-Peru boundary in Acre state before running along the border of the Santa Rosa-do-Purus national forest.

#### **6. Sao Francisco**

The Sao Francisco River is a 1,811 mile Brazilian river that is the 6th longest river in South America. Prior to colonization, the river was known as "Opava". Sao Francisco rises from the mountain ranges of Canastra in Minas-Gerais state. Sao Francisco traverses through 5 Brazilian states before flowing into the Atlantic Ocean.

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**Task**

1. Research and write down 5 facts about The Amazon River:
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. *“Paraguay gets its energy almost entirely from hydroelectric power, and is the world’s second largest exporter of electricity.”*  
Explain how hydroelectric power is generated.
  
3. *“More than 20 percent of the Amazon rainforest is already gone, and much more is severely threatened as the destruction continues.”*  
How is destruction of the Amazon Forest effecting The Amazon River?
  
4. Research and find the differences between The Nile and The Amazon River.
  
5. What are the four largest drainage systems (rivers) in South America and which major ocean are all these rivers connected to?