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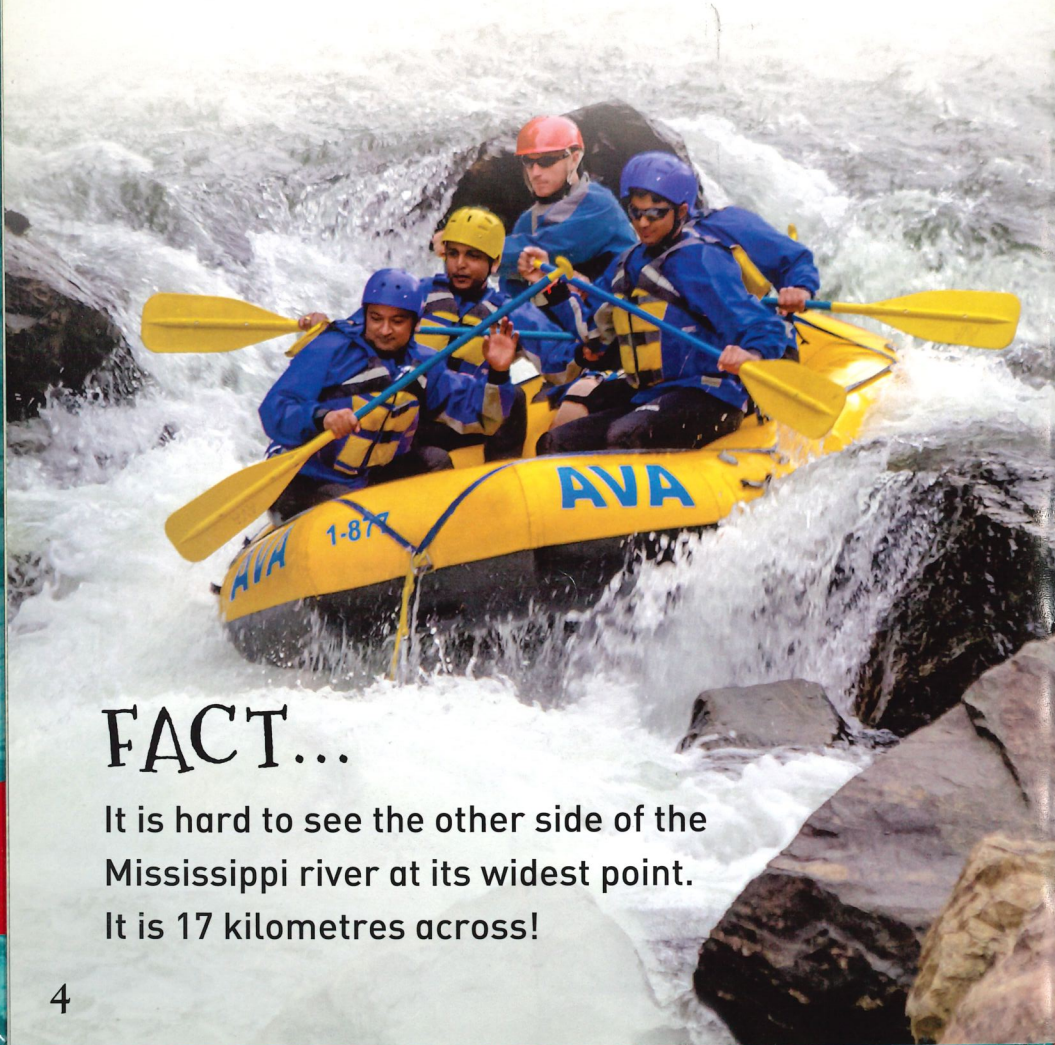
For your free audio download go to

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Happy listening!

Rushing rivers

Rivers can be gushing torrents or narrow streams. A river can be wide, narrow, fast or slow along its route or at different times of the year.

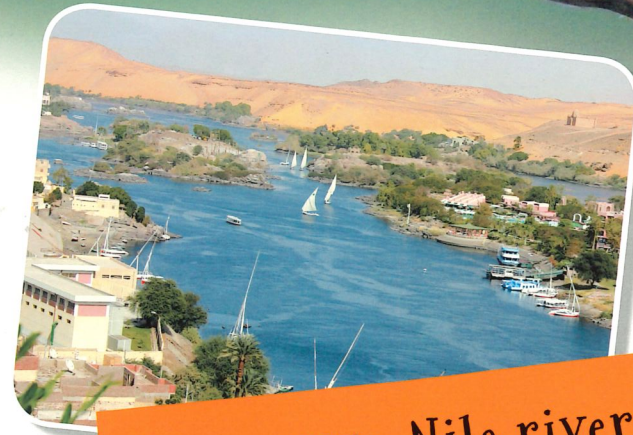


FACT...

It is hard to see the other side of the Mississippi river at its widest point. It is 17 kilometres across!

Rivers are home to lots of animals and plants, and many people live along their banks.

Kingfishers build their nests in river banks and feed on freshwater fish.



SPOTLIGHT: Nile river

Record breaker: longest river in the world
Length: 6695 km
Location: travels through 11 countries
Animals: crocodiles, hippos, fish

From mountain to sea

The beginning of a river is called its source. From there, the river flows downhill towards the sea.

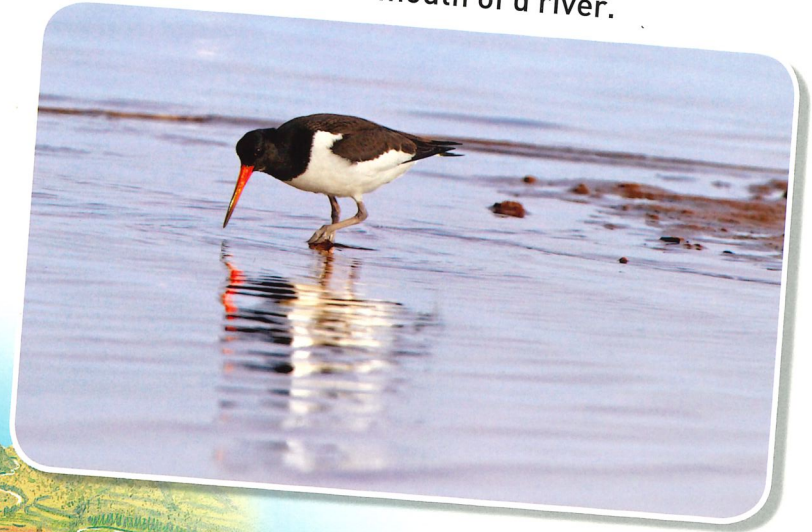


The river flows fast downhill.

The river gets bigger as other rivers and streams join it.

The river reaches flatter ground and slows down. It snakes across the land in big curves.

The oystercatcher finds snails and worms in the mud at the mouth of a river.



The river flows into the sea. This part is called its mouth.

River plants

Rivers make good habitats for plants because plants need water to grow.

Trees that grow alongside rivers have long roots to grip the soil. These roots help to protect the river.



Trees grow along a river in a rainforest in Malaysia.



Giant water lilies have roots underwater.

Plants are important to the life of the river. Their leaves give off a gas called oxygen, which fish and other river life need to breathe. Plants also provide food for animals and safe places to nest or hide.



Reeds make perfect nesting places for water birds.

River animals

Rivers are home to many kinds of fish, frogs and newts. In hot countries reptiles such as turtles, crocodiles and snakes live in rivers.

Most rivers worldwide are home to snails, shrimps, beetles and worms. Many insects, such as dragonflies, live in the water for the first stage of their life.

river turtles

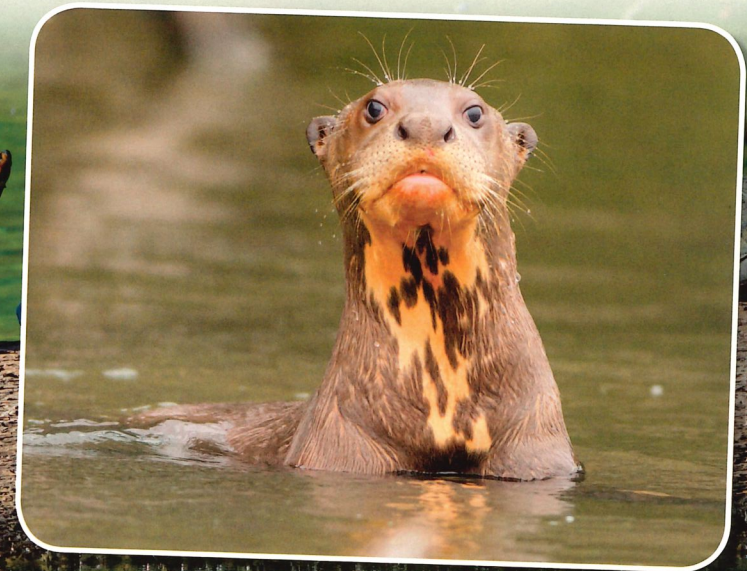


Crocodiles live in rivers in Africa and North and South America.



Water voles nest in holes in river banks. Water birds look for plants to eat, while otters and kingfishers hunt for fish.

A giant otter hunts for fish.



Rivers and people

Many of the world's oldest and most important cities were built on river banks: Cairo is on the River Nile, Rome is on the Tiber and London is on the River Thames.



New York was built at the mouth of the Hudson river.



Thousands of people bathe in the River Ganges in India each year. It is worshipped as a goddess in the Hindu religion.

Some rivers have a special meaning for people. The Ganges river in India is sacred to Hindus; the River Jordan is sacred to Jews, Muslims and Christians.

SPOTLIGHT: Ganges river

Record breaker:	most sacred river to Hindus
Length:	2525 km
Location:	India and Bangladesh
Animals:	Ganges river dolphins, gharials

The mighty Amazon

The Nile is the longest river in the world, but the Amazon is the largest. In the wet season it can be 40 kilometres wide in places.

The Amazon river is home to over 3000 species of fish including the deadly piranha. Anacondas, Amazon river dolphins and turtles are also found swimming in its waters.

Piranhas have sharp teeth and can attack and kill humans.



FACT...

There is only one bridge over the Amazon river, the Manaus-Iranduba bridge in Brazil.

SPOTLIGHT: Amazon river

Record breaker:	largest river in the world
Length:	6437 km
Location:	Brazil, Colombia, Peru
Animals:	anacondas, river dolphins



Using river water

In our homes we use river water for drinking, washing and flushing the toilet. Factories use huge amounts of water to make things, and to cool down machinery. Farmers use water for their animals and to irrigate their crops.

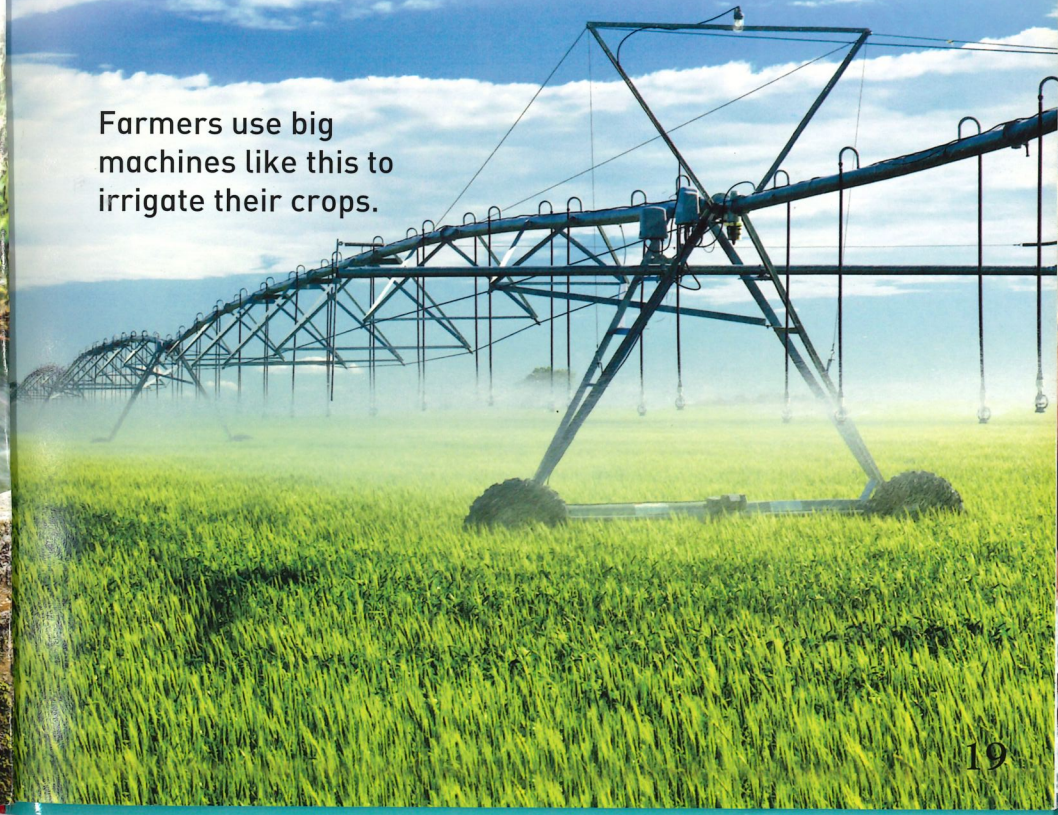


Waterwheels use the energy from fast-running water to drive machines.

If we take too much water from rivers, it may destroy the homes of the animals that live in them. This affects other animals and people, who rely on rivers for food.

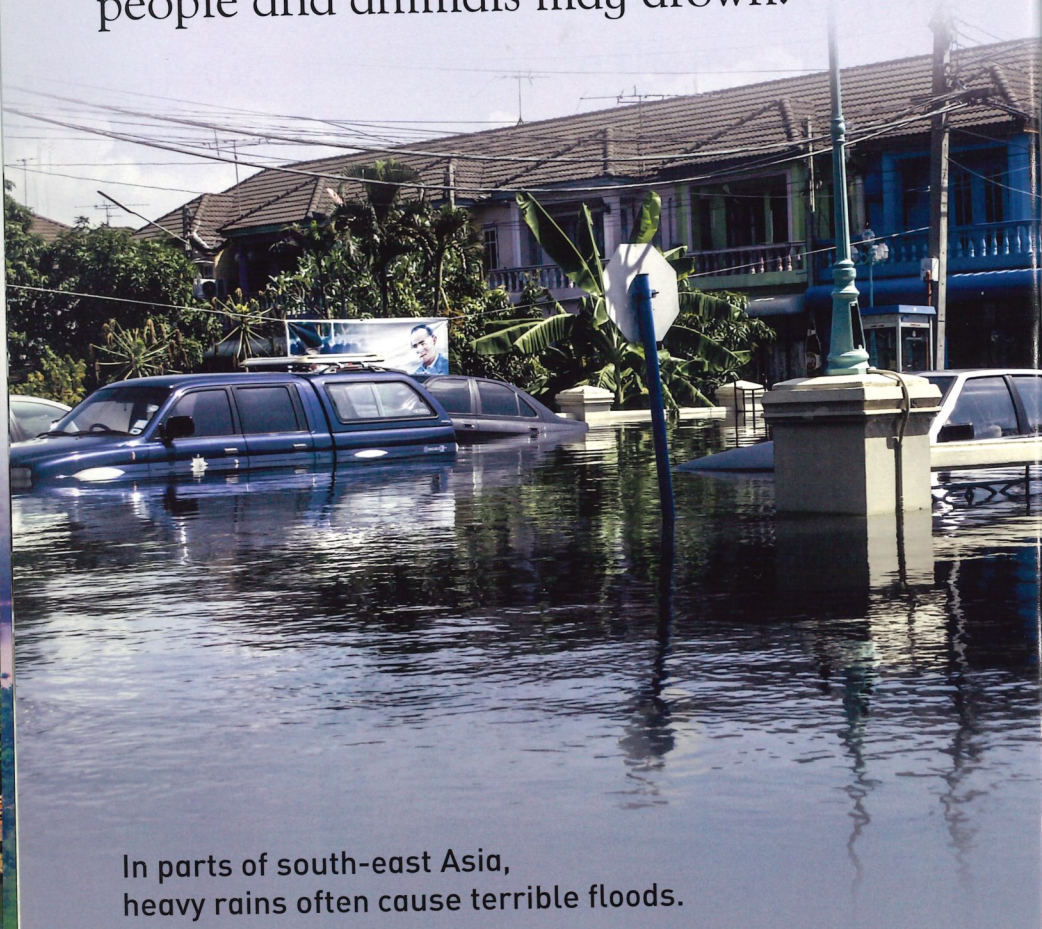


Farmers use big machines like this to irrigate their crops.



Rivers and floods

When snow suddenly melts, or heavy rain falls quickly, rivers can overflow and flood the land. Sudden floods can destroy buildings and crops, and people and animals may drown.



In parts of south-east Asia, heavy rains often cause terrible floods.



These farmers in Thailand are planting rice in flooded fields.

Some rivers flood every year and this can be useful for farmers. In many countries, rice farmers rely on rivers to flood their rice crops.

FACT...

In ancient Egypt, the River Nile flooded every year. The fertile mud helped crops to grow. Good harvests helped Egypt and its people to prosper.

Dams and water power

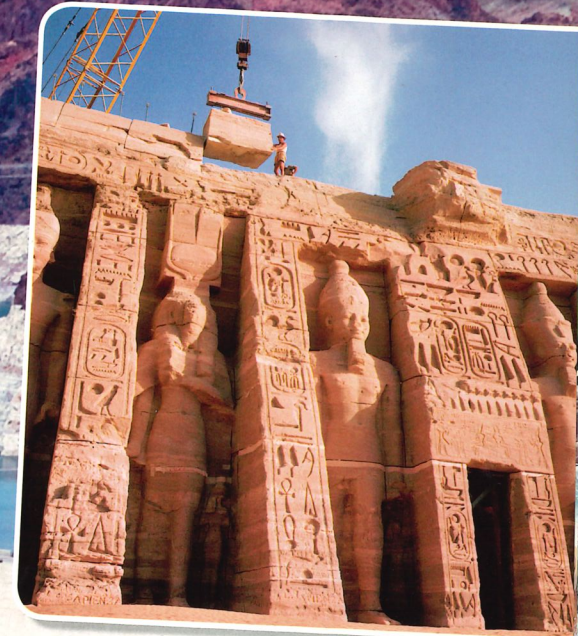
When a dam is built across a river, a big lake called a reservoir collects behind the dam. This reservoir stores fresh water, which is piped to people's homes.

When water is released through tunnels in the dam, the power of the water can be turned into electricity. A quarter of the world's electricity is made from water power.



The Hoover Dam is on the Colorado river in the USA.

The Abu Simbel temple was relocated when Egypt's Aswan Dam was built.



FACT...

When the Aswan Dam was built across the River Nile, about 100,000 people had to be moved.

Transport by water

The longest rivers cross countries and continents. People use them for transporting goods and for travel and adventure.

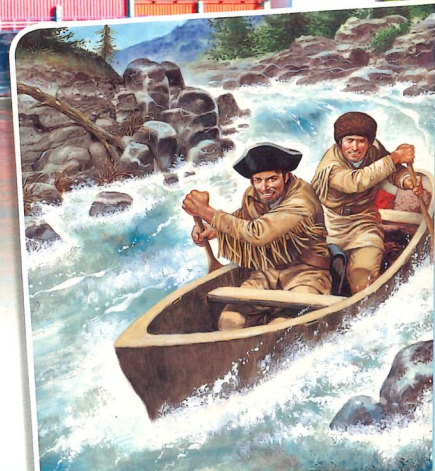
Riverboats come in many shapes and sizes. There are small ferries, pleasure boats and large cruise ships like floating hotels.

A cruise ship on the Yangtze river in China.



Huge barges transport goods to and from factories along the River Rhine, in Germany.

About 200 years ago, two explorers called Meriwether Lewis and William Clark travelled over 12,500 kilometres across America along rivers to reach the Pacific coast.





A peaceful paddle down a river.

Fun on the river

Many rivers are beautiful places where people can relax and have fun. In places where the water flows slowly, people enjoy swimming or boating. In places where the river flows swiftly, kayaking is an exciting river sport.

Many people enjoy fishing in rivers as a fun sport. If they catch a fish, they may quickly free the hook from the fish's mouth and return it to the water.



Dragon-boats race along the rivers in China. The rowers pull the oars in time with the beating drum.



Save your river!

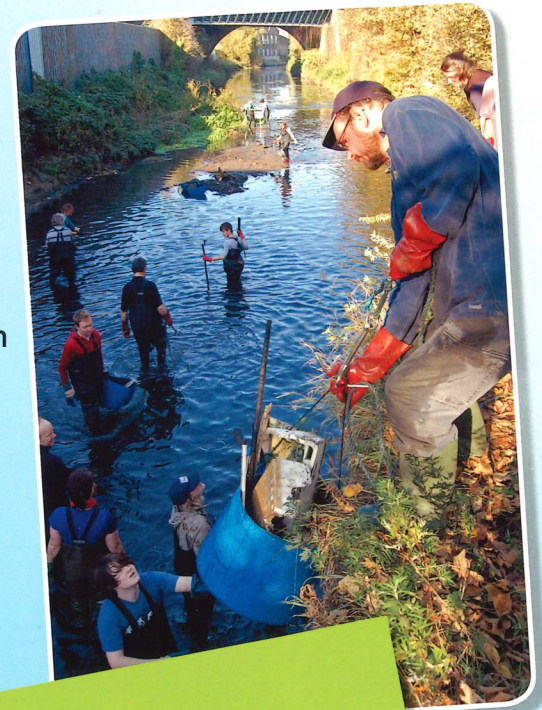
People can easily pollute rivers. Factories pour their waste into rivers or pump warm water into them after using it to cool machines. Fertilizers from farms run into the water. All this waste can harm river life.



Adding dirty water to rivers harms plant and animal life.

FACT...

Every year in the USA, thousands of people help to clean up local rivers. So far, 900 tonnes of rubbish have been removed from the water.



Volunteers clear rubbish out of the River Wandle in London, United Kingdom.

How to help rivers

- Save water whenever you can
- Join a wildlife group
- Don't throw litter or other waste into rivers or streams

GLOSSARY

banks The sides of a river.

crops Plants grown by farmers for food.

dam A wall built across a river to hold back the water.

discharge The amount of water that flows out of a river every second.

fertile Having good soil where plants grow well.

fertilizer A chemical added to soil to make it more fertile.

fresh water Water in rivers, lakes and ice that is not salty like seawater.

habitat The place where a particular animal or plant lives.

harvest The time when crops are ripe and ready to be picked.

irrigate To water the land.

limestone A type of rock that is made up of bits of animal shells.

pollute To make poisonous or unclean by adding chemicals or rubbish.

prosper To have a good life because you have everything you need.

reservoir A lake where water is stored for use.

sacred Special or holy to people of a particular religion.

source The place where a river starts.



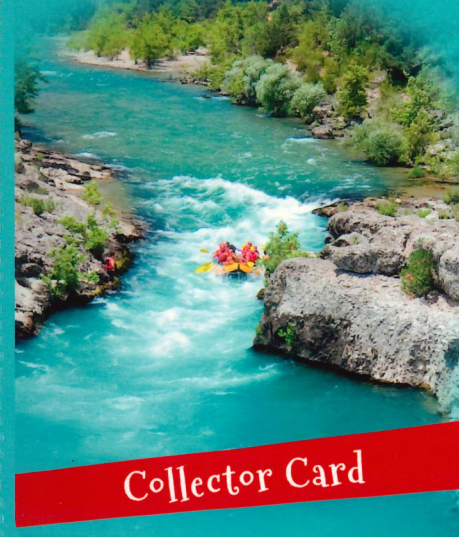
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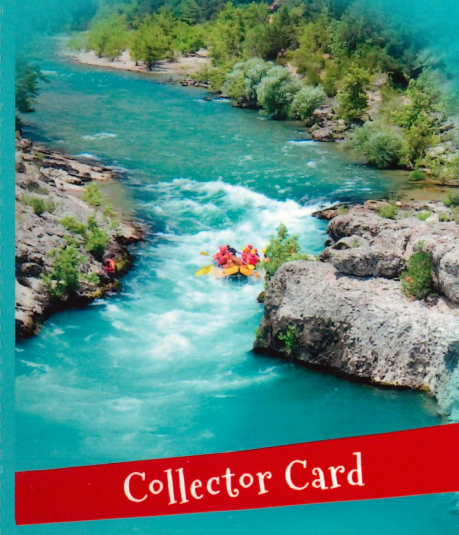


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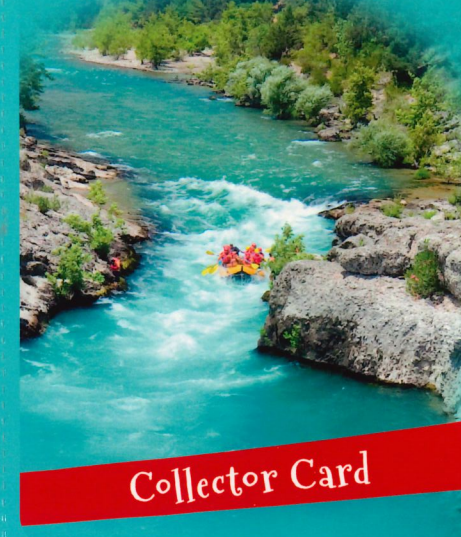
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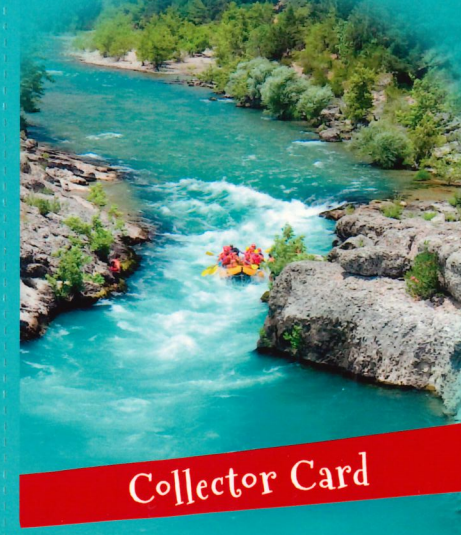
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