

PROJECT!

SUPPLIES

- * science journal and pencil
- * river or stream

RIVER WATCHING

Observing things closely is an important part of being a scientist. In this activity, you'll watch a river to see what you can notice about it.

Caution: Always have an adult with you when you are near any kind of water, including rivers and streams.

Note: If you don't have a river or stream nearby, you can ask an adult for help finding a video of a river or stream on the Internet.

- 1** Before visiting a river or stream, imagine what it will be like. What will you see, hear, feel, and smell? In your journal, write "Imaginary River" and then write or draw a description.
- 2** Go to a river or stream or watch a video. On the back of the page where you described the imaginary river, write "Real River."
- 3** Look at the river. What do you see? In what direction is the water flowing? How quickly is it flowing? Is there anything in the water, such as rocks, branches, a waterfall, or a beaver dam? Do you see any animals, fish, or birds? Write down your observations.
- 4** Listen to the river. What do you hear? Is the water making a lot of noise or is it very quiet? Do you hear any birds or other animal sounds? Write down what you hear.

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5 Notice the air around you and the river. Touch the water. Does the air feel cool or warm? How about the water? Do you smell anything? Write down what you feel and smell.

6 Look at the land on the sides the river. Do you see rocks, soil, or plants? Do you see human-made walls? Do you see sand or gravel? Write down what you see.

7 Compare the description of your imaginary river with the description of the real river. What did you notice through your observation that you didn't imagine?

THINK ABOUT IT: After observing a real river, try imagining another river. Does your imaginary river change? How?

MEASURING A RIVER

It seems like measuring a river should be pretty easy, as long as you have a really long tape measure! But measuring a river is pretty tricky because rivers are always changing. For one thing, the amount of water in a river changes with the seasons. During rainy seasons or the spring snowmelt, there might be more water in the river than usual, making it overflow its banks. During dry seasons, a river can temporarily shrink. The river's width will be different depending on the time of year. Also, rivers are always changing their routes, carving new channels, taking shortcuts across curves, and depositing sediment that they've carried for many miles. Any measurement you make of a river is only the measurement for that moment in time.

