



The Rio Grande Reading Comprehension

Word Count: 210 | Lexile 720

The Rio Grande is one of the longest rivers in North America. It begins high in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and flows more than 1,800 miles to the Gulf of Mexico. Along the way, it passes through New Mexico and forms much of the border between the United States and Mexico.

For thousands of years, people have lived along the Rio Grande. Native American communities used its waters for farming corn, beans, and squash. Spanish explorers gave the river its name, which means “Great River” in Spanish. Today, cities such as Albuquerque, El Paso, and Laredo depend on the Rio Grande for drinking water and irrigation.

The river is important for wildlife too. Cottonwood trees grow along its banks, and animals such as beavers, turtles, and many kinds of birds make their homes there. In the deserts of the Southwest, the Rio Grande provides a ribbon of green that supports life in a dry region.

But the Rio Grande faces challenges. Dams, irrigation, and droughts have reduced its flow. In some years, parts of the river run dry before reaching the sea. Conservation groups and governments on both sides of the border are working to protect this vital river, so future generations can benefit from its waters.

1. Where does the Rio Grande begin?
 - A. The Rocky Mountains of Colorado
 - B. The deserts of New Mexico
 - C. The Gulf of Mexico
 - D. The city of El Paso
2. What does “Rio Grande” mean in Spanish?
 - A. Long River
 - B. Great River
 - C. River of the Desert
 - D. River Border

3. Which crops did Native Americans grow with water from the Rio Grande?
 - A. Wheat and rice
 - B. Cotton and sugarcane
 - C. Corn, beans, and squash
 - D. Potatoes and tobacco
4. Which of these animals might you find along the Rio Grande?
 - A. Polar bears
 - B. Penguins
 - C. Kangaroos
 - D. Beavers, turtles, and birds
5. What problem does the Rio Grande face today?
 - A. Too many ships travel its waters
 - B. It flows in the wrong direction
 - C. Parts of the river sometimes dry up
 - D. It no longer reaches New Mexico
6. Why is the Rio Grande important to cities such as Albuquerque and El Paso?
 - A. It provides jobs on fishing boats
 - B. It supplies drinking water and irrigation
 - C. It is a place where gold is mined
 - D. It connects directly to the Pacific Ocean
7. What is the main idea of the passage?
 - A. The Rio Grande is no longer important to people
 - B. The Rio Grande is only used for farming
 - C. The Rio Grande is home to dangerous animals
 - D. The Rio Grande is a vital river for people and wildlife but faces challenges

Answers

1. A. The Rocky Mountains of Colorado
2. B. Great River
3. C. Corn, beans, and squash
4. D. Beavers, turtles, and birds
5. C. Parts of the river sometimes dry up
6. B. It supplies drinking water and irrigation
7. D. The Rio Grande is a vital river for people and wildlife but faces challenges