

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informative Page Count: 16 Word Count: 345

Book Summary

From Lake Itasca in Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico, the Mississippi River runs its mighty course. *The Mighty Mississippi* introduces readers to the geography and the many benefits of the river to people and wildlife alike. Students will have an opportunity to connect to their prior knowledge as they read. Text is supported with detailed photographs and text features.

Book and lesson also available at Levels H and N.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Connect to prior knowledge

Objectives

- Connect to prior knowledge
- Discriminate fact or opinion
- Identify final consonant *st*-blends
- Identify names of places as proper nouns
- Place words in alphabetical order

Materials

Green text indicates resources that are available on the website.

- Book—*The Mighty Mississippi* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Map of the United States
- Map of local area
- Posters paper
- Sheets of paper
- [Fact or opinion, proper nouns: names of places, alphabetical order worksheets](#)
- [Discussion cards](#)



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on an interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if the books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](#).

- **Content words:**
Story critical: **dams** (n.), **floods** (n.), **locks** (n.), **mammals** (n.), **Mississippi River** (n.), **shipped** (v.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Show students a map of their local town and surrounding areas. Have students name local bodies of water including creeks, rivers, ponds, lakes, and so on. Locate as many of these water sources on the map as possible. Point out that the amount and types of bodies of water vary greatly depending where on Earth you are located. Ask students to name places that do not have a lot of water. Have students explain how this might affect communities in these areas.

Ask students to name places in parts of the world where there is an abundance of water.

Again, ask students how this might affect the community. Engage students in a conversation about why water sources are important to communities.

- Show students a map of the United States and identify the Mississippi River. Point out that this is a major river in the United States, which flows from Minnesota all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. Ask volunteers to come up to the map and identify the names of the states through which the Mississippi River travels.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book and author's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Connect to prior knowledge**

- Explain to students that engaged readers make connections between the information they are reading and what they already know about a topic. We often call these connections *text-to-self*, *text-to-text*, and *text-to-world* connections. Point out that they will be able to better understand a book if they already know something about the subject.
- Model connecting to prior knowledge.
Think-aloud: *On the cover of the book, I see a photo of a large river running alongside a city. I can tell that the river is large because when I look at the big ships and barges, they look small. After reading the title of the book, I think that this is a picture of the Mississippi River. Although I have not spent much time near the Mississippi River, I can still make a connection to the text through my experiences with other bodies of water. I grew up in a city that had many rivers. Although none of these rivers were as big as the Mississippi River, they were large enough for large boats. I remember when I was young, sitting at the edge of the river, watching the large boats pass by, and wondering where they were heading. I recall my dad telling me that many of the boats were carrying things like food and other supplies to places down the river. On the basis of this information, I think that the boats shown on the cover of this book are also carrying supplies. Pausing to make a text-to-self connection before I read will help me stay engaged with the book and better remember and understand what I have read.*
- Review with students the title page and the table of contents. Remind students that a table of contents provides clues about the information in the book. Read the section titles with students and ask students to share with a partner an idea of what the book might be about if they have one. Have students preview the photographs and text features.
- Have students share with a partner connections they can make between their prior knowledge and the information they previewed in the book. Remind students of the information they shared during the Build Background portion of the lesson, and point out that those details represent prior knowledge the class has about local water sources and the importance of water to communities of people. Invite volunteers to share connections they made with the rest of the class.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Fact or opinion**

- Review with students the difference between fiction and nonfiction. Explain to students that readers need to evaluate information in a nonfiction book, and one way to do this is to discriminate between fact and opinion. Write the words *fact* and *opinion* on the board. Remind students that a *fact* is a detail that is true and can be proven. An *opinion* is what someone thinks, feels, or believes about something.

- Read page 5 aloud and model distinguishing between fact and opinion.
Think-aloud: *This page informs me about the length of the Mississippi River and how it flows through ten different states. Additionally, I learned that the water from the river eventually flows into the Gulf of Mexico. All of these details can be proven, or shown to be true, by checking evidence such maps and aerial photographs of the river. These details are considered to be facts because they can be proven. What would be an opinion about the Mississippi River? An opinion expresses a feeling or belief about something, so an opinion might be the Mississippi River is the most beautiful river in the country. Some people may disagree with this statement and could argue that a different river is more beautiful. Because this statement is not backed up with evidence or proof, it is an opinion. As I read, I will keep track of which details are facts and which are opinions.*
- Have students read page 6 with a partner and identify the facts listed in the text. Then, have students create opinions about the same information. Have students share their findings with the class. Be sure students can distinguish between a fact and an opinion.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Write the following story-critical words on the board: *dams, flood, locks, shipped*. Write each of the words listed on the board on separate sheets of chart paper and hang the posters in various places around the classroom. Have students work in small groups and assign each group a poster. Have students discuss what they know about the meaning of the word and write or draw a definition on the chart paper. Rotate the groups and have them repeat the process with the remaining words.
- Review all four words as a class. Read the students' definitions aloud and discuss their prior knowledge. Create a single definition for each word and write it on the board.
- Have a volunteer read the definition for each word in the glossary. Compare students' definitions with the glossary definitions. Use the comparison to modify the definition for each word or phrase on the board.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to learn more about the Mississippi River. Encourage them to connect the information they are reading to prior knowledge about rivers and to distinguish between facts and opinions.



During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read the section "A Long Journey." Encourage those who finish early to go back and reread.
- Model connecting to prior knowledge.
Think-aloud: *After reading the section "A Long Journey," I paused to make a connection to what I already know about the information being presented. For example, after reading the first section, I made a text-to-self connection. I recalled a time when my family went on a vacation to Minnesota. Even though we did not go to Lake Itasca, I still remember what it was like there and that it was lush owing to all the moisture and water. The area that we visited was full of lakes and streams. When I look at the picture on page 4, it reminds me of the part of Minnesota that my family visited. Making this connection to my own experience will help me remember and understand the text.*
- Have students discuss with a partner any prior information or experience they have with the details in the first section of the book. Have students draw a picture that represents one connection they made to their prior knowledge. Invite volunteers to share their pictures and explain the connection they were able to make.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

The Mighty Mississippi

- Write the following two sentences on the board: *The Mississippi River is a major river in the United States. The journey of the Mississippi River is one of the most incredible journeys in the world.* Read each sentence aloud to the class and have students discuss with a partner which statement is a fact and which statement is an opinion.
- Have a volunteer come to the board and point to the fact. Ask students to discuss in groups how they know that this statement is a fact. Then, have them discuss how they know the other statement is an opinion. Remind students that facts are true and can be proven with evidence and that an opinion is what someone believes or how he or she feels about something.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read the section titled “The Upper River.” Invite them to record on a separate sheet of paper the connections they made to their prior knowledge. Invite students to share their findings with the class.
-  Have students work with a partner to identify and underline two facts from the section “The Upper River.” Then, have students turn these facts into opinions. Invite students to share their responses.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to continue to pause to connect to their prior knowledge.
-  Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Have students draw one final picture representing a new connection they made to their prior knowledge while reading the book. Have students discuss their illustration with a partner. Invite volunteers to share with the rest of the class the connections they were able to make and how making these connections helped them understand the text.
- **Think-aloud:** *As I read about the upper part of the Mississippi River and all of the wildlife that depend on its waters, it reminded me of a time I visited the San Juan River in Northern New Mexico. I remember watching a bald eagle fly to and from its nest that it had built in a cottonwood tree on the riverbank. Then, it soared through the sky while it hunted for fish in the river. Eventually, the eagle caught a fish from the river. This experience helped me to understand how rivers are important places to help wildlife thrive. Even though the San Juan River and the Mississippi River are different, many animals depend upon them.*
- Have students discuss with a partner how pausing throughout the book to make connections helped them to understand, remember, and stay engaged with the text.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Have students discuss in groups the facts they learned while reading. Invite volunteers to share a fact with the rest of the class. Record these ideas on the board. Ask students to think about opinions they formed concerning the information they learned from the facts in the book. Have students share at least one opinion with a partner.
- Have students discuss in a group how they can distinguish between facts and opinions. Discuss with students why it is important to recognize the difference between these types of details.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **fact-or-opinion worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their responses aloud.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book you learned about the importance of the Mississippi River. Why do you think it is important to keep the waters of the Mississippi and other rivers clean and free of pollution?

Build Skills

Phonics: Final consonant *st*-blends

- Write the word *rest* on the board and say the word aloud with students, emphasizing the /st/ sound at the end of the word.
- Have students say the /st/ sound aloud. Run your finger under the letters in the word as students say the word aloud. Ask students to identify which letters represent the /st/ sound in the word *rest*.
- Ask students to name words that contain the final consonant *st*-blend. Record their responses on the board and have volunteers come to the board and circle the final consonant blend.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words on the board without the final consonant *st*-blend: *rust, mast, fast, frost, must, dust*. Invite volunteers to the board to add the final consonant blend *-st* to each word and then to read each word aloud.



Independent practice: Have students identify and circle all of the words in the book (including captions) that contain the final consonant *st*-blend. If time allows, review their responses as a class.

Grammar and Mechanics: Proper nouns: Names of places

- Review or explain that a noun is a *person, place, or thing*. Write the following sentence on the board: *Over the next three months, the water will journey through ten states*. Underline the word *states* and point out that this word is an example of a regular noun because it names a thing.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *Rain falls on a lake in Minnesota*. Ask students why *Minnesota* is capitalized. Explain or review that this is an example of a proper noun, which names a specific place and therefore is capitalized. In this case, it is the name of a state.



Check for understanding: Have students work with a partner to locate and circle all of the proper nouns that name places in the text. Have students share their findings with the class.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **proper-nouns-names-of-places worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers aloud after students finish.

Word Work: Alphabetical order

- Review or explain the process of putting a list of words in alphabetical order. Remind students to look at the first letter of each word and then decide which word begins with the letter that comes first in the alphabet.
- Write the alphabet on the board. Underneath, write the words *river* and *state*. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order (*river*) and why (because *Rr* comes before *Ss* in the alphabet). Circle the *Rr* and *Ss* and compare their locations in the alphabet. Erase the circles when the discussion is complete.
- Write the words *eagle* and *otter* on the board. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order (*eagle*) and why (because *e* comes before *o* in the alphabet). Circle the *e* and *o* on the board and compare their locations in the alphabet. Erase the circles when the discussion is complete.
- Write the words *muddy* and *miles* on the board. Point out that when two words begin with the same letter, it is necessary to look at the second letter of each word to determine which word comes first in alphabetical order. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order (*miles*) and why (because *i* comes before *u* in the alphabet). Circle the *i* and *u* on the board and compare their locations in the alphabet. Erase the circles when the discussion is complete.

- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words on the board: *river, rock, upper, lower, lake, and wade*. Have students write the words in alphabetical order on a separate sheet of paper. Discuss students' responses.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [alphabetical order worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Invite students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students demonstrate how a reader pauses to connect to prior knowledge.

Extend the Reading

Social Studies Connection

Acquire a map of the local watershed. Use blue masking tape to map out the watershed on the floor of the classroom, labeling each water source. Have students locate where they live in relationship to these water sources. Discuss with students how these sources of water impact the people and animals of the local community. Invite community members, including conservationists, water engineers, biologists, and so on, to come speak to the class about different aspects of the local watershed. Have students create questions to ask the presenters on the basis of their prior knowledge.

Science Connection

Discuss with students the process of the water cycle. Point out to students that the water that comes out of the faucet is essentially as old as Earth. In small groups, have students discuss how this could be so. Have students share their thoughts with the class. Create a simple drawing on the board of the water cycle. Write the following words on the board: *evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and collection*. Read the words aloud with the students. Assign one of the words to each group. Provide students with Internet and text resources to research more about their group's aspect of the water cycle. Have students share their findings with the class. Once all the groups have shared, label the water cycle on the board. Provide students with the necessary materials to create their own water cycle illustration.

Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment**Monitor students to determine if they can**

- consistently use prior knowledge to comprehend the text during discussion;
- accurately identify fact or opinion in text, during discussion, and on a worksheet;
- consistently identify final consonant *st*-blends during discussion and in the text;
- correctly identify names of places as proper nouns in the text, during discussion, and on a worksheet;
- accurately place words in alphabetical order during discussion and on a worksheet.

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)