

Name _____

Date _____

Great Blue Heron



The Mississippi River

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER is probably the most famous river in America. The Mississippi River runs from Minnesota and ends in the Gulf of Mexico, and was the main transportation route of the United States for many years. The Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers join to form the longest river system in the U.S. and the fourth longest in the world. Its name comes from *misiziibi*, an Ojibwe word that means “Big River.”

“The Mighty Mississippi” starts small – in a little lake in Minnesota called Lake Itasca. It moves on to meander past several major American cities – Minneapolis, St. Paul, St. Louis, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans – bringing them water and hydroelectric power for their homes and businesses. Several other major rivers feed into it, like the Missouri and the Ohio Rivers. Though most people estimate it to be around 2,300 miles long, no one can agree on how long the Mississippi actually is!

The area around the Mississippi is one of the country’s best agricultural regions, with farmers depending on the water and the minerals it brings to nourish their crops. The Mississippi is also home to several species of fish and waterfowl that thrive on it.

FACT FILE

Name: _____ Length: _____

Source (*where it starts*): _____

Mouth (*where it ends*): _____

Cities Along It: _____

Tributaries (*rivers or streams that feed into it*): _____

Importance to Communities Near It: _____