This activity guide is designed to focus on the connection people have to the River in the past, present and future. One common thread that connects many who work and play on the River is how it inspires them. That inspiration may come from a single visit, a lifetime spent along it's shores, or any time span in between.

The Mississippi River has served as the inspiration for many forms of art and literature. One of the more famous writers who have found inspiration in the tranquility, power, resiliency and moods of the River was Samuel Clemens, aka Mark Twain. His writing still connects readers to the Mississippi River in ways that, well, can’t quite be captured in words.
OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

• Defend or negate the author/orator’s message in writing and/or orally.

METHODS

Students read and reflect on quotes about rivers.

BACKGROUND

Quotes can serve as springboards for reflective thinking. Students’ responses will reflect personal attitudes, values and understanding of the River and its related issues.

This activity would be a good culminating affective domain assessment for a Mississippi River unit. It allows educators to address the affective domain by providing opportunities for students to communicate their viewpoints. It is essential to maintain an environment that respects differing value systems. One’s values are based on his/her relative estimation of worth or desirability of the subject or experience. Fact from opinion can be distinguished while acknowledging the reality that values can “color” the facts. As you lead the discussions during this activity, keep in mind there are no right or wrong values. Focus on students’ abilities to clarify and support their values. When one needs to defend their position, they develop a deeper understanding of their value system resulting in further affirmation or rejection of the value.

PROCEDURES

1. Have the class generate a list of things, people, and experiences they value. Does everyone value the same things equally?

2. Further discuss:
   a. The definition of values.
   b. The need to respect other’s values.
   c. The need to clarify and challenge our values.
   d. Facts versus opinions.

Grade Level: 5 - 12
Subjects: Language Arts
Duration: Two 30 minute periods, Homework ~ 30 minutes
Group Size: Any
Setting: Classroom or Outside
Key Vocabulary: quote, fact, opinion, values, viewpoint, reflective thinking
Materials:
• River quotes (1/student)
3. Read a River quote to the class.
   - Do you agree with the message the author/orator is stating in the quote?
     - Is your opinion based on facts? If so, what?
     - Is your opinion based on experiences? Explain.
   - Point out that there is not a right or wrong viewpoint; however, facts must be accurate.

4. Provide each student with a copy of the river quotes.

5. Have each student choose one quote for writing a personal response paragraph. The paragraph should defend or negate the quote’s accuracy. Each student should include specific facts and/or experiences to support his/her viewpoint.

6. Share some of the responses. Focus the discussion on specific facts and experiences that support a viewpoint. Also discuss why not everyone might feel the same way about an issue or topic.

**POST - ASSESSMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>River of Inspiration Paragraph Assessment Rubric</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic Sentence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clearly stated topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Viewpoint</td>
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<td>Supportive details</td>
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<td>Sentence Structure</td>
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</tbody>
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**EXTENSIONS**

1. Rewrite a quote substituting antonyms for key words. Does this change the impact of the quote?

2. Add graphics to a quote to create a button, bookmark or poster.
“To trace the history of a river... is to trace the history of the soul, the history of the mind descending and arising in the body.” - Gretel Ehrlich

“There is a river somewhere that flows through the lives of everyone.” - Roberta Flack

“The river delights to lift us free, if only we dare to let go. Our true work is this voyage, this adventure.” - Richard Bach

“The face of the river, in time, became a wonderful book... And it was not a book to be read once and thrown aside, for it had a new story to tell everyday.” - Mark Twain, Life on the Mississippi

“Rivers are magnets for the imagination, for conscious pondering and subconscious dreams, thrills, fears. The rivers’ reflections of our lives and experiences are endless.” - Time Palmer, Lifelines

“The song of the river ends not at her banks but in the hearts of those who have loved her.” - Buffalo Joe

“Any river is really the summation of the whole valley. To think of it as nothing but water is to ignore the greater part.” - Hal Borland, This Hill, This Valley

“The care of rivers is not a question of rivers, but of the human heart.” - Tanako Shozo, conservationist
“Rivers run through our history and folklore, and link us as a people. They nourish and refresh us and provide a home for dazzling varieties of fish and wildlife and trees and plants of every sort. We are a nation rich in rivers.” - Charles Kuralt, journalist

“I stand by the river and I know that it has been here yesterday and will be here tomorrow and that therefore, since I am a part of its pattern today, I also belong to all its yesterdays and will be a part of its tomorrows.” - Virginia S. Eifert, author

“... So this is the river!” “THE River,” corrected Rat. “And you really live by the river? What a jolly life!” “By it and with it and on it and in it,” said the Rat... “What it hasn’t got is not worth having and what it doesn't know is not worth knowing.” The Wind in the Willows – Kenneth Grahame

“To the extent that it is possible, you must live in the world today as you wish everyone to live in the world to come. That can be your contribution. Otherwise the world you want will never be formed. Why? Because you’re waiting for others to do what you’re not doing; and they are waiting for you, and so on.” – Alice Walker

“We learn what is interesting. Interest comes from meaningful experiences.” – Joseph Cornell

“It takes a better brain, more patience, and a greater vision to restore than it does to destroy.” - Ranger Mac (Wakelin McNeel), Madison Public Radio ~ 1930
OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

• Write a wish that reflects a Mississippi River attribute.

METHODS

Students read *Give Her the River* and write their own wish for a person.

BACKGROUND

It is difficult to measure growth in the affective domain; however this activity provides great insight into each student’s attitudes and values about the Mississippi River. It would work well as a culminating affective domain assessment for a Mississippi River unit.

MATERIALS


PROCEDURES

1. Read *Give Her the River*.

2. Have each student write a River wish for someone. The wish can be written in the same format as the book or another form chosen by the student (ex. rhyming poem, paragraph, prayer, free verse)

3. Share River wishes. Since this can be a very personal and emotional piece of writing, only have those that want to read aloud their piece share with the class. Encourage all to share privately with the person for whom the wish is written for.

POST – ASSESSMENT

Assess the written piece. Does it use vivid language while giving specific descriptions of natural or human aspects of the Mississippi River?
River Wish

for __________________

By: __________________

Giver Her the River

Exploration of the Mississippi River
Jeff Jamrinh, Wisconsin DNR

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