

## Where does the Water Flow?

Every second, over 500,000 cubic feet of water pours into the Gulf of Mexico. Where does all this water come from? In this exercise you will be examining the drainage basins for the Mississippi and other major river systems in the US.

### Materials:

1. Physical Map from the Environmental Science Book page 418-419.
2. Colored pencils

### Procedure:

1. Label the bodies of water on the map.
2. Locate the mouth of the Mississippi River on the river map. Use a colored pencil to trace the Mississippi River and all its tributaries .
3. Draw a continuous line around all the rivers you have traced in step 2. The line should not cross any rivers.
4. Label the enclosed area *Mississippi River system*.
5. Use the same colored pencil to lightly shade in the area.
6. Locate the Colorado River. Use a different colored pencil to outline, label, and shade the *Colorado River system*. (Be sure to use the one that starts in Colorado)
7. Locate the Rio Grande and trace it and all its tributaries.
8. Locate the St. Lawrence and trace it.
9. Draw a line to show the location of the Great Continental Divide. (this is the area between the two major river systems)

### Answer the following questions:

1. In the continental United States, what happens to rain that falls west of the Great Continental Divide? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What happens to rain that falls east? \_\_\_\_\_
3. The headwaters of three river systems are located in Colorado along the Great Divide. Identify the three systems.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the source of the water in the St. Lawrence River?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. In what general direction does the St. Lawrence River flow? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Identify 3 rivers for which the Mississippi River is the base level.
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Identify the bay, sound, or gulf that serves as base level for:
- a. the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. the Alabama River system \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. the Connecticut River system \_\_\_\_\_
8. Locate and label the James, Roanoke, and Savannah rivers. In what topographic features do these rivers originate?
- \_\_\_\_\_
9. List the 3 largest rivers that flows through our state.
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Which of these rivers is part of a larger river system?
- \_\_\_\_\_
11. Which river system is it a part of? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Locate the rivers shown in central Nevada. Why are these rivers not part of a larger river system?
- \_\_\_\_\_

