

Life on the Murray River

Activity 2

View the 'Life on the Murray River' VR tour at www.lsv.com.au/vr



Key Learning

During this activity, students will model erosion using materials from the natural environment. They will investigate common causes and possible ways to combat erosion.



Resources

- Computer access for students
- Shallow plastic containers (one for each group of 3-4 students)
- Collection of natural materials, such as rocks, twigs, dirt, sand etc. (students could collect these themselves during the lesson)
- Jug or watering can for each group
- Camera or other device for filming



Engage

- Ask students to close their eyes and imagine the Murray River.

Ask:

- What plants/animals might we find beneath the water?
- What else might be hiding beneath the water?

Ask students to picture the river bank, imagining that they have x-ray vision:

- What plants/animals might be hiding beneath the earth?
- What is the river bank made of? (e.g. Loose rocks, tight-packed earth, clay etc.)



Curriculum

Geography – Geographical Knowledge

Factors that shape places and influence interconnections

Levels 5 & 6

- Environmental and human influences on the location and characteristics of places and the management of spaces within them ([VCGGK096](#))



Explore

- Take students outside to an appropriate area and organise them into small groups of 3-4 students. Give the groups an opportunity to collect materials from the natural environment to use when constructing a model river bed (e.g. soil, rocks, twigs, leaves etc). Groups can now build their river bed inside a shallow, transparent, plastic container. Using a watering can or jug, students can slowly pour water along their river bed. They should document what happens by taking photos or filming a time lapse video.



Explain

Allow students time to view their images or videos. Explain to students that they likely observed the geological process called erosion. As a whole class discuss:

- What did you notice?
- How long might this process take in real life?
- How did the composition of your river bed affect the way it eroded?
- How did the movement of the water affect the way it eroded?
- Are there other factors that might affect this process?
- How can we stay safe around river banks that may have been affected by erosion? What do we need to consider before entering the water in these areas? (Answers may include: reading safety signs, staying away from crumbling edges, using recommended access points, checking the water for submerged obstacles, etc.)



Elaborate

- Give small groups time to investigate erosion further. They will then need to combine their photos/video, together with their research, to create a visual presentation specifically about erosion along the Murray River. They will need to consider the following:
- What are the common causes of river bank erosion?
- How does erosion affect the health of the river?
- How is erosion being addressed along the Murray River?



Evaluate

Invite each group to present their findings. Discuss as a whole group:

- What is something important that you have learnt and will share with others?
- Why is it important to maintain the health of our waterways?
- How could we help maintain the health of our waterways?