

Birth of a Mighty River



a part of the Amazon River

The Amazon River is the longest river in South America. It flows for 4,000 miles across the continent. The location of the river's source or beginning, was a mystery for centuries. A team of explorers and geography experts recently found the tiny stream where the mighty river begins.

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High on the Nevado Mismi, an 18,363-foot-high mountain in Peru, a stream trickles from the melting snow. A team of 22 explorers and geography experts recently announced that this small stream is the source of the mighty Amazon River.

The stream flows into the Apurimac (Ah-poo-REE-mahk) River, which is one of the many rivers that combine to form the Amazon.

Andrew Pietowski, a high school math teacher in New York, led the team in search of the river's source. The team searched the Andes, a range of mountains that stretches the whole western

length of South America. "Since the Amazon River has an end, there must be a beginning. I wanted to know where it was," Pietowski said.

The River of Life

On its way across South America, the Amazon River flows through the largest rain forest in the world. A rain forest is a dense forest that has a lot of rainfall and warm temperatures all year round. The Amazon rain forest is almost as big as the continent of Australia.

Scientists say about 80,000 different types of trees and plants can be found in the Amazon rain forest. More kinds of fish live in the Amazon River than in the Atlantic Ocean. The river flows through forests that are home to jaguars, armadillos, snakes, monkeys, crocodiles, and anteaters. Along the river live about 170 different groups of native people.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. The source of the river was a mystery for so long because

- A. the source was hard to get to.
- B. no one thought to look for the source before.
- C. the river was too dangerous to follow.
- D. the source kept changing.

2. Scientists say that the stream that feeds the Amazon is made from melting snow. This means that

- A. snow is melting at the river's source.
- B. fish cannot live in the Amazon.
- C. the river dries up during the summer.
- D. the river is mostly frozen.

3. The author compared the Amazon rain forest to Australia because

- A. they are both homes to many animals.
- B. they have the same amount of people.
- C. they have similar plant life.
- D. they are about the same size.

4. The following live along the Amazon River:

- A. lions, cheetahs and anteaters.
- B. armadillos, jaguars and anteaters.
- C. giraffes, armadillos and snakes.
- D. snakes, cheetahs and crocodiles.

5. The author uses the heading The River of Life. Why is the Amazon called The River of Life?
