

APPLY

Read the paragraphs, and answer the questions.

The Mississippi River

Long before Europeans and others came to America, Native Americans lived along the Mississippi River. In fact, the name *Mississippi* is a Native American word for "big river." The Mississippi River valley had rich soil and was full of life. Native Americans enjoyed the foods that the river and its valley provided. They also used the river for travel by canoe.

Spanish explorers were the first Europeans to see the Mississippi River. Later, French and English explorers traveled along it. All the explorers understood that a river this large would be useful in many ways. At different times, Spain, France, and Britain each claimed the

Mississippi River and the lands of its valley.

In time, the United States gained control of the Mississippi. The river became important to the nation's transportation and trade. Cities and towns sprang up along the river. Soon, faster boats were built, and they began traveling the river. Some children dreamed of taking trips to distant places. A few of those children ended up working on boats on the river.

Today, many large cities still thrive on the banks of the Mississippi River. Their people and businesses use the river as a source of water, as a means of transportation, and as a place to have fun.



Summarize

1. How would you describe the Native Americans' reasons for settling in the Mississippi River valley?
2. Why was the Mississippi River important to the United States?
3. Why is the Mississippi River important today?

