

Virginia Water Routes

Trace how Virginia's land guides water to different destinations.

6.8.b "Virginia is composed of multiple watershed systems which have specific features;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each watershed feature word that tells how water moves or where it begins, ends, or separates. Circle each river system or final water body named in the passage so you can compare Virginia's watershed systems.

Where Virginia Water Goes

- ① Virginia's rain and melting snow do not all travel to the same place. Land that drains to one common body of water is a watershed. High land called a divide separates one watershed from another. A drop of water falling on opposite sides of a ridge can begin two different journeys. Streams join larger streams and rivers. These smaller streams are tributaries. At the start of a river, often in higher land, are its headwaters. At the end is the river's mouth.
- ② Much of Virginia lies in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Potomac, Rappahannock, York, and James river systems carry water toward Chesapeake Bay. Each system includes many tributaries, from small creeks to larger rivers. The York River forms where the Mattaponi and Pamunkey rivers meet, so those rivers are tributaries of the York. The James River begins in the mountains and flows southeast across the state. Its mouth opens into Chesapeake Bay near Hampton Roads in southeastern Virginia.
- ③ Other parts of Virginia drain elsewhere. In southern Virginia, the Roanoke River carries water toward Albemarle Sound in North Carolina. Some far southwestern streams flow through the Tennessee River system, then to the Ohio and Mississippi rivers before reaching the Gulf of Mexico. A small area on Virginia's Eastern Shore drains directly to the Atlantic Ocean or to Chesapeake Bay. Watersheds do not follow county lines. They are shaped by land height and the paths water takes downhill. Protecting streams in one watershed helps the larger water body that receives their water.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is a watershed, and what feature separates one watershed from another?

2 Name two river systems that carry water toward Chesapeake Bay.

3 Why are the Mattaponi and Pamunkey rivers tributaries of the York River?

4 Trace the route of water from far southwestern Virginia to its final water body.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose one Virginia river system named in the passage. Write exactly two sentences that trace water from a tributary through the river's mouth to the body of water that receives it. Use the words tributary and mouth.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each watershed feature word that tells how water moves or where it begins, ends, or separates. Circle each river system or final water body named in the passage so you can compare Virginia's watershed systems. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is a watershed, and what feature separates one watershed from another?	A watershed is land that drains to one common body of water. A divide, or high land, separates watersheds.
2	Name two river systems that carry water toward Chesapeake Bay.	Any two: Potomac, Rappahannock, York, or James.
3	Why are the Mattaponi and Pamunkey rivers tributaries of the York River?	They meet to form the York River, so they flow into the York River system.
4	Trace the route of water from far southwestern Virginia to its final water body.	Water flows through the Tennessee River system, then to the Ohio River and Mississippi River, before reaching the Gulf of Mexico.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A small creek can be a tributary of the James River. Its water flows through the James River's mouth into Chesapeake Bay.

Accept accurate descriptions of a watershed, divide, tributary, headwaters, or mouth in students' own words. For the open response, accept any named river system if the water route and final receiving body are correct and both required words are used.