

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Drainage Basins and How Rivers Flow

Read the following passage. Then sketch a drainage basin in the space below.

A drainage basin is the area of land that is drained by a river and the smaller rivers and streams that flow into it. A drainage basin is shaped like a bowl. It usually has mountains or highlands at its upper edges. The upper edges are where the rivers originate, or begin. A drainage basin usually has lowlands in the middle. Lowlands cause water to flow downward toward the mouth of the river.

There are several large drainage basins in Europe. Each drainage basin flows into a sea or ocean. In this way, the people and products of the drainage basin are connected to the wider world. Cities located at important points in a drainage basin become large and powerful when trade increases. For example, the Volga River flows south over 3,701 kilometers (2,300 miles) into the Caspian Sea. Many of western Russia's largest cities, including Moscow, Kazan, and Astrakhan, are located on the Volga or its tributaries. People from Asia and Europe have been connected through trade for centuries.

© 2012 National Geographic Society



education 

[www.education.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.education.nationalgeographic.com)