The Missouri River is a major waterway of the central United States. Rising in the Rocky Mountains of western Montana, the Missouri flows east and south for 2,341 miles (3,767 km) before entering the Mississippi River north of St. Louis, Missouri. The river takes drainage from a sparsely populated, semi-arid watershed of more than half a million square miles (1,300,000 km²), which includes parts of ten U.S. states and two Canadian provinces. The Milk River flows into both Montana and Alberta, Canada. The Poplar River flows from Saskatchewan, Canada into Montana.

The Missouri River officially starts at the confluence of the Jefferson and Madison in Missouri Headwaters State Park near Three Forks, Montana, and is joined by the Gallatin a mile (.6 km) downstream. The Missouri then passes through Canyon Ferry Lake, a reservoir west of the Big Belt Mountains. Issuing from the mountains near Cascade, the river flows northeast to the city of Great Falls, where it drops over the Great Falls of the Missouri, a series of five substantial waterfalls. It then winds east through a scenic region of canyons and badlands known as the Missouri Breaks, receiving the Marias River from the west then widening into the Fort Peck Lake reservoir a few miles above the confluence with the Musselshell River. Farther on, the river passes through the Fort Peck Dam, and immediately downstream, the Milk River joins from the north.

Flowing eastwards through the plains of eastern Montana, the Missouri receives the Poplar River from the north before crossing into North Dakota where the Yellowstone River, its greatest tributary by volume, joins from the southwest. At the confluence, the Yellowstone is actually the larger river. The Missouri then meanders east past Williston and into Lake
Sakakawea, the reservoir formed by Garrison Dam. Below the dam the Missouri receives the Knife River from the west and flows south to Bismarck, the capital of North Dakota, where the Heart River joins from the west. It slows into the Lake Oahe reservoir just before the Cannonball River confluence. While it continues south, eventually reaching Oahe Dam in South Dakota, the Grand, Moreau and Cheyenne Rivers all join the Missouri from the west.

The Missouri makes a bend to the southeast as it winds through the Great Plains, receiving the Niobrara River and many smaller tributaries from the southwest. It then proceeds to form the boundary of South Dakota and Nebraska, then after being joined by the James River from the north, forms the Iowa–Nebraska boundary. At Sioux City the Big Sioux River comes in from the north. The state of Minnesota is part of the Big Sioux River watershed. The Missouri flows south to the city of Omaha where it receives its longest tributary, the Platte River, from the west. Downstream, it begins to define the Nebraska–Missouri border, then flows between Missouri and Kansas. The Missouri swings east at Kansas City, where the Kansas River enters from the west, and so on into north-central Missouri. It passes south of Columbia and receives the Osage and Gasconade Rivers from the south downstream of Jefferson City. The river then rounds the northern side of St. Louis to join the Mississippi River on the border between Missouri and Illinois.

The Missouri starts in which state? ______________________

What two rivers join to form the Missouri River?

________________________________ and _____________________________

How many states are part of the Missouri River watershed? ______

Name the states. __________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

Which 2 Canadian provinces have tributaries to the Missouri River?

________________________________ and _____________________________

The Missouri River flows into the ________________ River.

The Missouri River is the border between Nebraska and what two states?

__________________________ and _______________________________

The Missouri River is also the border between another 2 states. Which states?

__________________________ and _______________________________
Answers

The Missouri starts in which state? *Montana*

What two rivers join to form the Missouri River?

*Jefferson and Madison*

How many states are part of the Missouri River watershed? *10*

Name the states. *Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, Iowa, Missouri, Colorado, and Minnesota.*

Which 2 Canadian provinces have tributaries to the Missouri River?

*Saskatchewan and Alberta*

The Missouri River flows into the *Mississippi* River.

The Missouri River is the border between Nebraska and what two states?

*Iowa and Missouri*

The Missouri River is also the border between another 2 states. Which states?

*Kansas and Missouri*