

TASK 2: FLUVIAL ASPECTS OF THE ALCANTARA GORGE

READ: A river has three main stages – upper, middle and lower - as it flows from its source in the mountains to its mouth (in this case, the Ionian Sea). River landscapes and river features are quite different in each of these three stages. The following Tasks will look at river landscapes and river features in the upper to middle course (or torrent stage) of a river.

(a) Two photographs are provided below and on the next page. For each:-

- find a location on the river bank where it is safe and comfortable to sit
- identify the view in each picture (approximately), one at a time
- complete the questions/tasks that are given for each of the photographs

PICTURE 1: LOOKING DOWNSTREAM

(a) How would you describe the slope of the valley sides?

(b) What covers the valley sides?

(c) What letter of the alphabet is suggested by the slope of the valley sides?

(d) What two river processes allow a river to erode downwards into its river bed to make this type of valley – select from abrasion (corrasion), attrition and hydraulic action.

(e) Describe the nature of the river channel and its bed.

(f) Describe the river valley floor itself (the “dry” land on either side of the river’s channel).

(g) What evidence is there that tells you that this river can sometimes flow with much more energy?

