

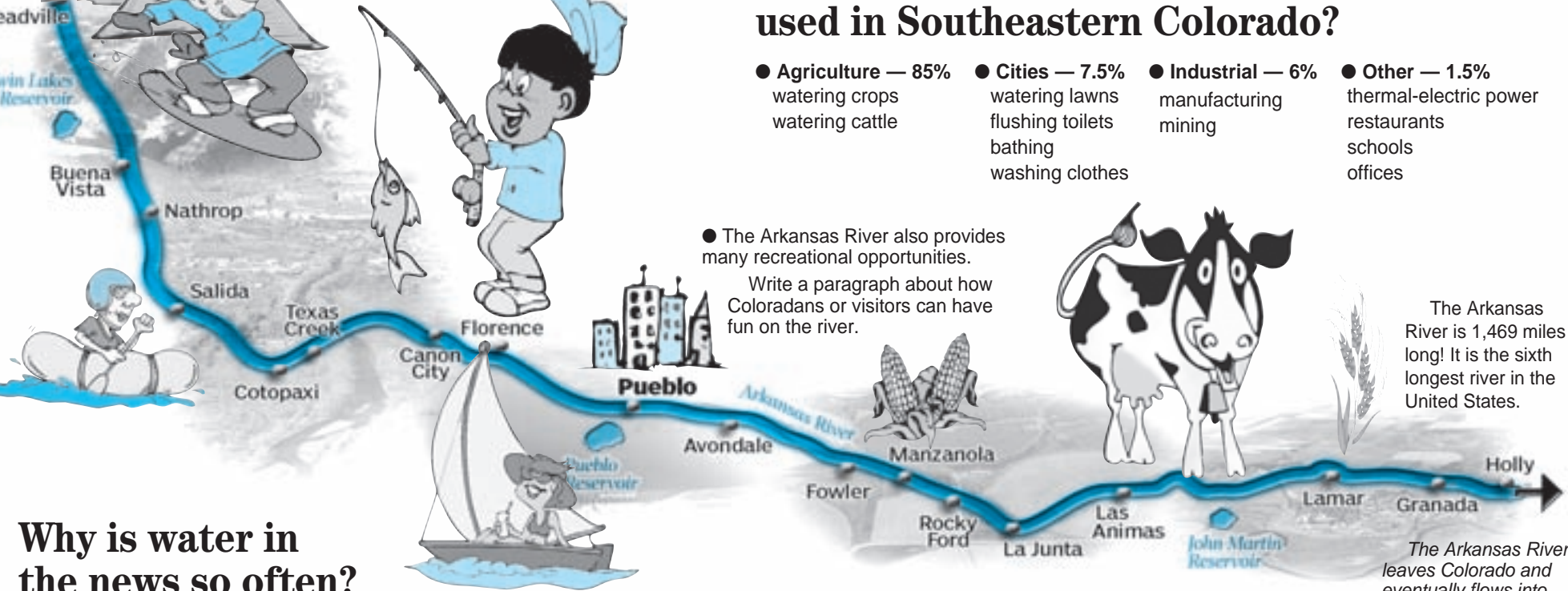
A Kid's Guide to the ARKANSAS RIVER

Where does our water come from?

The headwaters (beginning) of the Arkansas River are high in the Rocky Mountains near Leadville.

Snowmelt from high mountain peaks and rainfall from spring and summer storms flow into canals and streams which carry the water to the Arkansas River.

Some of Pueblo's water comes from the other side of the mountains through a series of water tunnels.



Why is water in the news so often?

Water is in the news because:

- A. Water is scarce in Colorado.
- B. There are many different opinions about how and where this precious resource should be used.

What are some of the news stories about?

- In recent years, heavy snowfall has been scarce in Colorado's mountains. When spring arrives and the snow melts, water runoff to the rivers has been less than in previous years. Add to that our high summer temperatures and strong winds, and you have worrisome drought conditions in our state.
- Colorado's population, especially in the cities of Colorado Springs and Aurora (a suburb of Denver) is growing rapidly.
- Most of the snow and rain that provide water for our rivers fall in the mountains, in the western half of Colorado. However, most of Colorado's population lives on the dry plains, in the eastern half of Colorado.
- Also, the Arkansas River is just one of FOUR major rivers that originate in the mountains of Colorado and flow into other states. Colorado can't use all the water in those rivers. . . We must allow a certain amount of water to flow into our neighboring states.

Write a paragraph about what *you* think is the most important use of water.

How can you help to conserve water?

- Take shorter showers
- Don't use the toilet to dispose of facial tissues
- Don't let water run freely from hoses outside
- Don't use water to wash driveways or sidewalks

Write a paragraph about some ways you might conserve water at home.

Plains Indians camped along it; trappers depended on it for their livelihood; traders built their outposts on it, most notably Bent's Fort in La Junta; and travelers on the mountain branch of the Santa Fe Trail watered their stock in it. When settlers came to their new dry home, they began to irrigate, using the river to water their crops.

The Arkansas at one time was the boundary between the United States and Mexico; it also divided the territories of the Cheyenne and the Comanche. It witnessed a railroad "war" as the Denver & Rio Grande and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe fought over a route through the Royal Gorge.

As miners and farmers settled along the banks of the Arkansas River, they began to divert water for their own purposes. Water disputes were sometimes settled with shovels and shotguns. It soon became obvious that our dry state would need a system to appropriate water. Colorado now operates under a complex system of water laws and water rights, with its own water courts and water judges.

The beautiful and cool waters of the Arkansas River hide the fact that the future of this river depends upon man's ability to balance the needs of a growing population with the needs of nature; satisfying the thirst of cities and the water needs of agriculture.

How is water from the Arkansas River used in Southeastern Colorado?

- **Agriculture — 85%**
watering crops
watering cattle
- **Cities — 7.5%**
watering lawns
flushing toilets
bathing
washing clothes
- **Industrial — 6%**
manufacturing
mining
- **Other — 1.5%**
thermal-electric power
restaurants
schools
offices

● The Arkansas River also provides many recreational opportunities.

Write a paragraph about how Coloradans or visitors can have fun on the river.

The Arkansas River is 1,469 miles long! It is the sixth longest river in the United States.

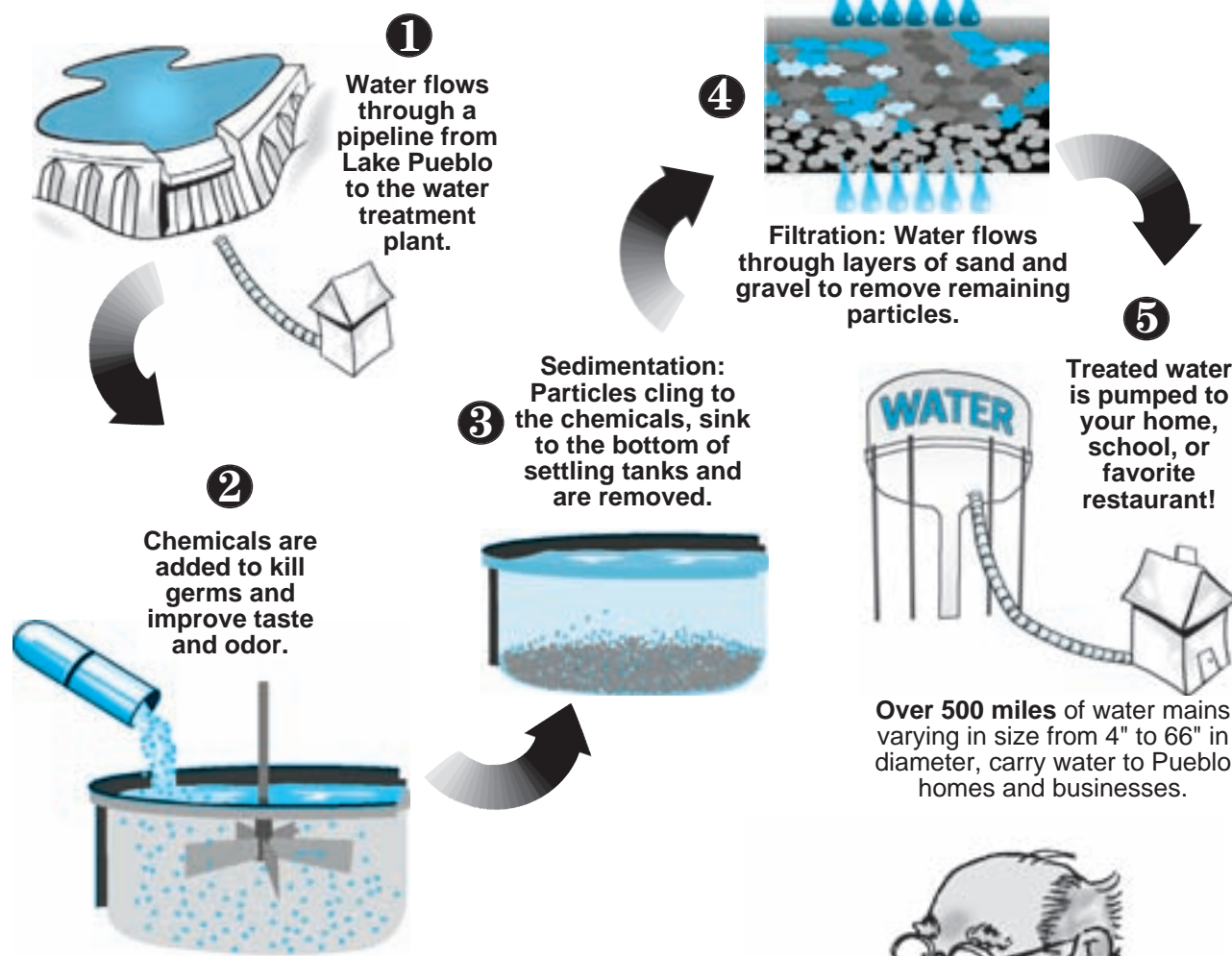
The Arkansas River leaves Colorado and eventually flows into the Mississippi River.

How is water cleaned before we drink it?

In nature, you might get sick if you drink water directly from a river. "Raw" river water could be polluted with many different things.

So Pueblo, and all cities that take their water supplies from a river, have water departments that treat (or clean) our water to make sure that it is safe and tastes good. Where does your water come from? Some cities get water from wells. Is your water from a river or a well?

The water treatment process used by the Pueblo Board of Water Works is shown here in a simplified version:



Over 500 miles of water mains, varying in size from 4" to 66" in diameter, carry water to Pueblo homes and businesses.

How is the water tested?

Chemists at the water treatment plant do many tests on the water to make sure that the process is working as it should.

Water samples are collected at many locations throughout the city to make sure that the water arrives at your house as clean and pure as it left the treatment plant!



Newspaper Activities

Water is a frequent topic of news stories. Look through several issues of The Chieftain to see if you can find a story about water.

Find the weather page in today's Pueblo Chieftain. Is rain predicted to fall anywhere in the United States today? In your community?

Look in the sports section to see if you can find a sport played on water.