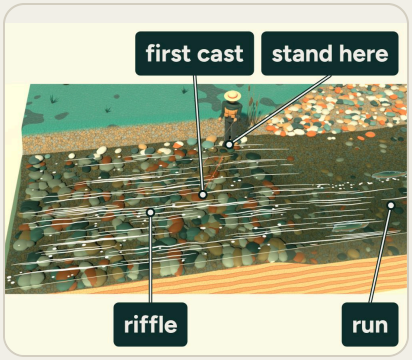
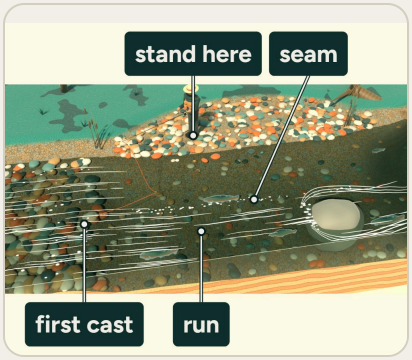
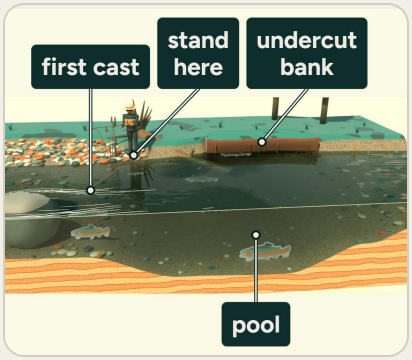
HOW DO I FISH A RIFFLE, A RUN AND A POOL?

A riffle is shallow, fast water broken by rocks. A run is deeper than a riffle and shallower than a pool, with a moderate current. A pool is the deepest, slowest part of the stretch. Here is a plain way to start on each.







	RIFFLE	RUN	POOL
HOW TO SPOT IT	Shallow water running fast over rocks; the surface is broken and choppy.	Below a riffle: deeper than the riffle, shallower than a pool, moderate current. Look for the seam.	The deepest, slowest part of the stretch. The downstream end is the tailout.
WHERE TO STAND	At the bottom end of the riffle, at its edge, with the riffle upstream of you.	Beside the run on its shallow side, level with or a little below its head.	At the side near the head of the pool, on the bank or the shallow edge, not in the deep water.
TIE ON FIRST	**A dry dropper, dropper 12 to 18 inches.**	**A dry dropper, dropper 24 to 36 inches. Deeper than about 4 feet or very fast: indicator nymph.**	**An indicator nymph. Set it so the nymph ticks the bottom now and then.**
FIRST CAST	Short, up and across into the lower riffle; let it drift out into the slower water below.	Up and across to the head of the run, on the fast side of the seam; let it drift into the slow edge.	Upstream into the head, so the nymph sinks before the deep middle; then closer to the bank and wood.
WHAT STUDIES SAY	One study, three small British Columbia streams: riffles sent out about 3.5 times more aquatic insect drift per unit area of streambed than pools.	In lab and outdoor-channel studies with young fish, dominant fish held the most profitable feeding spots; wild adult trout were not tested.	Larger trout used deeper water. In winter, many trout gather in deep, slow pools with cover.

The angler in each picture stands where this sheet says to stand; the line shows the first cast. Depths are drawn, not measured. Illustration: Fly Findr

WHAT CHANGES IT

Winter. Start with the pools. Many trout gather in deep, slow pools with cover and move little.

High water. In the studies that tracked them, adult trout stayed in their reach in floods. Where within it is disputed: check pools with cover and the slow edges.

Muddy water. In lab studies, trout saw prey from shorter distances as the water got muddier. Put the fly closer and cast more.

What the studies don't settle. No study tested fly pattern, fly size or tippet against catch, so these rigs are chosen for the depth they fish. No study measured how close you can wade before adult trout move, so the places to stand are a starting point, not a stealth rule. On a dry dropper, **set the hook on any twitch, pause or dip of the dry**.