

The Water Cycle

The Earth always has the same amount of water. This water moves through stages, called the water cycle. The water cycle is important to life on Earth, and the Sun plays an important role in the cycle.



Did You Know?

The water you drink today could have been used in a dinosaur's bath!



Accumulation

Accumulation is water stored in rivers, lakes, oceans, and in the soil. Oceans hold most of the Earth's water. Groundwater is in the soil and is absorbed by roots to help plants grow.

Evaporation

Evaporation happens when the Sun heats up water and turns it into water vapour. Water vapour is a gas in the air. Water can be evaporated from plants. This is called transpiration.

Condensation

When water vapour is in the air, it cools and turns back to a liquid. This is called

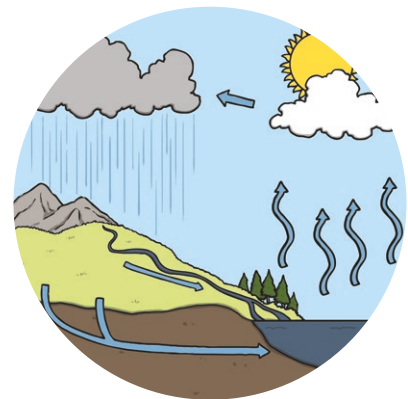
condensation. Water droplets in the air form clouds. But even on a clear day, there is always water in the air.

Precipitation

When more water joins the clouds, they get heavy.

The water falls back to Earth, which is called precipitation. Precipitation gives water to plants and animals. Precipitation can be:

- rain;
- hail;
- sleet;
- snow.



The water will now go through the cycle again.

Questions

1. Match each word to the correct definition.

Precipitation

Water stored in lakes and oceans.

Evaporation

Rain, snow, sleet or hail.

Accumulation

Water vapour cools and returns to liquid.

Condensation

The Sun heats up water and it becomes water vapour (a gas).

Transpiration

Water evaporated from a plant.

2. Check the true statements.

The Earth always has the same amount of water.

☐

The Moon is important to the water cycle.

☐

Oceans hold most of the Earth's water.

☐

3. List the four stages of the water cycle.

1.

2.

3.

4.

4. What are clouds formed of?

5. Explain the process of evaporation in your own words.

6. Why is precipitation important to plants and animals?

Answers

1. Match each word to the correct definition.

Precipitation		Water stored in lakes and oceans.
Evaporation		Rain, snow, sleet or hail.
Accumulation		Water vapour cools and returns to liquid.
Condensation		The Sun heats up water and it becomes water vapour (a gas).
Transpiration		Water evaporated from a plant.

2. Check the true statements.

The Earth always has the same amount of water. ☒

The Moon is important to the water cycle. ☐

Oceans hold most of the Earth's water. ☒

3. List the four stages of the water cycle.

1. Accumulation

2. Evaporation

3. Condensation

4. Precipitation

4. What are clouds formed of?

Clouds are formed of water droplets that have come together.

5. Explain the process of evaporation in your own words.

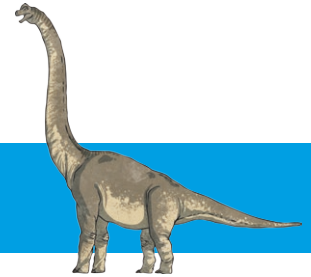
Example answer: Evaporation happens when water is heated up and turns into the gas, water vapour

6. Why is precipitation important to plants and animals?

Precipitation is important to plants and animals because it gives water for the animals to drink and for plants to use to help grow.

The Water Cycle

You drink water every day, but have you ever asked how old the water is? The Earth always has the same amount of water and it moves through a cycle. The water in your cup today could have been the same water a dinosaur once took a bath in! The water cycle is important to life on Earth, but it is important to know that without the Sun there would be no water cycle.



There are four stages of the water cycle.

Accumulation

The first stage of the water cycle is water accumulation. Water accumulation is water that is stored in rivers, lakes, and oceans. Oceans are the largest water accumulations because they hold 97 percent of the Earth's water. Accumulation can also be groundwater, which is water that goes into the Earth's surface, and is absorbed by roots to help plants grow.

Water can be evaporated from plants. This is called transpiration. You can see

evaporation by finding a puddle near your home after a rainstorm. As time passes, you will see that the puddle gets smaller. This is because the water is evaporating.



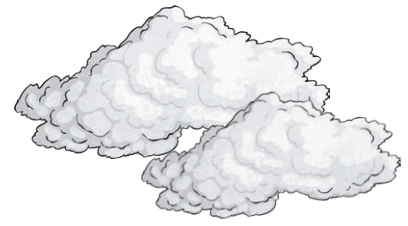
Evaporation

As the Sun shines on accumulated water, the water heats up and turns into water vapour. Water vapour is a gas, so it rises into the air. When the Sun changes water from a liquid to a gas, the process is called evaporation.



Condensation

When water vapour is in the air, it cools. As it cools, the water vapour forms back into a liquid. Groups of water droplets come together to form clouds. When water changes from a gas (water vapour) to a liquid, this process is called condensation.



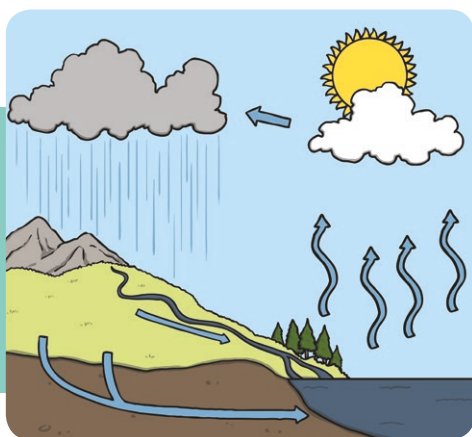
Even if there are no clouds in the sky, there is still water in the air. Clouds are not the only place to see condensation. On a hot day, you may take a cold glass of water outside. After some time, you feel that the outside of your cup is wet. Is the cup leaking? No, it is actually water vapour condensing when it cools on the side of your cup.

Precipitation

As more water condenses in the air, it becomes heavy. The water will fall back to Earth as rain, hail, sleet, or snow, which is called precipitation.



When the water falls back to Earth, it gives water to plants and animals. Some water that does not go into the soil will run-off, which is when gravity pushes water to larger accumulations. The water cycle is now complete and ready to repeat again.



Questions

1. Does the amount of water on Earth change? Explain your answer.

2. List the four stages of the water cycle.

1.

2.

3.

4.

3. Describe an example of evaporation you might see at home.

4. What happens after water vapour is in the air?

5. How does the Sun help the water cycle?

6. Explain precipitation in your own words.

7. Find and copy a phrase that tells you the Sun is important to the water cycle.

8. What role do oceans play in the water cycle? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

Answers

1. Does the amount of water on Earth change? Explain your answer.

The Earth always has the same amount of water and it moves through a cycle.

2. List the four stages of the water cycle.

1. Accumulation

2. Evaporation

3. Condensation

4. Precipitation

3. Describe an example of evaporation you might see at home

Example answer: You can see evaporation by finding a puddle near your home after a rainstorm. As time passes, you will see that the puddle get smaller. This is because the water is evaporating.

4. What happens after water vapour is in the air?

When water vapour is in the air, it cools and becomes liquid again. These water droplets form clouds.

5. How does the Sun help the water cycle?

The Sun helps in the water cycle by heating water so that it becomes water vapour, which helps the cycle continue moving.

6. Explain precipitation in your own words.

Example answer: When water condenses in the air, it becomes heavy and falls back to the Earth as rain, sleet, hail or snow.

7. Find and copy a phrase that tells you the Sun is important to the water cycle.

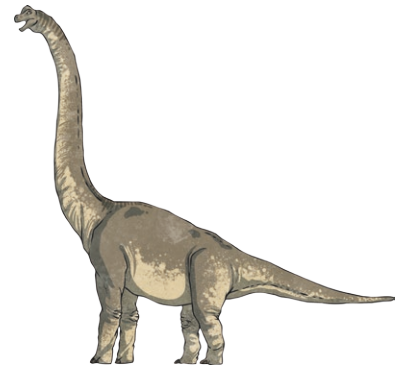
Without the Sun, there would be no water cycle.

8. What role do oceans play in the water cycle? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

Oceans are the largest water accumulations because they hold 97 percent of the Earth's water.

The Water Cycle

You drink and use water every day, but have you ever wondered where that water has come from or how old it is? The Earth has a specific amount of water that goes through a constant cycle. The water in your glass today could have been the same water a dinosaur took a bath in millions of years ago. The water cycle, also called the hydrologic cycle, is vital to life on Earth. There are four main stages of the water cycle, but it is important to remember that the most important factor in the water cycle is the Sun.



Accumulation

The first stage of the water cycle is water accumulation. Water accumulation refers to water that is stored on Earth's surface. This can be in rivers, lakes, and oceans. The largest water accumulations are in oceans, which hold nearly 97 percent of the Earth's water. Accumulation can also refer to groundwater, which is water that seeps into the Earth's surface, and is absorbed by roots to help plants grow.



Evaporation

As the Sun shines down on accumulated water, the water begins to heat up, until it turns into water vapour. The water vapour then rises into Earth's atmosphere. When the Sun changes water from a liquid to a gas, the process is called evaporation.



Water can also evaporate from plants. This is called transpiration. Plants that live in the desert develop special adaptations to trap water inside their leaves.

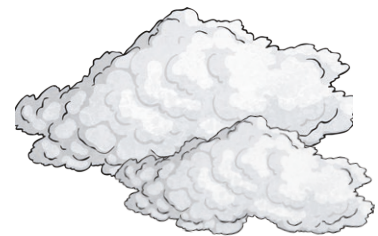
You can easily observe water evaporating by finding a puddle near your school or home after a rainstorm. Throughout the day, you will notice that the puddle is getting smaller. This is because the water is evaporating, and turning to water vapour.



Condensation

After water vapour enters the atmosphere, it begins to cool. As it cools, it condenses and forms back into a liquid. Groups of water droplets come together to form clouds. When water changes from a gas to a liquid, this process is called condensation.

Even in a cloudless and clear blue sky, there is still water in the atmosphere. The atmosphere acts as a road for water because it moves water all around the Earth. However, clouds aren't the only place to observe condensation. On a hot day, you may take an ice-cold glass of water with you outside. Then you notice that the outside of the glass is wet. Is your cup leaking? No, it is actually water vapour condensing when it cools on the side of your glass.

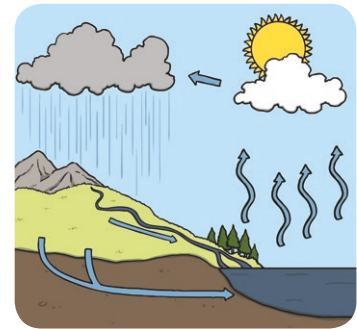


Precipitation

As more and more water condenses, it becomes too heavy for the air to hold. The water will fall back to Earth as rain, hail, sleet, or snow. This process is

known as precipitation and it is important because it allows the water in the atmosphere to return back to Earth's surface.

When the water returns to the Earth's surface, it provides water for plants and animals. Water that does not get absorbed into the soil will experience an additional stage of the water cycle called run-off. Run-off is when water is forced by gravity to move across Earth's surface towards larger water accumulations.



Once the water cycle is complete, it repeats over and over again. While this explains the different stages, each water molecule will travel on a unique and varied journey during its involvement in each stage of the water cycle. Water molecules may be kept in a container, drunk, carried and excreted by an animal, stored by a plant, used to boil pasta, or stay in the ocean or your neighborhood pool for a long period of time before they evaporate and begin the next stage of the water cycle.

Questions

1. Does the amount of water on Earth change? Explain your answer.

2. Why is the Sun important to the water cycle?

3. Which is the largest accumulation of water, and how much of Earth's water does it hold?

4. Complete the table by writing a description of each stage of the water cycle.

Stage	Description
Accumulation	
Evaporation	
Condensation	
Precipitation	

5. Describe an example of condensation you might see in everyday life.

-
6. What happens when water returns to the Earth's surface? Describe two things that might happen.

7. On a clear day, is there water in the atmosphere? Explain your answer.

8. Describe an example of evaporation you might see in everyday life.

9. Find and copy another name for the water cycle.

Answers

1. Does the amount of water on Earth change? Explain your answer.

The amount of water on Earth doesn't change. The earth has a specific amount of water that goes through a constant cycle.

2. Why is the Sun important to the water cycle?

The Sun helps in the water cycle by heating water so that it becomes water vapour, which helps the cycle continue moving.

3. Which is the largest accumulation of water, and how much of Earth's water does it hold?

The largest water accumulations are in oceans, which hold nearly 97 percent of the Earth's water.

4. Complete the table by writing a description of each stage of the water cycle.

Stage	Description
Accumulation	Water accumulation refers to water that is stored on Earth's surface. It can also refer to ground water.
Evaporation	When the Sun heats water, it becomes a gas called water vapour and rises into the Earth's atmosphere.
Condensation	After water vapour enters the atmosphere, it begins to cool. As it cools, it condenses and forms back into a liquid.
Precipitation	As water condenses in the air it becomes too heavy and falls back to Earth as rain, hail, sleet or snow.

5. Describe an example of condensation you might see in everyday life.
On a hot day, you may take an ice-cold glass of water with you outside. Then you notice that the outside of the glass is wet. This is water vapour condensing when it cools on the side of your glass.
6. What happens when water returns to the Earth's surface? Describe two things that might happen.
When the water returns to the Earth's surface, it provides water for plants and animals. Water that does not
7. On a clear day, is there water in the atmosphere? Explain your answer.
The water in the atmosphere isn't just in the clouds. The atmosphere acts as a road for water because it moves water all around the Earth.
8. Describe an example of evaporation you might see in everyday life.
You can easily observe water evapourating by finding a puddle near your school or home after a rainstorm. Throughout the day, you will notice that the puddle is getting smaller. This is because the water is evapourating, and turning to water vapour.
9. Find and copy another name for the water cycle.
Hydrologic cycle.