

The Water Cycle

The Earth always has the same amount of water. This water moves through continuous stages called the water cycle. The water you drink today could have been bathed in by a dinosaur! The water cycle is essential for all life on Earth, and the sun plays a vital role in the cycle. The water in the water cycle takes different forms at different times based on climate, weather patterns, and human interaction. Water can be found in a liquid form, gas form (water vapor or steam), or solid form (ice).

Accumulation

Accumulation refers to storing water. Water is stored naturally in rivers, lakes, oceans, and in the soil. Oceans hold most of the Earth's water. Groundwater is in the ground below the surface. It is absorbed by roots to help plants grow.



Evaporation

Evaporation happens when the sun heats water and turns it into water vapor. Water vapor is a gas in the air. Water can be evaporated from plants. This is called transpiration. Water can also be evaporated from bodies of water such as streams, lakes, and rivers.



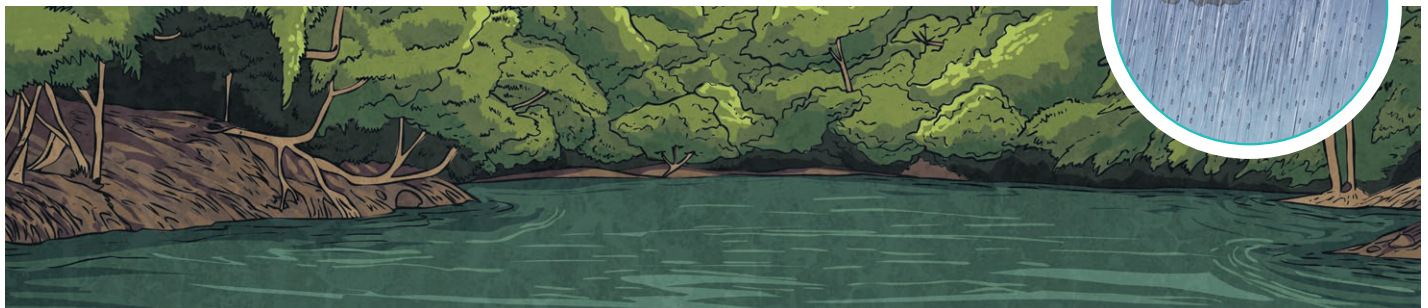
Condensation

When water vapor is in the air, it cools and turns back to a liquid. When water is transformed from a gas to a liquid, the process is called condensation. Water droplets in the air form clouds. Even on a clear day, there is always water in the air.



Precipitation

When more water joins the clouds, they get heavy. The clouds then release the water. It falls back to Earth as precipitation. Precipitation provides water for plants and animals. Precipitation can be rain, hail, sleet, or snow.



Questions

1. Which of the following is not a stage in the water cycle?

- ☐ evaporation
- ☐ precipitation
- ☐ sublimation
- ☐ condensation

2. In which stage of the water cycle does rain occur?

- ☐ accumulation
- ☐ evaporation
- ☐ condensation
- ☐ precipitation

3. What is the name for water in gas form?

- ☐ water vapor
- ☐ ice
- ☐ plasma
- ☐ liquid

4. What are the three different forms of water?

- ☐ liquid, gas, solid
- ☐ steam, water vapor, ice
- ☐ ice, snow, sleet
- ☐ ain, liquid, hail

5. What happens during condensation?

6. Why is accumulation important for humans?
