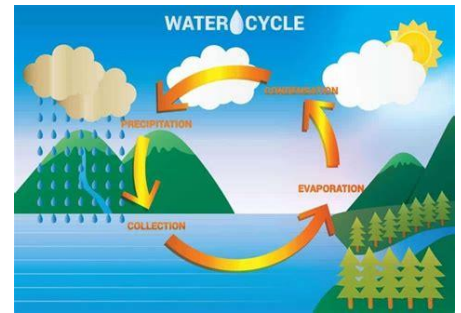


# YEAR 4 THE WATER CYCLE



## THE WATER CYCLE: A JOURNEY OF WATER

The water cycle is a natural process that describes how water moves around the Earth. It is very important because it helps to provide water for plants, animals, and people. The water cycle happens all the time, and it does not have a beginning or end. Let us explore the different stages of the water cycle and learn how it works.

## WHAT IS THE WATER CYCLE?

The water cycle is the continuous movement of water on, above, and below the surface of the Earth. Water travels in a never-ending loop, moving from oceans, lakes, rivers, and the ground, into the sky, and back down again. It changes from one form to another, such as from liquid to gas or from gas to liquid.

## STAGE 1: EVAPORATION – WATER RISING INTO THE AIR

The first stage of the water cycle is called evaporation. When the Sun heats up bodies of water, like oceans, lakes, and rivers, the water turns into an invisible gas called water vapour. This gas rises into the air. When plants lose water through their leaves, it is called transpiration, and this also sends water vapour into the air.

## STAGE 2: CONDENSATION – THE CLOUDS FORM

As the water vapour rises, it cools down high in the sky. When it cools enough, it changes back into tiny water droplets, which come together to form clouds. This process is called condensation. Clouds can be very big, and they can hold lots of water droplets.

## STAGE 3: PRECIPITATION – WATER FALLS TO THE GROUND

When the clouds become full of water, the water droplets join together and become heavier. Eventually, they fall back down to the Earth as precipitation. Precipitation can be rain, snow, sleet, or hail. The type of precipitation depends on the temperature in the air. If it is cold, the water might fall as snow. If it is warm, it will fall as rain.

## STAGE 4: COLLECTION – WATER RETURNS TO EARTH'S SURFACE

After precipitation, the water collects in different places on the Earth's surface. It can flow into rivers, lakes, or oceans. Some of the water seeps into the ground and becomes groundwater. Groundwater is stored in underground reservoirs and can be used by plants, animals, and people.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WATER CYCLE

The water cycle is important because it helps to move water around the Earth. Without the water cycle, there would be no fresh water for us to drink, water our plants, or clean ourselves. It also helps to keep the climate balanced by moving heat and moisture around the planet.

## SUMMARY

The water cycle has four main stages: evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and collection. Water moves in a continuous loop, changing forms from liquid to gas and back again. This cycle ensures that the Earth has enough water to support life.

## FIND OUT MORE...

[BBC Bitesize - What is the Water Cycle?](#)

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### EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. What is the process called when water turns into a gas and rises into the air?
2. How do clouds form during the water cycle?
3. What happens to water when it falls back to Earth as precipitation?
4. Why is the water cycle important for plants, animals, and people?
5. What is the difference between rain and snow in the water cycle?