

# Literacy Activity

Discovery  
Education

It's Only Water

Pour some water in a glass and leave it in the sun. If you leave it out there long enough, a process called **evaporation** will take place. The liquid water will turn into water vapor, which is a gas that escapes into the air. On a warm day, place a glass, with some ice cubes inside, on a table. What happens is called **condensation**. Water vapor in the air will cool and turn into water droplets that collect on the outside of the glass. Go outside when it's raining. You'll get wet from the rain. Rain is a type of **precipitation**.

**Evaporation, condensation, and precipitation** make up the **water cycle**. The water cycle is the constant movement of water from the oceans and the land to the atmosphere and back to the oceans. Water keeps moving, or cycling, through Earth's waters, land, and atmosphere.

The sun provides the energy that keeps water moving through the cycle. Sunlight warms the oceans, rivers, lakes, and other bodies of water. As the water warms, it evaporates and turns into water vapor. The water vapor rises into the atmosphere. This is the evaporation part of the water cycle.

In the atmosphere, the water vapor cools. The water vapor condenses and turns to liquid water. If it is cold enough, the water vapor in the atmosphere can turn into ice. This is the condensation part of the water cycle.

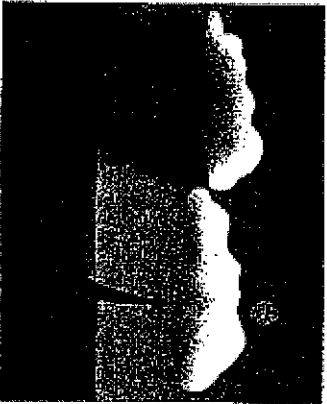
The liquid water in the atmosphere can fall back to Earth as rain. The ice in the atmosphere can fall back to Earth as snow, sleet, or hail. Most of the water in the atmosphere falls into the oceans. This is the precipitation part of the water cycle.

The water cycle doesn't work the same everywhere. For example, water may remain frozen in the Antarctic for thousands of years. With such cold temperatures, very little evaporation occurs. As a result, evaporation is a very slow process in the Antarctic. On the other hand, water may remain as a liquid for only a few minutes in a desert because of the sun's heat. As a result, evaporation is a very quick process in the desert.

The water cycle has been happening for millions of years. Without knowing it, you may drink some of the water a dinosaur gulped down over 100 million years ago. Water on Earth has quite a history!



This water will evaporate if left in the sun.



The sun is the main source of energy that keeps the water cycle moving.

1. Close read: Read the article.
2. Summarize the article at the bottom of the handout (5-8 sentences).
3. Identify one vocabulary word and definition in each paragraph (7).
4. Highlight or annotate the text that led you to your definition.