



# The water cycle

The water cycle is the path that water follows as it moves around Earth.

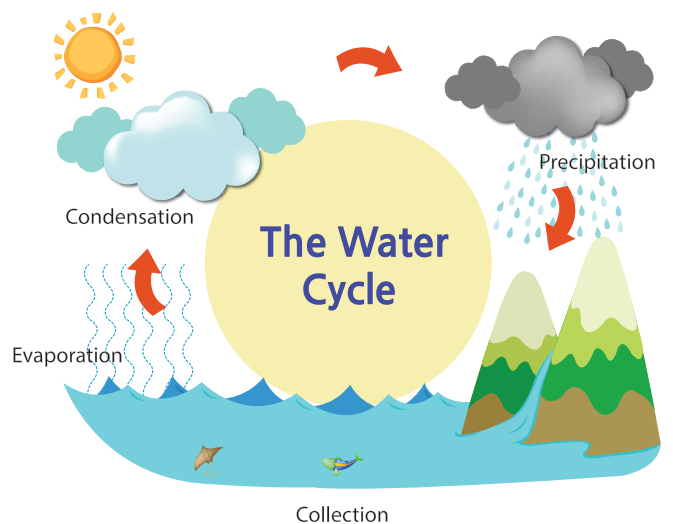
## EVAPORATION

Evaporation is when the sun heats up water in rivers, lakes or the ocean. When the water is heated it turns into vapour or steam. The water vapour or steam leaves the river, lake or ocean and rises up into the air.

Evaporation occurs in everyday life, boiling the kettle at home is a great example of evaporation. When the water heats up, it

## CONDENSATION

As water vapour rises into the air it cools down. As the water vapour floats up higher into the atmosphere it becomes so cold that it changes back into a liquid. Once a large amount of water vapour gathers, liquid clouds are formed. Water vapour continues to be cooled down until the cloud becomes heavy with condensation turning it a dark colour.



## PRECIPITATION

Rain! Precipitation is another word for rain, hail, sleet or snow. Precipitation occurs when there is too much condensed water in the air and clouds cannot hold it anymore. The clouds get heavy and dark with the rain, hail, sleet or snow falling back to the earth when the clouds cannot hold anymore.

## COLLECTION

When water falls back to earth as precipitation, it may fall back into rivers, lakes and oceans, or it may end up on land. It will either end up on land, soaking into the soil and become part of the "ground water" or it will be collected in dams, rivers, lakes and the ocean. The water that soaks into the earth helps living organisms like plants grow. When the water is collected in dams, rivers and lakes it supplies water for animals, plants and domestic use.

*The water cycle process begins again with collected water in the oceans, lakes or rivers being heated up by evaporation.*