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Water cycle

Our water is being continually recycled in what we call the water cycle.

In the water cycle, water goes round and round the Earth through a number of processes.

Evaporation

Sunlight raises the temperature of liquid water in oceans and lakes. Water evaporates from the Earth's waterways and rises (invisibly) into the air as water vapour, a type of gas.

Transpiration

Transpiration occurs when plants give off water vapour through tiny pores in their leaves. This is the plants' way of getting rid of waste. This is the same as when people and animals sweat when they are hot.

Condensation

Water changes state when temperatures fluctuate. The cooler the air the less water vapour it can hold and the warmer the air the more it can hold. When the air cannot hold all the water vapour, the excess vapour condenses and turns into tiny droplets of water, which appear as fog, mist or clouds.

Precipitation

As clouds form, wind moves across the globe spreading out the water vapour. Eventually the clouds can't hold the moisture and they release it – a process called precipitation – and it returns to Earth as rain, hail or snow.

Infiltration

Infiltration occurs when precipitation seeps into the ground. This depends on the permeability of the ground.

Groundwater

Ground water is simply water under the ground where the soil is completely filled or saturated with water. This water is also called an 'aquifer'.

Water Table

The Water Table is found underground where the rock and soil begin to be filled or 'saturated' with water.



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