

What Is the Water Cycle?

Science Words

Say each word quietly to yourself. Then read the meaning.

Read the tip to help you remember.

evaporation [ee•vap•uh•RAY•shuhn] the change of liquid to gas

Evaporation and *every* begin with the same sounds. *Evaporation* takes place from every river, lake, ocean, birdbath, and puddle on Earth.

condensation [kahn•duhn•SAY•shuhn] the change of gas to liquid

Condensation, *create*, and *clouds* begin with the same sound. *Condensation* creates clouds when water vapor touches bits of dust and changes to tiny drops of water.

precipitation [pree•sip•uh•TAY•shuhn] water that falls from clouds to Earth's surface

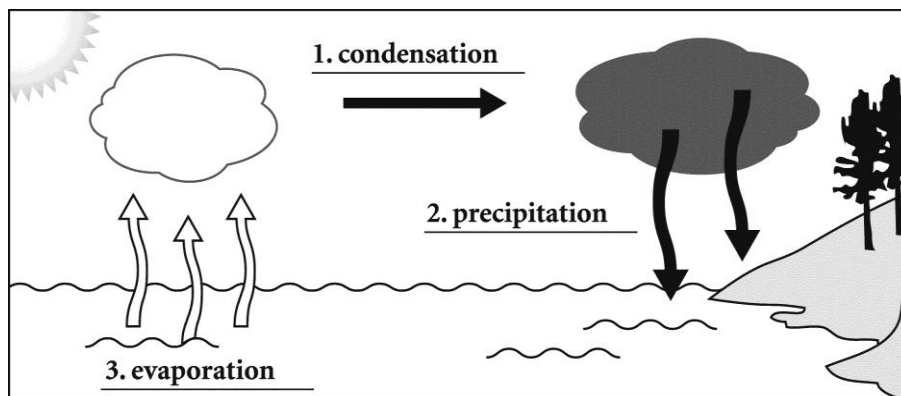
Precipitation and *prevent* begin the same way. When water droplets become too heavy to stay in the air, there is no way to prevent *precipitation*

atmosphere [AT•muhs•feer] the mixture of gases that surround Earth

Atmosphere and *air* begin with the same sound. The *atmosphere* is made up of air.

water cycle [WAW•ter SY•kuhl] the process through which water moves between Earth's surface and the atmosphere

Cycle and *circle* begin the same way. The *water cycle* is like a circle that begins when water evaporates into the air, then condenses in clouds, and then falls back to Earth, only to evaporate again.



run-off [RUHN awf] water that cannot soak into the ground and instead flows across Earth's surface

When you think of *run-off*, think of rain. *Run-off* usually comes after a rainstorm so heavy that the ground can't soak up all the rainwater.

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Science Concepts

Read the Ideas more than once. Do your best to remember them.

1. Water is constantly moving between Earth's surface and the atmosphere in the water cycle.
2. Water on Earth's surface evaporates or changes to water vapor, a gas in the atmosphere.
3. When water vapor rises, it cools and condenses around tiny bits of dust and salt.
4. Together, billions of droplets form a cloud; fog is a cloud that forms close to the ground.
5. Water droplets in a cloud join together until they are too heavy to stay in the air.
6. Rain, snow, and hail are kinds of precipitation, water that falls from clouds to Earth's surface.
7. Groundwater is rain that seeps into the ground and remains stored there.
8. Run-off, water that cannot soak into the ground, flows downhill into low-lying areas.
9. Precipitation may become part of a glacier, a large, slow-moving sheet of ice.
10. Aquifers, like the Floridan Aquifer, are huge bodies of rock that store water for people to use.