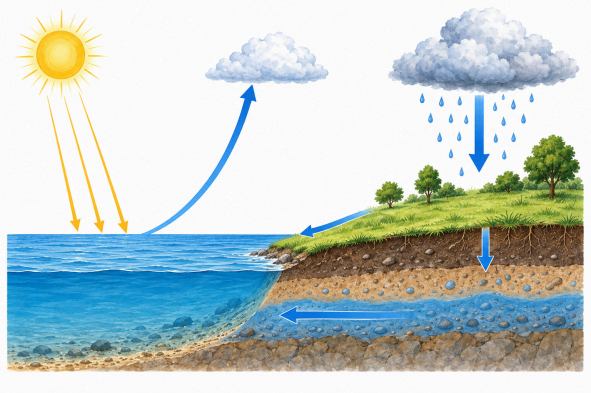
The water cycle

Observe

Choose 1–3 tasks. Point, say or draw; writing is optional.

1 · Look

Find clouds, surface water and groundwater. Where is each?



Selected water-cycle paths. Arrows show processes, not amounts.

2 · Choose

Follow one path: how does water go up and come down? Must every cloud rain?

Always | Not always

3 · Choose

Are visible clouds water vapor, or tiny drops and ice crystals?

Vapor | Tiny drops or ice crystals

4 · Write

Find “Evaporation” on the knowledge card. Say it; write it if you wish.

Evaporation

5 · Draw

Draw two possible paths for a raindrop: over land or underground. Add arrowheads.

6 · Record

I notice: ____

The diagram cannot tell me: ____

I want to observe: ____ (or draw/say)

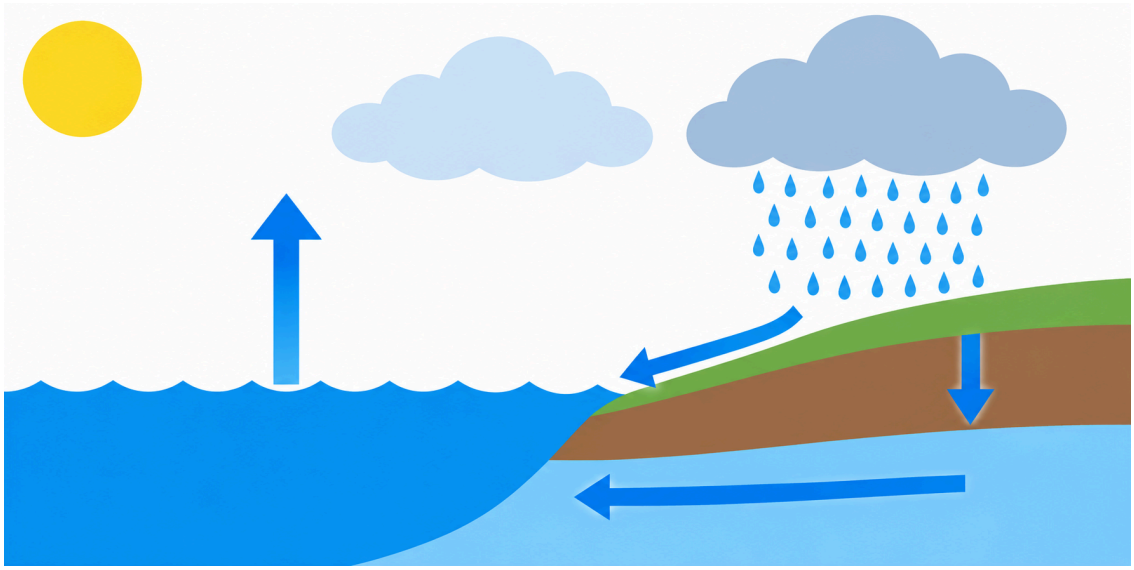
The water cycle

Discover

Where does water go?

Water moves and is stored among oceans, land, air and underground: the water cycle.

Trace the routes



Process diagram · not to scale

Evaporation → **Condensation** → **Precipitation**

- **Evaporation:** liquid → vapor
- **Precipitation:** cloud → ground; rain is one type
- **Partly known:** Selected paths, not required for every drop

- **Cooling and condensation:** vapor → tiny cloud droplets
- **Branches:** surface flow / soaking underground
- **Partly known:** Energy and amounts not measured

Two drivers

- Sun → energy → evaporation
- Gravity → falling rain, downhill flow

Cloud ≠ vapor

- **Vapor:** invisible gas
- **Cloud:** tiny droplets / ice crystals
- Cloud ≠ guaranteed rain

Many routes

- **Oceans, soil, rivers, underground:** storage
- No compulsory loop or fixed number of days

- **Arrows:** process direction, not amounts; rising vapor is not smoke
- **Diagram:** no field measurement or forecast
- With an adult; away from water edges; do not taste rainwater

Sources: USGS · NWS