



Water

Let's be sustainable

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The water cycle explained

The earth has a limited supply of water. The water that we have goes around and around in something we call the 'water cycle'. Below is a diagram and a simple explanation of the water cycle.

1. Evaporation

Evaporation happens when the sun heats up the water in the oceans, rivers or lakes and it turns into vapour (like when you boil water and it turns to steam). The vapour rises and goes into the air.

2. Transpiration

Transpiration is the process of plants losing water out of their leaves. This vapour rises into the air (just like evaporation).

3. Condensation

Once the vapour goes into the air, it gets cold and changes back into a liquid. This liquid joins together and forms clouds. This is called 'condensation'. It is like the drops that form on the mirror after you've had a hot shower. This is the warm vapour cooling down and changing back to a liquid.

4. Precipitation

Precipitation happens when so much water has gathered (condensed) in the air that the clouds get heavy and the water falls back to earth. This could be as rain, hail, sleet or snow.

5. Collection

When water falls back to earth (as rain, hail, sleet or snow) it soaks into the ground (ground water) or goes into the rivers, lakes or oceans. This is called 'collection'.

