



The Water Cycle

The water cycle describes how water changes as it moves from the earth's surface to the sky and back down again. The water cycle has been happening for a very long time, even before the dinosaurs appeared on Earth!

Water can take three different forms: liquid, vapour and ice. Water in its liquid form can be found in oceans, rivers, lakes, reservoirs and even in the ground!

When the warmth from the sun heats up the water it causes evaporation. Evaporation turns the water into vapour (much like a gas) and it rises up towards the sky. Vapour that comes from the water in trees and plants is called transpiration. When this vapour reaches the sky it condenses and becomes clouds.

Eventually the tiny droplets that make up the clouds become heavy enough to fall back down to earth.

This is what we call rain, but it is also known as precipitation. When the rain falls down to earth it either seeps into the ground or runs off back into our waterways. If the water in the clouds gets really cold it can freeze and become ice instead. This is how we get snow. The snow on the ground will eventually melt, becoming a liquid and flowing into our waterways as well. There it can continue the water cycle!