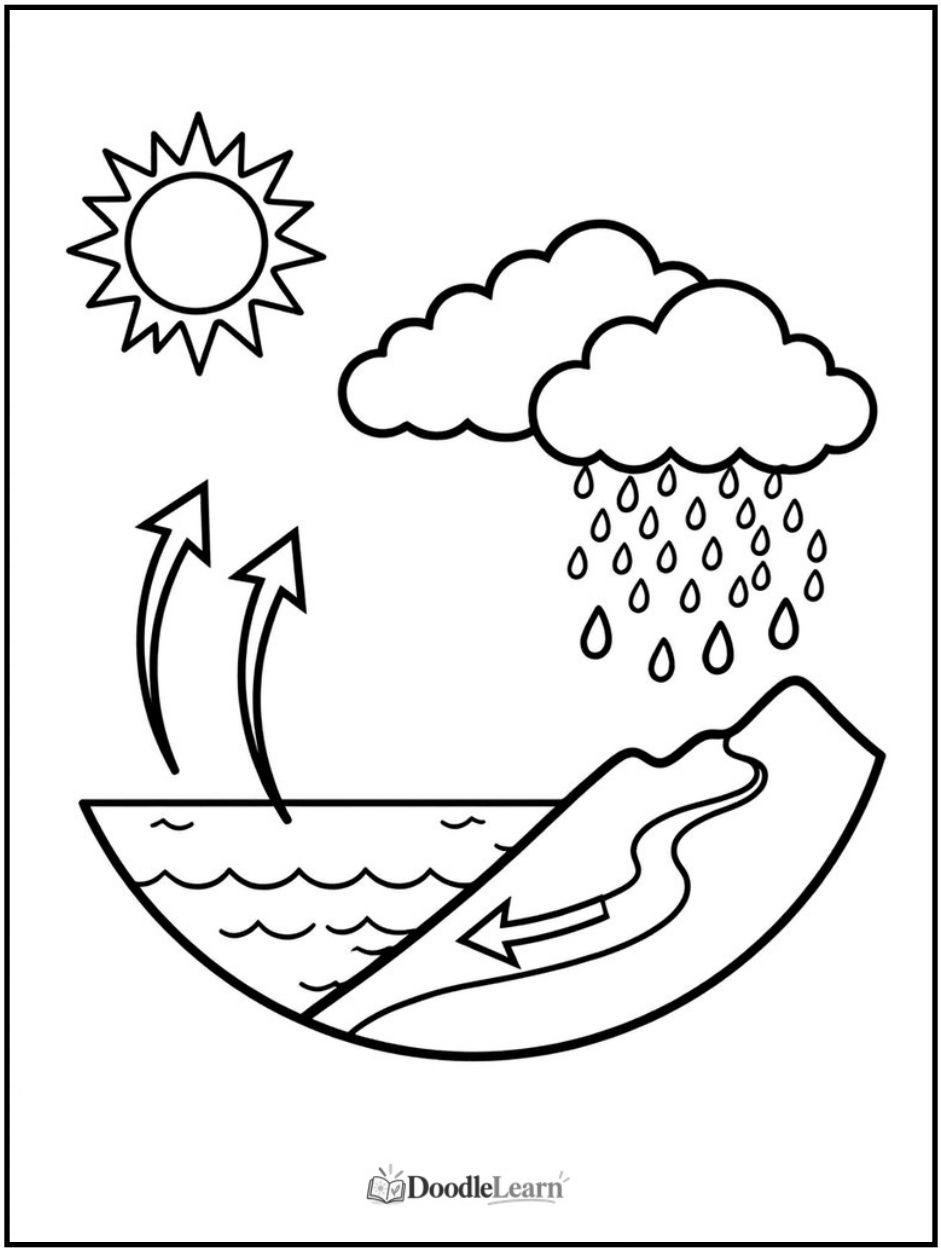
The Water Cycle

Learning Pack · Color It. Learn It. Explore It.

Ages 6–10 · Grades 1–4 (approximate) · Earth Science · 30–75 minutes

Name: _____



Inside: facts · vocabulary · label the water cycle · sequencing · quiz · answer key · notes

What you will learn

Learning objectives

- ☐ Explain in simple words what the water cycle is.
- ☐ Describe evaporation, condensation, precipitation and collection.
- ☐ Label six parts of a water cycle picture.
- ☐ Put the steps of one path through the water cycle in order.
- ☐ Spot the water cycle in everyday life, like a cold glass or a puddle.

Four water cycle facts

Fact 1: The sun starts it

The sun warms water so it evaporates: it turns from a liquid into an invisible gas called water vapor. Most evaporation happens over the oceans.

Fact 2: Clouds are tiny drops

High in the sky the air is cold, so water vapor turns back into tiny drops of liquid water — or, where it is cold enough, tiny ice crystals. That is condensation, and it makes clouds.

Fact 3: Drops get heavy

Cloud droplets and ice crystals join together into bigger drops and snowflakes. When they are heavy enough, they fall as precipitation: rain, snow, sleet or hail.

Fact 4: Most water is salty

Oceans contain about 96.5% of Earth's water, and ocean water is salty.

Sources (U.S. Geological Survey Water Science School, checked October 2026)

Facts 1 and 3: water.usgs.gov/edu/watercycle-kids-beg.html
Fact 2: usgs.gov/water-science-school/science/condensation-and-water-cycle
Fact 4: usgs.gov/water-science-school/science/how-much-water-there-earth ("about 96.5 percent")

Water cycle vocabulary

Water cycle	The way water keeps moving between the land, the oceans and the sky.
Water vapor	Water as an invisible gas in the air.
Evaporation	When the sun's heat turns liquid water into water vapor.
Condensation	When water vapor cools and turns back into tiny drops of liquid water.
Cloud	Millions of tiny liquid water droplets, ice crystals, or both, floating together in the sky.
Precipitation	Water falling from clouds as rain, snow, sleet or hail.
Runoff	Rain water that flows over the ground into streams and rivers.
Collection	When water gathers in oceans, lakes, rivers and under the ground.
Groundwater	Water that soaks into the ground and is stored in soil and rock.

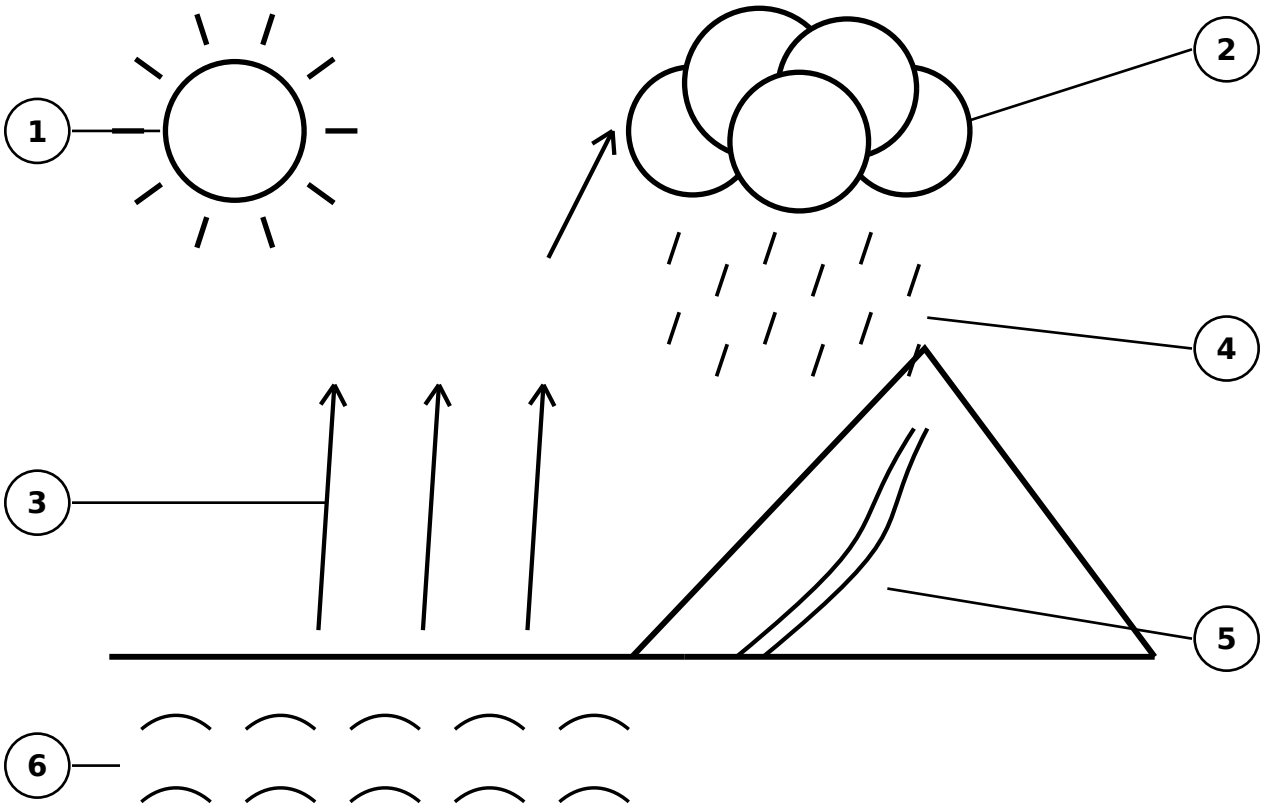
Your turn: write a sentence using two of the words above.

Label the water cycle

Name: _____ Date: _____

Read the word bank. Write each word on the line with the matching number.

sun · evaporation · condensation (cloud)
precipitation · runoff (river) · collection (ocean)



1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

5. _____ 6. _____

Put the water cycle in order

Name: _____ Date: _____

Water can take many paths through the water cycle. These five steps show one possible path, from the ocean and back again, but they are mixed up. Write 1 to 5 in the boxes, then draw this path in the big box.

☐ Water vapor rises, cools and turns into tiny drops that make a cloud.

☐ The sun warms the water in the ocean.

☐ The water flows into rivers and back to the ocean, and the path starts again.

☐ The water evaporates and floats up into the sky as water vapor.

☐ Tiny drops join into big drops and fall as rain, snow, sleet or hail.

Draw this path of the water cycle with arrows:

Water cycle quiz

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What turns liquid water into water vapor?

- ◯ a) The moon
- ◯ b) The sun's heat
- ◯ c) The wind only

2. What is it called when water vapor turns into tiny drops and makes clouds?

- ◯ a) Condensation
- ◯ b) Evaporation
- ◯ c) Collection

3. Which of these is precipitation?

- ◯ a) A puddle
- ◯ b) A cloud
- ◯ c) Snow falling

4. Where does most evaporation happen?

- ◯ a) Over the oceans
- ◯ b) Inside caves
- ◯ c) On the moon

5. About how much of Earth's water is in the oceans?

- ◯ a) Half
- ◯ b) 96.5%
- ◯ c) 10%

Bonus: Why does a cold glass get wet on the outside on a warm day?

Answer key

Label the water cycle

1. sun
2. condensation (cloud)
3. evaporation
4. precipitation
5. runoff (river)
6. collection (ocean)

Put the water cycle in order (one possible path)

1 The sun warms the water in the ocean.

2 The water evaporates and floats up into the sky as water vapor.

3 Water vapor rises, cools and turns into tiny drops that make a cloud.

4 Tiny drops join into big drops and fall as rain, snow, sleet or hail.

5 The water flows into rivers and back to the ocean, and the path starts again.

Water cycle quiz

1. b) The sun's heat
2. a) Condensation
3. c) Snow falling
4. a) Over the oceans
5. b) 96.5%

Bonus (sample answer): Water vapor in the warm air touches the cold glass, cools down and turns into liquid drops. That is condensation.

Teacher and parent notes

Who it is for

Ages 6–10 (about grades 1–4). Younger children can do the coloring and vocabulary pages with help reading.

Time

30–75 minutes, depending on the activities selected. Use one or two pages for a short 30-minute lesson, or the full pack across two lessons.

Materials

Pencils, crayons or colored pencils. Optional: a cold glass of water for the condensation demo. Print single-sided at 100% scale.

Suggested order

1) Read the facts aloud (10 min). 2) Vocabulary page (10–15 min). 3) Label the water cycle (10 min). 4) Sequencing and drawing (15 min). 5) Quiz (10 min). 6) Color a sheet from the free Water Cycle collection (10+ min).

Quick demo

Fill a glass with ice water and leave it on a table. After a few minutes, drops form on the outside. Ask: where did the water come from?

Many paths

The sequencing page follows one common path (ocean, sky, rain, river, ocean). Real water can also soak into the ground, freeze in glaciers, or be taken up by plants, so accept sensible alternatives.

Discussion questions

Where does rain go after it falls? Could the water you drink today once have been in a cloud? Why do puddles disappear on sunny days?

Differentiation

Support: read words aloud and let children point to labels. Extension: keep a one-week weather diary and match each day to a water cycle step.

Matching coloring pages

doodlelearn.com/coloring-pages/earth-science/water-cycle