

The Water Cycle

Grade 3 • SCIENCE • Students identify evaporation, condensation, and precipitation and place these processes in the correct water-cycle sequence. • Standards: 5-ESS2-1

Read each question carefully and write your answer. Think about how water moves through evaporation, condensation, and precipitation in the water cycle.

1. When liquid water changes into water vapor and rises into the air, this is called _____.
2. When water vapor cools and changes back into tiny water droplets in the sky, this is called _____.
3. When water falls from clouds as rain, snow, sleet, or hail, this is called _____.
4. A puddle in the playground disappears on a sunny day. Which water cycle process is happening?
5. Clouds form when water vapor in the air cools down. Which water cycle process makes clouds?
6. Put these three steps of the water cycle in the correct order: precipitation, evaporation, condensation.
7. Maria notices fog on the bathroom mirror after her shower. The water vapor from the hot shower cooled on the mirror. Which process is this?
8. The sun heats water in a lake. The water changes to water vapor and rises into the air. Next, the water vapor will cool and turn into tiny droplets. What will happen after that?
9. After a rainstorm, water sits in a birdbath. Two days later on a warm, sunny day, the birdbath is empty even though no one poured the water out. Explain what happened to the water using two water cycle processes.

10. Why does the water cycle keep repeating instead of stopping after precipitation falls?

Answer Key — The Water Cycle

For the teacher / parent. Do not distribute with the worksheet.

1. evaporation
2. condensation
3. precipitation
4. evaporation
5. condensation
6. evaporation, condensation, precipitation (*Water evaporates first, then condenses into clouds, then falls as precipitation.*)
7. condensation
8. The water will fall back to Earth as precipitation. (*After condensation forms clouds, precipitation is the next step in the water cycle.*)
9. The water evaporated: heat changed it into water vapor that rose into the air. Later, that water vapor can condense high in the sky to form clouds. (*Evaporation emptied the birdbath; condensation is what happens to the water vapor next.*)
10. Because the sun heats the water again and causes evaporation to start the cycle over. (*The sun's energy continuously drives evaporation, which restarts the cycle.*)