



# The Water Cycle

Answer Key



Fill in the blanks below with words from this box:

<del>evaporation</del>	sunny	<del>precipitate</del>	<del>condenses</del>
<del>evaporates</del>	clouds	<del>vapor</del>	atmosphere
<del>heating</del>	<del>heavy</del>	oceans	<del>lakes</del>
<del>droplets</del>	plants	<del>hail</del>	<del>glaciers</del>
<del>runoff</del>	<del>snow</del>	<del>cycle</del>	<del>crystals</del>
<del>rain</del>	rivers	<del>streams</del>	

## Evaporation

On a warm, sunny day, water in a glass of water seems to slowly disappear. This is because the energy from the sun is heating the water up and turning the liquid water into water vapor. This process is called evaporation. When the water evaporates, it becomes an invisible gas in the atmosphere. Evaporation takes place all over the earth, but especially in the oceans and lakes where there is lots of water.

## Condensation

As the water vapor rises, it cools off and condenses into water droplets. If the water vapor becomes extremely cold, it will form ice crystals instead of water droplets. As the water droplets or ice crystals grow bigger and more numerous, they form clouds.

## Precipitation

If water droplets or ice crystals become too heavy, they can't stay in the air. They precipitate. Water droplets precipitate as rain and ice crystals precipitate as hail snow. Sometimes, the rain freezes before it hits the earth and precipitates as hail.



## Runoff

This precipitation gathers into rivers and streams that flow down to the lakes and oceans. This is called runoff. Not all of the water makes it back to the oceans and lakes right away. Some of it is used by animals and plants. Some is frozen into glaciers. Eventually, the animals and plants breathe the water out and the glaciers melt, releasing the water back into the water cycle.