

Water cycle and Rivers

Human and physical geography Geographical skills and fieldwork.



Quick Facts



- The water cycle is made up of several stages including evaporation, condensation, precipitation and run off.
- Rivers begin at their source and flow downhill to their mouth.
- Rivers can be fed by other smaller rivers or streams, which are known as tributaries.
- Rivers offer many uses to people including water supply and transport for trade.

Vocabulary			Knowledge
	Evaporation 	Water heated by the sun, which turns it from a liquid to a gas called water vapour.	How does the water cycle work? Evaporation: The Sun causes the water from the Earth to evaporate. This water evaporates from seas, lakes, streams and even puddles. When it evaporates, water turns into water vapour. Condensation: As the water vapour rises, it cools down. As it cools down, condensation happens and water vapour condenses to small droplets of water. Clouds are made from a mix of dry air and small droplets of water. Precipitation: As condensation continues to happen, more droplets of water vapour are formed. When the droplets become heavy and large enough, they fall back to the Earth's surface in the form of rain or snow. Runoff and Transpiration: As precipitation happens in the form of rain or snow falling back to Earth, water is absorbed into the soil. This water is used by plants to grow -when water from plant leaves evaporates back into the atmosphere, this is called transpiration. Water may also run off and enter oceans, seas and rivers. Water then evaporates again and the water cycle begins again! Rivers A river is a path that water takes as it flows downhill, normally towards another river, a lake, sea or ocean. Rivers come in many different shapes and sizes, and often join together to make larger rivers. As rivers are a ready source of water, lots of plants/ animals often live near or in them. Most inland settlement were originally formed around rivers. In addition to drinking and bathing, rivers were also important waterways for trade. Rivers can flood, at which point they can become exceptionally dangerous.
	Condensation 	The cooling of water vapour as it rises. This forms droplets of water.	
	Precipitation 	The droplets of water join together and fall to Earth as rain, hail, sleet or snow.	
	Run off 	Water hitting the ground and running over it rather than soaking into it.	
	Source 	Where a river begins. This is usually in a mountainous or hilly area.	
	Tributary 	A small river or stream flowing into a larger river or stream.	
	Confluence 	The junction of two rivers.	

Diagram of the water cycle and stages of a river

