THE WATER CYCLE

A never-ending global process of water circulation from clouds to the land, to the ocean, and back to the clouds.

CONDENSATION

EVAPORATION
from oceans, rivers and streams

TRANSPARATION
from plants

PRECIPITATION
(rain and snow)

SURFACE RUNOFF

GROUNDWATER
THE WATER CYCLE

A never-ending global process of water circulation from clouds to the land, to the ocean, and back to the clouds.

1. EVAPORATION
   Heat from the Sun causes water to evaporate from the ocean, lakes and streams. Evaporation occurs when liquid water on Earth's surface turns into water vapor in our atmosphere.

2. TRANSPIRATION
   Water from plants and trees also enters the atmosphere. This is called transpiration.

3. CONDENSATION
   Warm water vapor rises up through Earth's atmosphere. As the water vapor rises, the cool air of the atmosphere causes it to turn back into liquid water, creating clouds.

4. PRECIPITATION
   When a cloud becomes full of liquid water, it falls from the sky mainly as rain or snow—also known as precipitation. Rain and snow then fill lakes and streams, and the process starts all over again.

5. SURFACE RUNOFF
   Surface runoff is nothing more than water "running off" the land surface. Rain runs off land surfaces downhill due to gravity.

6. GROUND WATER
   Some water seeps into the ground as soil moisture or groundwater.