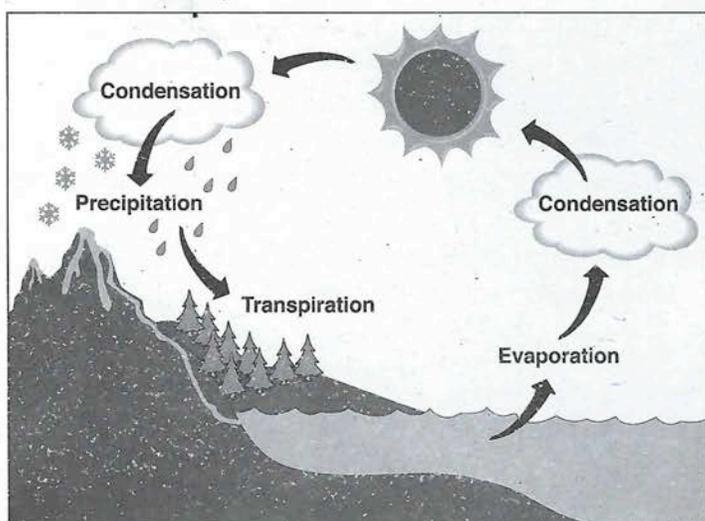


About three-fourths of Earth's surface is water. All water, both liquid and otherwise, above Earth's crust is called the **hydrosphere** (hydro = water). The hydrosphere contains all the water that exists on Earth: 97 percent in the oceans; 2 percent in ice; and less than 1 percent in the atmosphere, lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater.

Sometimes water seems to vanish, but it never really disappears. It just recycles itself by moving to the next stage in the water cycle. The **water cycle** is the movement of water between land, sea, and air. It is

how water moves from one place to another by changing forms.

Precipitation is water that returns to Earth as rain, snow, sleet, hail, or dew. **Transpiration** is the process by which plants give off water. **Evaporation** occurs when water goes back into the atmosphere. The sun's rays heating the earth cause evaporation. **Condensation** occurs when water in the atmosphere cools to form clouds. The clouds formed by this condensation release water when they get too heavy or too cold. This lets water in the form of rain, snow, sleet, or hail fall to the earth again.



The Water Cycle

1. Water falls as snow in mountain areas; as rain everywhere else.
2. Water melts and flows in rivers and streams to lakes. It can evaporate before it joins the ocean, or it can evaporate when it falls onto land.
3. The sun heats the water in oceans, rivers, and lakes, and on plants. Some water evaporates and changes into water vapor, a gas that rises into the air.
4. When it rises into the air, the vapor cools and becomes drops of liquid water (condensation).
5. The drops form clouds then fall as rain, snow, sleet, or hail.
6. The cycle begins again as water goes back to Earth's surface and either evaporates from the land, is absorbed into the land as groundwater, or runs down hills and mountains (runoff) until it joins a body of water, where it evaporates.

Answer the Following

1. What is the hydrosphere? _____
2. What is the difference between condensation and precipitation? _____

3. What causes evaporation? _____
4. How does water return to the earth? _____

5. What is the water cycle? _____