

Name _____

period _____

Date _____

Write your notes
about what you are
reading in this space.

Science Shorts -8

What Is the Water Cycle?

When a puddle dries, the water is not lost forever. The water has become part of a big circle called the **water cycle**. Water changes its form in the water cycle, but it never disappears.

One part of the water cycle that you can see is **rain**. After it rains, everything is wet—the grass, the sidewalks, and the streets. Some of this rain sinks deep into the ground. And some of the rain spills into ponds, streams, and rivers.

Soon, the sun shines again. Heat from the sun **evaporates**, or dries, the rain. When rain evaporates, the liquid water changes form. It becomes a gas you cannot see. This gas is called **water vapor**. The sun is always evaporating water from puddles, ponds, lakes, streams, rivers, and oceans.

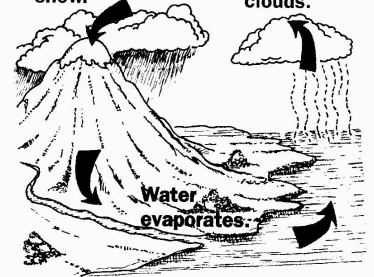
Water vapor is light, not heavy. It rises into the sky. When there is enough water vapor in the sky, the water vapor **condenses**, or gathers together. Water vapor that condenses isn't a gas anymore. It is liquid water again. We see the liquid water as a cloud.

Liquid water is heavy. When it falls, we call it rain. If the air is cold, the water may fall as snow or ice. The rain, snow, or ice falls to the ground. The sun melts the snow and ice. The liquid water evaporates again, returning to the water cycle.

The Water Cycle

Water falls as
rain, ice, or
snow.

Water vapor
becomes
clouds.



Water keeps moving through the
water cycle.

A.

Write the word or words that best complete each sentence.

clouds rain water cycle water vapor

1. Water changes to vapor and back to water again as part of the _____ .
2. When the sun evaporates water, the water turns into _____ .
3. Water vapor condenses into _____ in the sky.
4. Water may fall from clouds as _____ , snow, or ice.

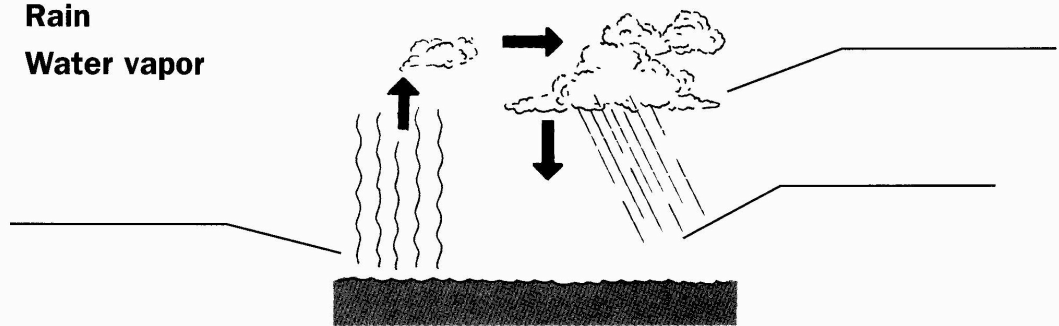
B.

Write the correct name for each part of the water cycle.

Clouds

Rain

Water vapor



C.

Write one or more sentences to answer the question.

Are the black clouds you see before a thunderstorm heavy or light?
Explain your answer.
