

Water Cycle Experiment:

Grade Level: 3-5

Concept: The Water Cycle

Estimated Duration: 40 minute lesson, with a follow-up experiment

Objectives

Students will be able to

- understand that water travels in a cycle.
- understand the parts of the water cycle: evaporation, condensation, and precipitation.

Materials

Markers

Warm water

Plastic wrap

Marble

Plastic bowl with flat bottom (whip cream bowl works well)

Baby food jar

Salt

**White board (Optional)*

Key Vocabulary

Water cycle

Evaporation

Condensation

Precipitation

Procedures

Warm-up

- What is a cycle? *Something that goes in a circle. A bicycle has two circular tires. Something that travels in a circle is a cycle.*

- Show students a glass of water, and discuss where water comes from.

Direct Instruction

- Define the key vocabulary terms at board and provide examples of when students may have witnessed evaporation or condensation.
 - Examples of evaporation include:
 - Steam rising from a pot of water
 - Puddles that have dried up
 - Water sitting in a bowl that seems to 'disappear' after a few days
 - Examples of condensation include:
 - Water droplets forming on the outside of your water glass
 - A foggy mirror in a bathroom
 - Foggy windows in a car
 - Demonstrate the cyclical movement of water either by drawing the water cycle at the board, or sharing a poster of the water cycle.
 - Explain that in the experiment to follow, we will be creating a mini water cycle.

Practice

- Place a tablespoon of salt in bottom of plastic bowl. Fill with about 1 inch of warm water. Taste water with finger to see if you can taste the salt.
- Place the empty baby food jar in center of water. Cover plastic bowl with plastic wrap. Set marble on center of plastic wrap above the baby food jar. Place in a sunny spot for a few hours, or one day.
- Later, check inside the baby food jar. There will be fresh water. Taste it to see if it tastes salty. The warm water from the bowl evaporated, created condensation when it hit the cool plastic wrap, traveled down the plastic wrap to the center due to the weight of the marble, and dripped into the baby food jar as precipitation.

Assessment

- Ask students to share their knowledge of the experiment by relating it to the parts of the water cycle. Tell where there was evaporation, condensation, and precipitation in the experiment.

Ask students to draw and label the parts of the water cycle.