

# THE WATER CYCLE

## Hydrologic Cycle Educational Reference

### Evaporation

The sun heats up water in rivers, lakes, or oceans and turns it into vapor or steam, which rises into the air.

### Condensation

Water vapor in the air gets cold and changes back into liquid, forming clouds through atmospheric cooling.

*[ High-Resolution Illustration Area: Sun, Clouds, Mountains, and Ocean ]*

### Precipitation

Occurs when so much water has condensed that the air cannot hold it anymore. It falls as rain, snow, sleet, or hail.

### Collection

When water falls back to earth, it may fall back in the oceans, lakes or rivers or it may end up on land as groundwater.