Where Rain Comes From and Where It Goes

KS3 Ages 11-14 ⏰ 3 min read

The Water Cycle Explained

Rain might seem to appear out of nowhere, but it's actually part of a never-ending journey called the **water cycle**. Water is constantly moving between the ocean, the sky, and the land in a continuous loop. Understanding this cycle helps explain where rain comes from and where it goes after it falls.

Where Rain Comes From

Rain starts in the ocean and other large bodies of water like lakes and rivers. When the **Sun** heats these water sources, the water doesn't just disappear—it transforms into an invisible gas called **water vapour** in a process called **evaporation**. This water vapour rises into the atmosphere, where it's much colder.

Think of it like when you boil water on the stove and steam rises up—that's evaporation happening in your kitchen!

As the water vapour climbs higher and cools down, it changes back into tiny water droplets in a process called **condensation**. Billions of these droplets cluster together to form **clouds**. When enough water droplets gather in a cloud, they become heavy, and gravity pulls them back to Earth as **rain**.

Where Rain Goes

Once rain falls, it has several different paths. Some rain soaks into the ground and becomes **groundwater**, which plants use to grow and animals drink. Some rain flows downhill into streams and rivers in a process called **runoff**, eventually returning to the ocean. Plants also absorb water through their roots and release it back into the air through their leaves—a process called **transpiration**.

Think of it like a recycling system for water—nothing is wasted, it just keeps moving around and changing form!

The amazing thing is that the same water molecules that fell as rain millions of years ago are still cycling through today. Every raindrop is part of an eternal journey, making the water cycle one of Earth's most important natural processes.

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