

WATER CYCLE RELAY RACE

AGES

Children 8+ years

Tweens

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This game helps patrons learn about the water cycle with a fun relay race that uses water cycle vocabulary. First describe the steps in the water cycle and show how it works. This game was originally created by Utah State University Water Quality Extension. Suggested run-time: 30 minutes.

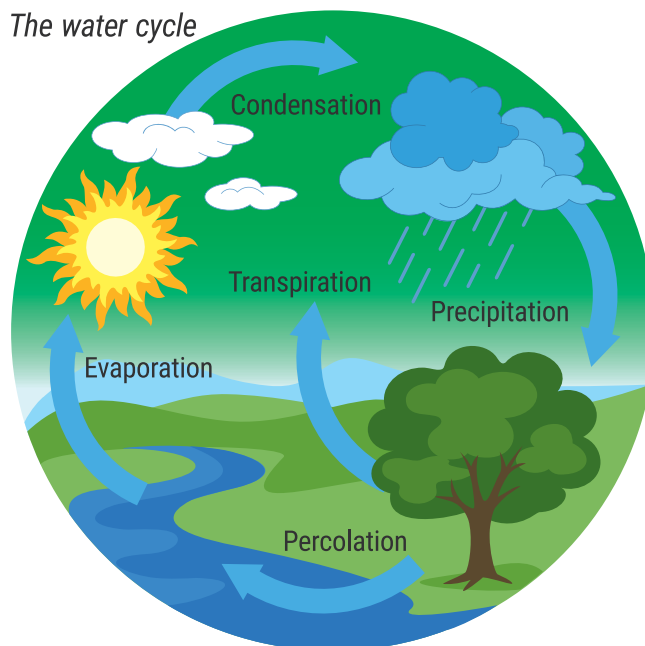


Image source: Shutterstock

ADAPTATIONS:

Allow participants to sit while playing, reduce the distance between lines, use spoons with ergonomic grips, increase size/font of water cycle poster, or read the definitions out loud and write them on poster board.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

Materials:

- 1 tray of ice cubes per team
- 1 set of vocabulary words on paper or index cards per team
- Tape for each team
- 1 spoon per team
- 1 set of definitions
- 1 or 2 buckets or large bowls
- Water cycle poster with lines for corresponding vocabulary (see Printables)

Before the program, create the water cycle poster. You can create a water cycle poster by enlarging and adding blank lines to the printable attached to this idea.

GAME/ACTIVITY | OUTDOORS

To start:

- Divide the group into two or more teams.
- Describe the steps in the cycle, and discuss how it works.
- Show the missing terms on the water cycle diagram. Explain that they will fill in the blanks with the missing words during the relay race.
- Pass out a spoon and a tray of ice cubes to each team.
- Optional: have the teams practice passing the spoon with the ice cube on it.
- Give each group a set of the following nine vocabulary words written on index cards or paper: evaporation, condensation, cloud, precipitation, river, infiltration, ground water, evapotranspiration, and water cycle.
- Have the teams attach a piece of tape to each slip of paper.
- Give the teams time to discuss the words and their definitions, and to look at the poster to begin thinking about where the vocab words go.

To play:

- After you read a definition from the water cycle, the team QUIETLY decides which word best fits the definition.
- The last person in line tapes the slip of paper with the matching word to the bottom of the spoon and places the ice cube in the spoon. They then pass the entire spoon to the next person, and so on down the line.
- The person at the head of the line walks quickly to the poster at the front of the room, places the ice cube in the bucket and tapes the word to the correct spot on the cycle, then returns to the end of the line. The race begins again with another definition.
- Teams score one point for each correctly placed vocabulary word. The team that finishes first gets an extra point (and wins!).

UNIQUE SPACE AND/OR PERSONNEL NEEDS

To prevent wet carpets, this program works best outside. Solo-librarian friendly.

RULES:

No one may touch the ice cube after it has been placed on the spoon. If an ice cube drops, teams must restart from the back of the line. They can use the fallen ice cube or start fresh with a new one.

RESOURCES

Non-fiction

The Great Big Water Cycle Adventure (2018) by Kay Barnham (children's)

Water is Water: A Book About the Water Cycle (2015) by Miranda Paul and Jason Chin (children's)

All the Water in the World (2011) by George Ella Lyon and Katherine Tilotson (children's)

When Cloud Became a Cloud (2021) by Rob Hodgson (children's)

Drop: An Adventure Through the Water Cycle (2021) by Emily Kate Moon (children's)

Printables

Water Cycle Poster

Water Cycle Vocabulary (two pages)



PRINT AND CUT: WATER CYCLE VOCABULARY

EVAPORATION	CONDENSATION	CLOUD
PRECIPITATION	RIVER	INFILTRATION
GROUND WATER	EVAPOTRANSPIRATION	WATER CYCLE

PRINT AND CUT: WATER CYCLE DEFINITIONS

EVAPORATION Heat from the sun makes water rise up.	CONDENSATION Was once a gas but then changed into a liquid able to be seen.	CLOUD Water vapor in the sky. We refer to them as cumulus, stratus, and cirrus.
PRECIPITATION Falls down as a crystal, drip, or even a ball	RIVER A large natural stream of water flowing in a channel to the sea, a lake, or another such stream.	INFILTRATION Movement of water into the ground from the surface.
GROUND WATER Is beneath the surface of the ground in the zone of saturation where every pore space between rock and soil particles is saturated with water.	EVAPOTRANSPIRATION Water evaporated from plants.	WATER CYCLE Movement of water into the ground from the surface.