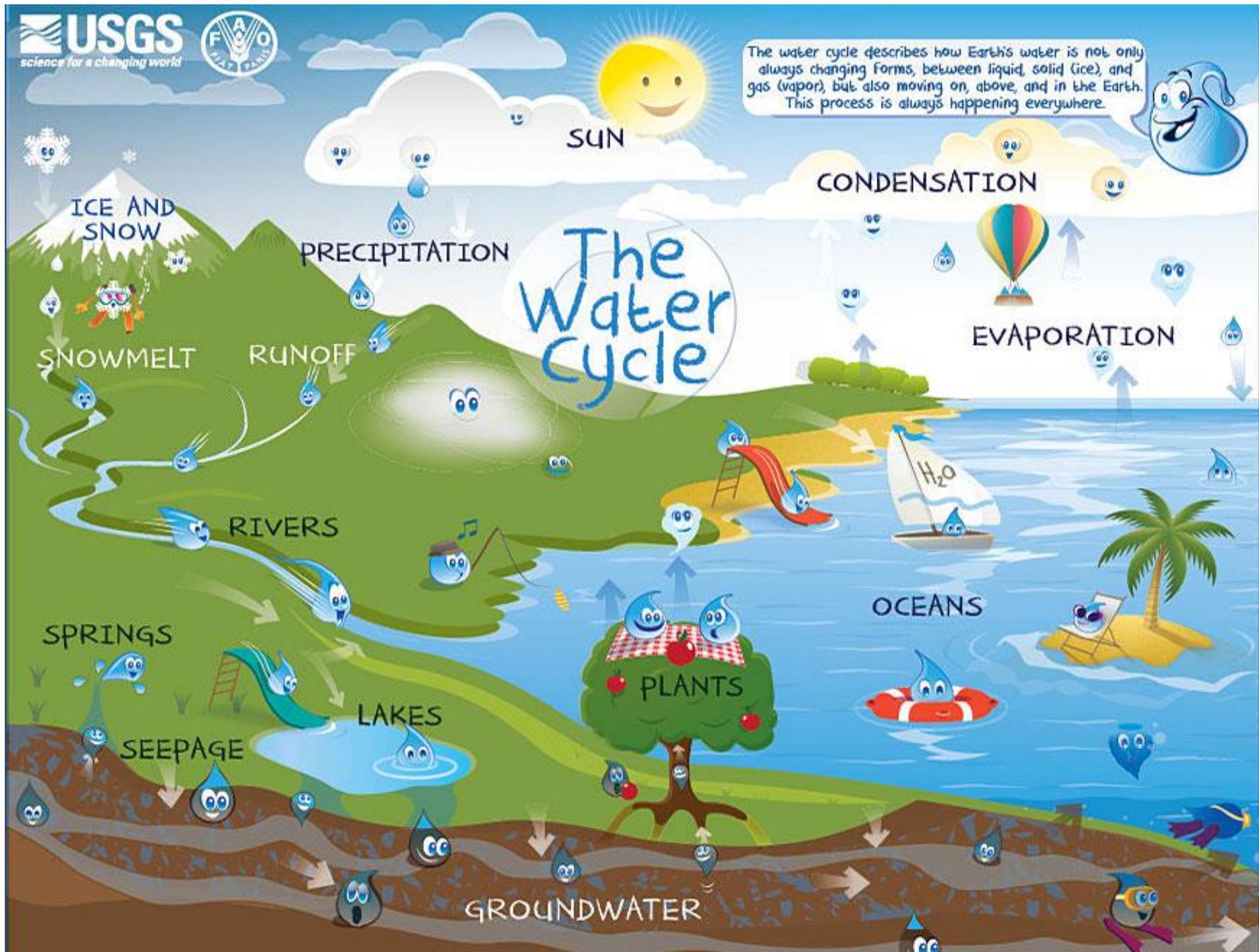


The water cycle describes how Earth's water is not only always changing forms, between liquid, solid (ice), and gas (vapor), but also moving on, above, and in the Earth. This process is always happening everywhere.



The Water Cycle



Water Cycle Steps

1. The heat of the sun provides energy to make the water cycle work.
2. The sun evaporates water from the oceans into water vapor.
3. This invisible vapor rises into the atmosphere, where the air is cooler.
4. The water vapor condenses into clouds.
5. Volcanoes emit steam, which forms clouds.
6. Air currents move clouds all around the Earth.
7. Water drops form in clouds, and the drops then fall to Earth as precipitation in the form of rain or snow.
8. In cold climates, precipitation builds up as snow, ice, and glaciers.
9. Snow can melt and become runoff, which flows into rivers, the oceans, and into the ground.
10. Some ice evaporates directly into the air through sublimation, skipping the melting phase.
11. Rainfall on land flows downhill as runoff, providing water to lakes, rivers, and the oceans.
12. Some rain soaks into the ground, as infiltration, and if deep enough, recharges groundwater.
13. Water from lakes and rivers can also seep into the ground.
14. Water moves underground because of gravity and pressure.
15. Groundwater close to the land surface is taken up by plants.
16. Some groundwater seeps into rivers and lakes, and can flow to the surface as springs.
17. Plants take up groundwater and evapotranspire, meaning that they evaporate it from their leaves.
18. Some groundwater goes very deep into the ground and stays there for a long time.
19. Groundwater flows into the oceans, keeping the water cycle going.

(Source: <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/watercyclekids/download/watercycle-kids-poster.jpg>)

Water Cycle Activity

1. What makes the water cycle work?
2. What does the sun do to ocean water?
3. Where does the invisible vapor go?
4. What does the water vapor condense into?
5. What do volcanoes emit?
6. What moves clouds around the Earth?
7. When the water falls to Earth, what two forms does it take?
8. In cold climates, precipitation builds up into what three forms?
9. When snow turns into runoff, into what three places does it go?
10. Ice gets directly into the air through what process?
11. When rainfall on land turns into runoff, what three places does it go?
12. Rain that soaks into the ground recharges as what?
13. Where can water from rivers and lakes go?
14. What two things make water go underground?
15. What takes up groundwater at the surface?
16. How does some groundwater flow to the surface?
17. From where do plants evaporate water?
18. Where does some of the groundwater stay for a long time?
19. Where does some of the groundwater go to keep the water cycle going?