



WATER RESOURCES

Water Cycle Glossary of Terms

Students, Meghen, Lauren, Sam, Fiona, and their teacher, Ms. Ruth Platt, found our website helpful for an elementary environmental science lesson and suggested that our site include a Water Cycle Glossary of Terms for other students and families who visit our website. Thank you, for the suggestion! We agree and really appreciate the great contribution your idea adds to our website.

Aquifer: An aquifer is an underground layer that contains groundwater.

Atmosphere: A unit of atmosphere measures the air pressure at sea level, which is about 14.7 pounds per square inch.

Climate: The climate of a location includes all the weather conditions for this location over an extended period of time.

Cloud: A cloud is a visible mass of small water droplets or tiny ice crystals that are suspended in the atmosphere.

Cloud Condensation Nuclei: Water vapor surrounds tiny particles, condensing in clouds to become raindrops.

Condensation: Condensation is the process by which water vapor changes into liquid.

Dew Point: Dew point is the temperature at which water in the air condenses to become water droplets near the ground.

Ecosystem: An ecosystem is a community of living and nonliving things in an area.

Erosion: Erosion happens when soil is worn away, usually by wind, water, or ice.

Evaporation: Evaporation is the process of water changing into water vapor.

Evapotranspiration: When moisture from the soil evaporates into the atmosphere or when transpiration from plants occurs, this is called evapotranspiration.

Fog: Clouds near the ground are known as fog.

Freshwater: A lake, river, or spring is a source of freshwater, which animals can drink.

Glacier: A glacier is a mass of ice that moves slowly across a land mass.

Groundwater: Groundwater is water found in an aquifer.

Humidity: The amount of water vapor in the air is the humidity.

Ice: Ice is water in solid form.

Ice Cap: An ice cap is an area of less than 19,000 square miles covered by ice.

Ice Sheet: Ice sheets are glacial ice areas that cover a large expanse.

Lake: A lake is a body of water that is surrounded by land.

Microscopic: Microscopic describes something very small.

Pollutant: A pollutant is a substance that harms a natural resource.

Precipitation: Precipitation includes all types of water that fall to Earth.

River: A river is a big stream of fresh water that flows.

Runoff: When it rains or when snow melt occurs, it's known as runoff.

Snowmelt: Melted water from snow is snowmelt.

Temperature: The level of heat or cold, measured by a thermometer, is temperature.

Transpiration: Water that evaporates from plants is transpiration.

Vapor: Vapor is liquid that is suspended in air.

Water Cycle: Water moves between the land, bodies of water, and atmosphere in a process known as the water cycle.

Weather: Weather describes the state of the atmosphere, and it includes atmospheric pressure, temperature, humidity, cloudiness, precipitation, and wind.

Wind: Wind is air that moves from areas of high pressure to low-pressure zones.

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