

Water Goes Round and Round

1 Clouds become so heavy with water that rain falls to the earth. This is called **precipitation**.

5 When the water in clouds gets heavy, it falls back to earth... precipitation again!

4 Vapor rises and collects in clouds. When it cools it turns back into liquid water. This is called **condensation**.

Water is amazing stuff. Our water starts out as rain from the sky. When it lands on earth it goes to lots of places, like streams and lakes and swamps. Some of it even goes into the ocean or the gulf. Also, some soaks down into the ground, through the soil, into the aquifer.

Do you know what happens to it next? It goes back into the sky. Then, sooner or later, it comes back down to earth someplace else. The next time it could be rain, or it might even be snow.

The path that water follows, out of the sky and back, over and over again, is called the **water cycle**. A cycle is like a circle... with no beginning or end. Here's how the water cycle works.

3 The sun warms the water, which turns it into vapor. This is called **evaporation**.

2 Water flows over the earth and, sometimes, into the sea.

DETOUR

Some water soaks into the ground. This is called **groundwater**. Much of the water we drink comes from under the ground.

AQUIFER