What are rivers?

Rivers carry water and nutrients to areas all around the earth. They play a very important part in the water cycle, acting as drainage channels for surface water. **Rivers** drain nearly 75% of the earth's land surface. **Rivers** provide excellent habitat and food for many of the earth's organisms.

Rivers begin at their source in higher ground such as mountains or hills, where rain water or melting snow collects and forms tiny streams. Find out more about the different sources of **rivers**

What is the Water Cycle?

Water on Earth is **constantly moving**. It is recycled over and over again. This recycling process is called the water cycle.

1. Water evaporates into the air
The sun **heats up** water on land, in rivers, lakes and seas and turns it into water vapour. The water vapour rises into the air.

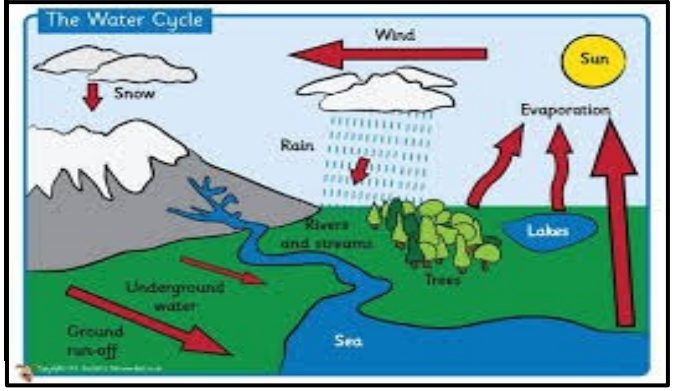
2. Water vapour condenses into clouds
Water vapour in the air **cools** down and changes back into tiny drops of liquid water, forming clouds.

3. Water falls as precipitation
The clouds get **heavy** and water falls back to the ground in the form of rain or snow.

4. Water returns to the sea
Rain water runs over the land and collects in lakes or rivers, which take it **back to the sea**. The cycle starts all over again.

Why is the Water Cycle important?

The **water cycle** is **essential** to life on our planet: without it there would be no plants or animals. ... The **water cycle** is powered by the Sun: heat makes **water** evaporate, before it cools and condenses and falls back to the ground. **Water** can exist in three forms: liquid (**water**), solid (ice) or gas (**water** vapour).



Rivers and the Water Cycle

Critical thinking:
Our big question

Identify problems in the world associated with water.

How would you solve these problems?

Vocabulary

Amazon River	Identify problems in the world associated with water.
Bay	an indentation of a shoreline, usually of softer rock
Beach	a landform by water, usually of loose particles such as sand or pebbles
Channel	a landform, the outline of the path that a river takes
Coast	the region where land meets sea
Condensation	the change of a state of matter – from gas to liquid
Confluence	the meeting of two or more streams of water
Coral	marine invertebrates that typically live in compact colonies in the sea
Estuary	where the mouth of a river broadens as it meets the sea
Evaporation	the change of a state of matter – from liquid to gas
Ocean	body of salt water
Precipitation	forms of water that fall to earth under gravity, e.g. rain, snow, sleet,
Wetland	swamp or marsh near a river or coast