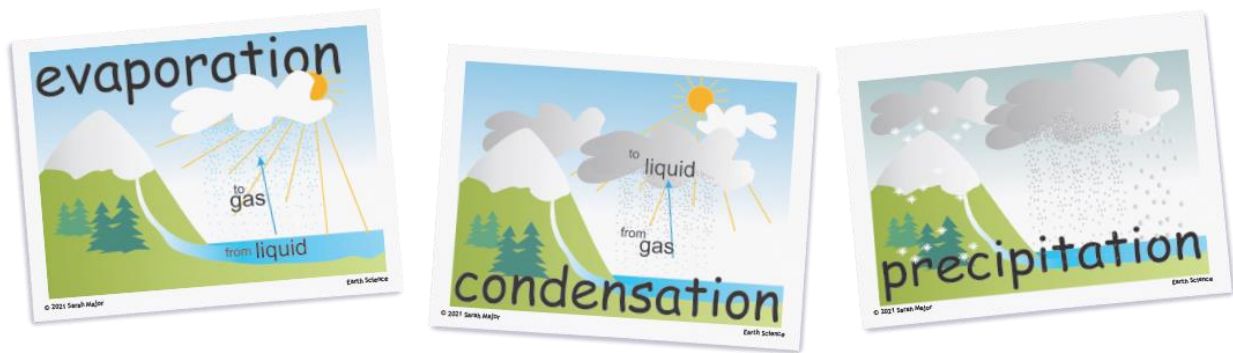


Let's Teach the Water Cycle

We can either explain it verbally and ask children to memorize the vocabulary used in describing the water cycle, OR we can create a very engaging right-brained lesson that will teach the water cycle unforgettably. Here is how to do it. (Download a printable copy of this right-brained lesson on [the water cycle](#) and sample [SnapWords® Science Teaching Cards](#)).

1. Teach the Vocabulary in a Meaningful Way

How to Teach the Water Cycle Vocabulary: evaporation, condensation, and precipitation. Please use [SnapWords® Science Teaching Cards](#) to introduce the words and then follow the steps below for breaking the words apart and teaching their meaning.



First, look at word origins. What is the meaning of “ation?” Ation talks about the act of doing something or the process of doing something. Next, look at the beginning of each word to see what the action is.

Evaporation – the process of evaporating. If something evaporates, it means it fades away, melts away, and disappears. Technically, it means liquid turning into vapor which we generally can't see.

Condensation – the process of condensing, sometimes involving combining two to make one. When you condense something, you make it tighter, more compact, or thick. When you boil soup for a while, it condenses or gets thicker. When you edit your story to condense it, you take words out. When vapor condenses, water droplets blend together making larger and larger drops until they are too heavy to remain suspended in the air. (The word “dense” in the middle of condensation is a clue to what is happening).

Precipitation – the process of precipitating or starting. Precipitation refers to stuff falling out of the sky suddenly. If someone is precipitous, this means they acted quickly and without warning. If someone precipitated something it means they started it suddenly.

Incorporate the vocabulary into daily communication

Use these root words unrelated to this particular lesson. If you lose a paper you need, tell the students it evaporated from your desk. If you are picking up art materials, suggest that you can condense them into a smaller bin. When a student gets the whole class laughing

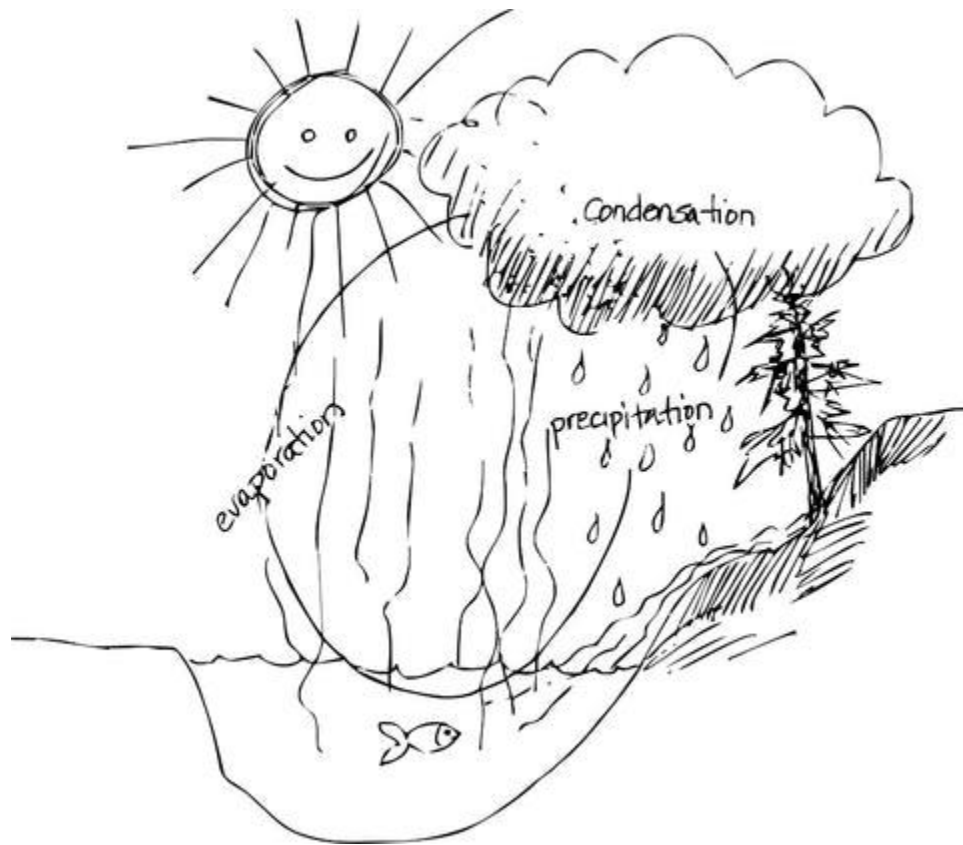
about something, say he precipitated a laugh fest. Hand out brownie points all week to the children who use their new words in conversation.

2. Utilize pattern detection

Each of our three words end in “ation” but the pattern I noticed is that the endings are in alphabetical order: “ration” “sation” and “tation.”

3. Rely on images

Here is a sketch I made of the water cycle. Using an image will show kids easily the interrelationship of the concepts. What comes first, what follows next, and where it goes from there.



4. Tell a story

The story can be as simple as talking about a family who lived out by the lake. They loved to sit on the hill by the big pine tree and watch the weather. On sunny days, even though they couldn't see this happening, the hot sun helped the water in the lake to rise in tiny vapor droplets. (Evaporation) These joined together to make fluffy white clouds. Then many droplets bumped together, condensing into bigger and bigger drops... (Condensation) until

suddenly, they were too big to stay in the air and they began to fall suddenly. (Precipitation). The family loved every part of this cycle and didn't even mind getting wet when it rained!

5. Act it out

It is so much fun to have your children act out the water cycle. I did this with my 1st grade class. True story.



- I was the sun. They were the droplets of water.
- We made a big circle of our chairs around the rug.
- The students started out lying closely together on the rug – to make a lake (a giggling lake).
- Next, I stood on a chair and spread my arms out wide. I was the sun beaming down on them.
- I prompted them to evaporate. As they chanted, “evaporation,” they slowly rose from the rug and climbed onto chairs.
- Next, I prompted them to condense. Carefully they got as close to each other on the chairs as they could without falling and chanted, “condensation!”
- Finally, as they yelled, “precipitation,” they all fell onto the rug again to make a lake.