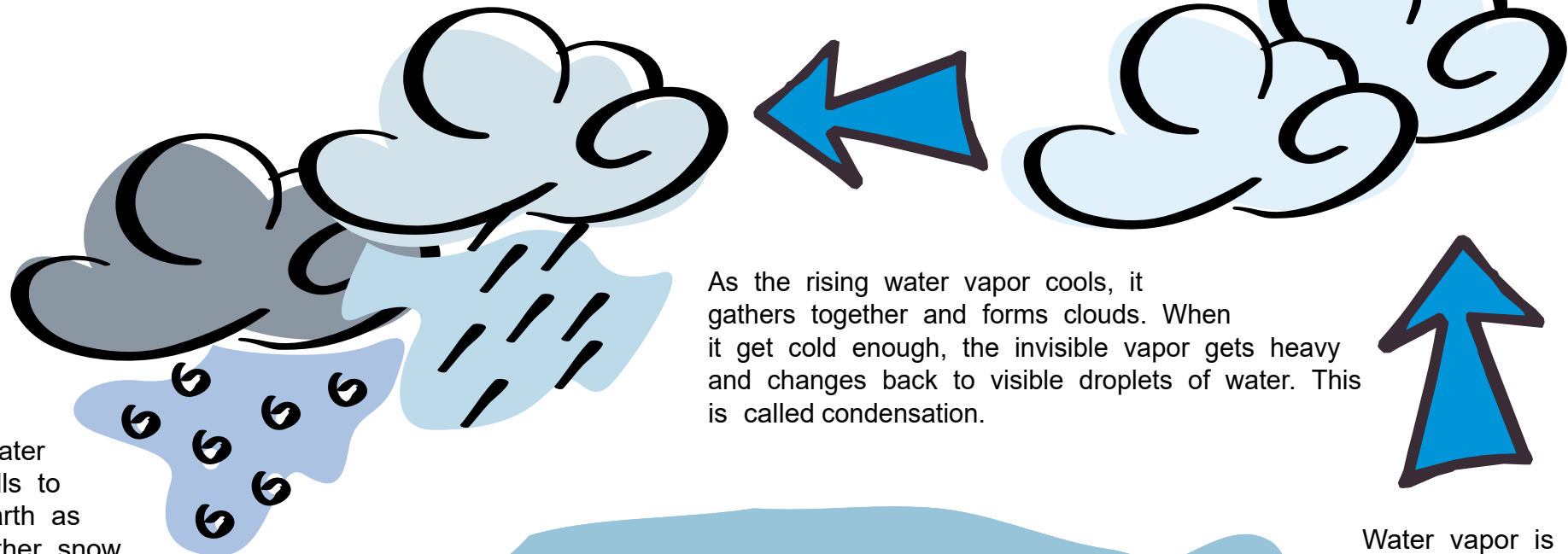


# Nature's Water Cycle



Water falls to earth as either snow or rain. This is called precipitation.

As the rising water vapor cools, it gathers together and forms clouds. When it get cold enough, the invisible vapor gets heavy and changes back to visible droplets of water. This is called condensation.

Water vapor is also given off by plants through their leaves. This is called transpiration.

## Where Does Our Water Come From

Water – we all use it every day. So where do we get the water we use? Water can be found in two places on the ground and under the ground.

### Surface Water

Water does, of course, fall out of the sky – as rain, snow, sleet and hail. In most years, California gets almost 200 million acre-feet of precipitation. that would be about 200 million football fields each filled a foot deep – more than enough to cover all of California. But, of course, California isn't covered in water. So where does all the rain that falls and snow that melts go?

About two-thirds is either used by trees and plants, soaks into the ground or evaporates. About one-third runs off into rivers, streams and lakes.

These rivers, streams and lakes make up our surface water, which helps supply the water that people use every day.

Most of California's surface water is in the north because that's where about 75% of the precipitation falls. Southern California has much less rain; therefore has fewer rivers and lakes.

### Groundwater

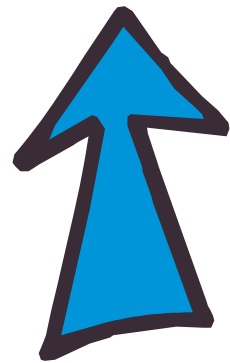
Water that soaks into the ground collects in underground areas of rocks and sand and gravel. These underground areas – called aquifers – hold huge amounts of water like giant sponges. Aquifers can be large or small. And they can be almost right under our feet or they can be deep underground. Under the San Gabriel Valley lies a huge aquifer that holds about 2,800,000,000 gallons of water.

California has about 450 groundwater basins under almost half the state. But much of the water in these aquifers is too far underground to reach. To get the water up to the surface, wells are drilled down to the aquifers. Electrical pumps then bring the water to the surface. Sometimes, water from under the ground rises naturally to the surface in what is called a spring.

Information courtesy of the California Water Awareness Campaign



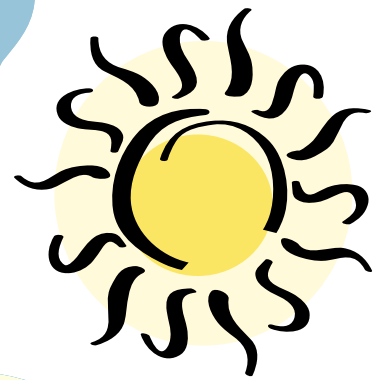
Some of the water on the ground flows into rivers, lakes, and oceans. This is called surface runoff.



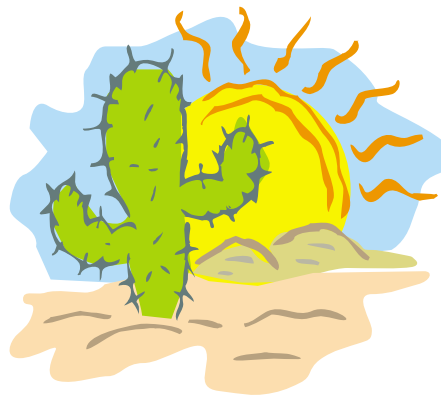
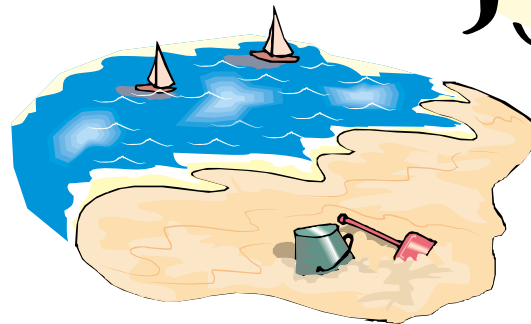
## Water Facts

- 97% of all water on earth is salty, 2% is trapped in icecaps and glaciers, and 1% is available for drinking.
- There are about one million miles of pipeline and aqueducts for water delivery in the U.S. and Canada...enough to go around the earth 40 times.
- 66% (two-thirds) of the human body is water.
  - A cow must drink 3 gallons of water to make 1 gallon of milk.
  - 75% of a tree is water.
  - 70% of an elephant is water.
- It takes 50 glasses of water to grow enough oranges to make 1 glass of orange juice.
- You can survive about one month with food, but only 5 to 7 days without water.
  - You can fill an 8 oz. glass of water about 15,000 times for the same cost as a six-pack of soda pop.

Water in lakes, oceans, rivers and other places on the ground gets heated by the sun. The heated water turns to vapor, which is tiny, invisible droplets of water. The vapor rises into the sky. This is called evaporation.



In Southern California cities, some of the water flows down streets and into storm drains and on to the ocean.



Some water soaks into the ground. This is called percolation. The water in the ground is either used by plants or remains underground until it is needed.

## Be Water Wise

- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth or washing your face.
- Don't use the toilet as a trash can.
- Wash full loads in the dishwasher and washing machine.
- When washing the car, use a large bucket and rinse with the hose quickly.
- Don't let the water hose continue to run.
- Water plants as needed with small amounts of water.
- Make sure when you water the lawn you don't water the walkway and street too.
- Watch out for cloudy skies. Turn off sprinklers when its raining.



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