

WATER CYCLE KICKBALL

GRADES K-8

BACKGROUND

People use water in a variety of ways, from recreation to sustaining life. These activities will help you and your students understand and appreciate the water cycle!

The total amount of water on Earth stays the same. It is always cycling through the water cycle. All of the water that is here today was here years ago and in the time of dinosaurs! (And only 0.02% of the water on Earth is freshwater that is readily available for use by people!) The water in rivers, lakes, and oceans rises in a process called evaporation; as the water molecules heat up and move around more, they become a gas (water vapor) and rise into the air. The water molecules then slow down, cool down and become water droplets, and then gather with dust particles to form clouds. This process is called condensation. When the clouds become too heavy, water droplets fall as precipitation. Water either runs across the land as surface runoff or soaks into the ground as infiltration.

DIRECTIONS

Water Cycle Kickball has two teams—one team kicking and one team fielding. The game is played with normal kickball rules: three outs, runners must return to base on pop flies. There are no force-outs at home plate; however these runners can still be tagged out.

The kicking team will line up behind home base; let them know that they are in a cloud. Each person who goes up to kick has the opportunity to become a water drop. If they kick the ball and make it to first base, they are now precipitation. When they reach first base, they must shout out what type of precipitation they are: rain, snow, sleet, hail, etc., before they are considered safe.

Next, as the runner advances to second base, they are now “water runoff,” so they must run as fast as they can, representing water flowing over the land to the nearest river.

As the runner moves from second to third base, they are now in a river flowing to the ocean. Set up cones for the children to weave around to mimic the motion of a river.

Third base is special. This base is the ocean. There is no limit to the number of people on third base at any given time. This represents the fact that a lot of our water spends a good amount of time in the ocean. In order to leave third base and evaporate back to the “home base cloud,” there must be at least

DEFINITIONS

Evaporation: The transformation of water molecules from liquid phase to vapor phase

Condensation: The transformation of water molecules from vapor phase to liquid phase

Precipitation: Water falling from clouds as rain, snow, sleet, or hail

Infiltration: Water in liquid form as it soaks into and moves through the soil

two people on third base. They can run home alone or in groups of two, three, or more. A person can run alone only if they are leaving at least two people on third base.

When the runner makes it back to home base they must yell, "Evaporated!" to signify they have completed one round of the water cycle. The team with the most completed water cycles wins.

When the fielding team gets someone out by either tagging the runner or by a force out, the person on the fielding team must yell "Evaporate." This signals that the water drop is ending its cycle early by evaporating straight into the clouds.

