Picture It: The Water Cycle

Did you know...?

- Almost all of the world's water is contained in the oceans. (over 90%)
- All living things need water to survive—without it they'd die.
- The water we use today is the same water that's been around since the earth began.
- The water on earth is limited; it moves around the world in the water cycle.

Here are the four main stages of the water cycle:

First, water contained in the seas, oceans and rivers gradually warms up, using heat from the sun. This water then evaporates—it turns into a gas in the earth's atmosphere. This is known as ***evaporation***. The water changes state, from a liquid to a gas.

At the same time, plants and trees lose water vapour through their leaves, which also end up in the air. This is called ***transpiration***.

All of this water vapour rises high into the sky, into the earth's atmosphere. The cold air then causes the water vapour to form clouds. This is called ***condensation***. (You can also see condensation in action when you have a bath or a shower and your mirror or windows might mist up!)

Finally, when the clouds become too full or heavy, they lose their water as rain, snow or hail. This is called ***precipitation***. The water falls back to earth and is collected in the oceans, rivers and streams—and the water cycle begins again.

Picture It

Using the information above, draw a diagram (picture) for each stage in the water cycle. Be sure to give each drawing a title; annotate (label) the main objects in your diagram.

Think about it...

- Make a list of ways you use water every day at home and at school.
- If the water cycle is continuous and the water on earth is limited, what does that mean about the water you drink from your tap?
- How does the water you drink get back into the water cycle?

Source: Original text by Anne Glennie