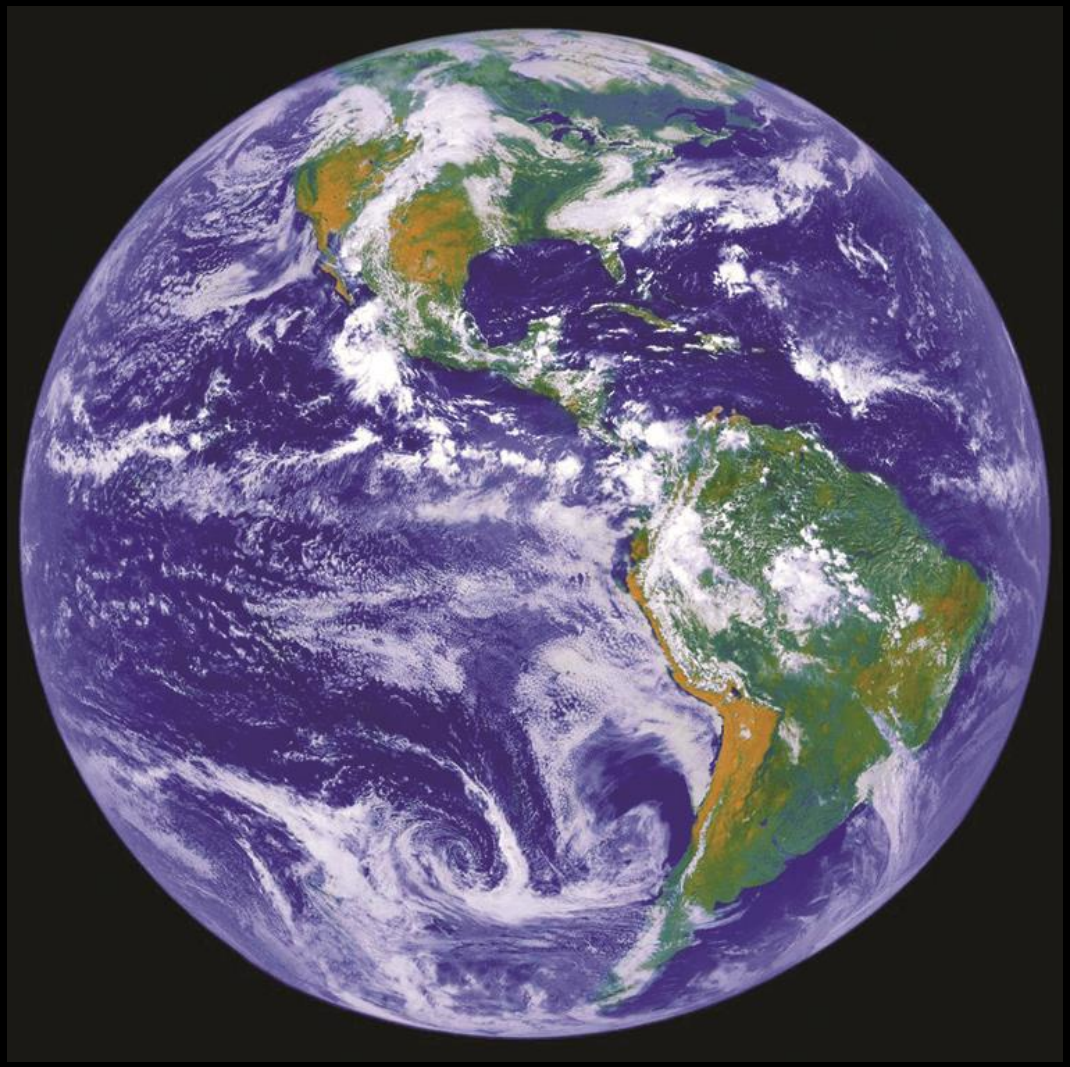
The Water Cycle

Most of the Earth's surface is covered in water.

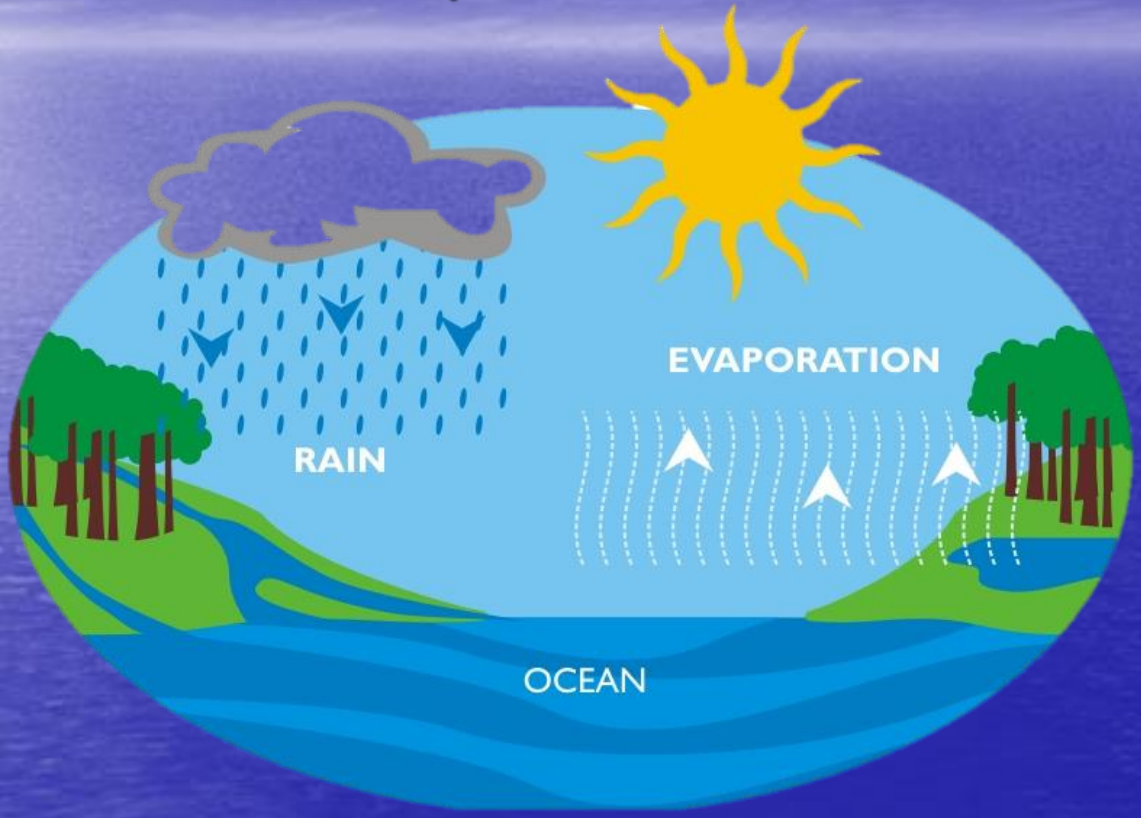
This water is constantly moving!



It moves from the surface of the Earth,

…into the air

…and then it falls back down to Earth.



We call this continual process…

The WATER CYCLE

To see how it works, let's start with the process known as…

EVAPORATION

EVAPORATION

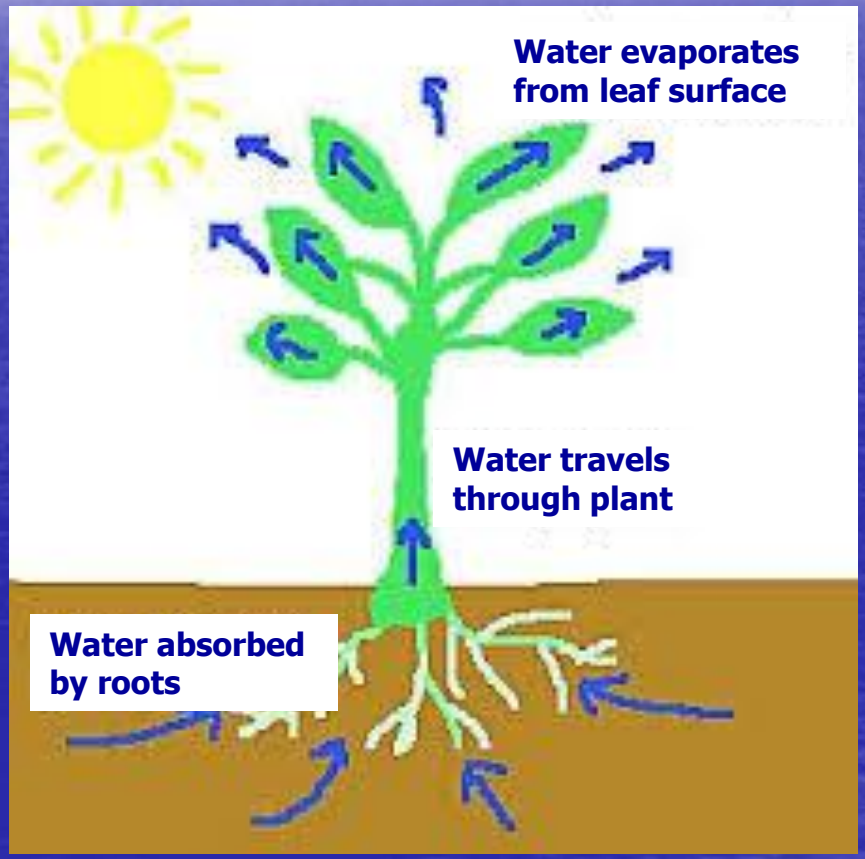
Each day the sun heats the earth's surface causing water to turn from a liquid into a gas.

We can't always see this process but water evaporates from oceans, rivers and lakes every day.

TRANSPIRATION

Plants also produce water that will evaporate when heated by the sun.

This process is called TRANSPIRATION.



CONDENSATION

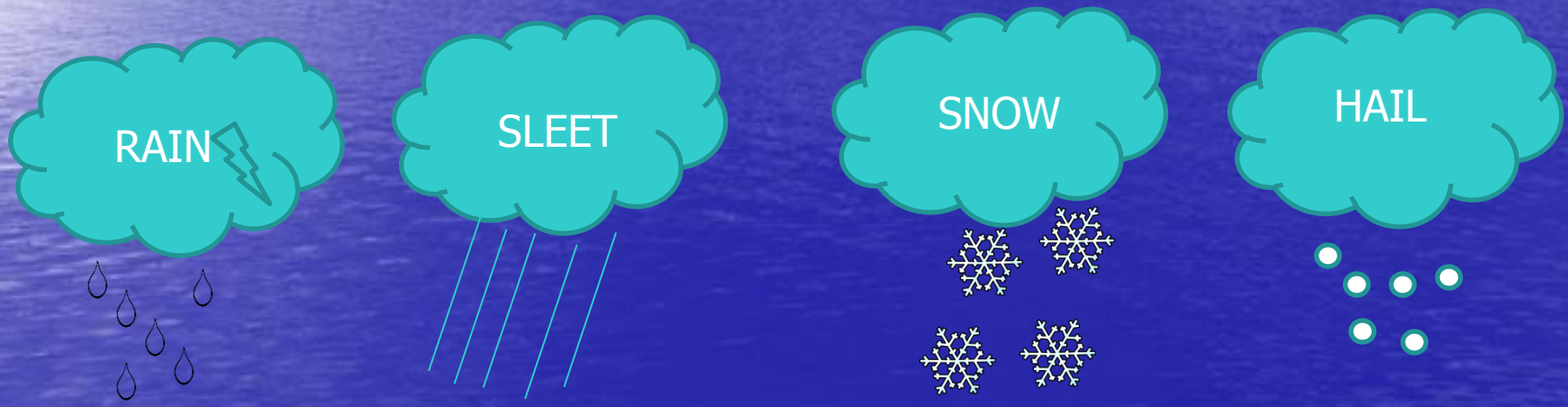
As water evaporates from the Earth's surface, the water vapors rise up into the sky.

As the water vapor cools, it changes into fine droplets which form clouds.

PRECIPITATION

Water returns to the Earth's surface when temperatures are cool enough to convert the water vapors from gas to liquid or solid. Gravity pulls the water back to the Earth's Surface.

Here are some types of precipitation.



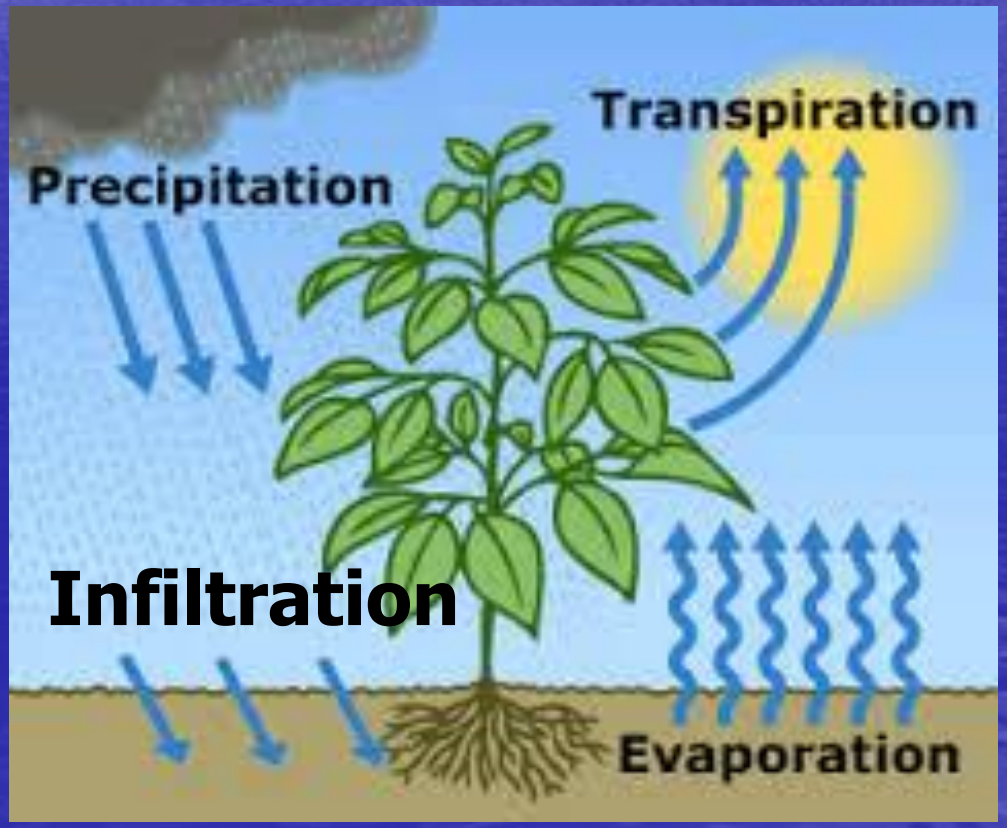
INFILTRATION

Some of the water that lands on Earth will evaporate back into the clouds.

Some water will be absorbed into the soil.

We call this process
INFILTRATION

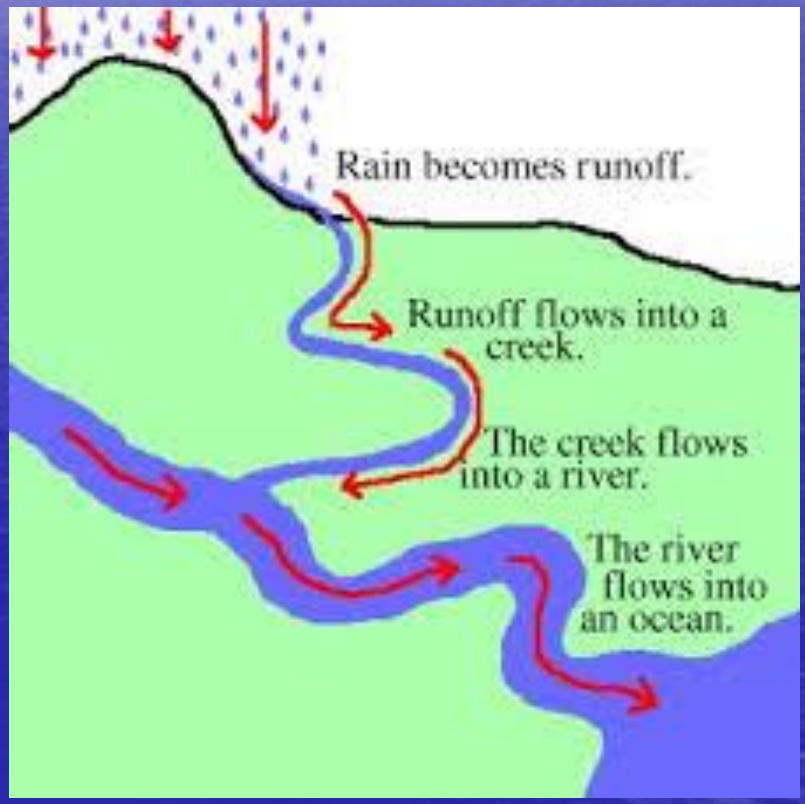
Can you think of why that might be important?



RUNOFF

If the water does not absorb into the soil or evaporate, it moves over land in a variety of ways.

This part of the Water Cycle is referred to as RUNOFF



As you can see, the movement of water is a continual process.

Now, let's review each step in the Earth's Water Cycle.