

LESSON PLAN

Water Cycle

Science · Year 7 · 45 min

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Aligns to The New Zealand Curriculum. Science, Level 4 (Years 7 to 8), Year 7 teaching sequence. Planet Earth and Beyond: processes in the water cycle and how energy from the Sun drives them. (Refreshed Te Mātaiaho version available 2026; mandatory 2027.)

[Te Mātaiaho: Science](#)**LEARNING INTENTION**

Explain the stages of the water cycle and the energy that drives each stage

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can name the four main stages of the water cycle: evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and collection.
- I can explain that energy from the Sun drives evaporation.
- I can describe what happens to water particles during condensation.
- I can connect the water cycle to weather patterns I observe in Aotearoa.

Lesson Structure

HOOK

- A shallow tray of warm water sits at the front. What do you notice above it?
- Touch the cold glass held over the tray. What forms on the surface?
- Where else have you seen this happen in real life?

TEACHING

- Water cycle diagram on the board. Four stages labelled: evaporation, condensation, precipitation, collection.
- Energy from the Sun heats liquid water. Particles escape as water vapour.
- Water vapour rises, cools, and particles clump together. That is condensation forming clouds.
- Clouds release water as precipitation: rain, hail, or snow depending on temperature.

PRACTICE

- Blank water cycle outline on mini whiteboards. Label the four stages from memory.
- Add an arrow showing where the Sun's energy enters the cycle.
- Which stage did most pairs find hardest to place? Revisit that stage together.

CLOSURE

- Point to one stage. Name it and describe what happens.
- Where does the Sun's energy enter the cycle?
- Which of our success criteria can you tick off right now?

Task Details

TASK

- Water cycle diagram printout. Cut out the four stage labels.
- Arrange labels on the correct stage of the diagram.
- Add an arrow to show where the Sun's energy enters.
- Write one sentence describing what happens during condensation.

MATERIALS

Water cycle diagram printout (one per student, A4), pre-printed stage labels to cut out (one set per student), scissors (one pair per student), glue sticks (one per student), pencils, whiteboard and markers for class reference

TEACHER ROLE

- Circulate. Ask: which stage comes right after evaporation?
- Prompt students to trace the Sun's arrow before writing.
- Check condensation sentences name water particles clumping together.

ASSESSMENT NOTES

- Criterion 1: all four stage labels placed correctly on the diagram.
- Criterion 2: Sun's energy arrow points to the evaporation stage only.
- Criterion 3: condensation sentence names particles cooling and clumping.
- Criterion 4: listen for weather links during circulation. Note who cannot connect.

RESOURCES

[YouTube](#) [water cycle video](#)

[Pinterest](#) [water cycle activities](#)

RELIEF TEACHER NOTES

- Printouts and scissors are in the science resource tray at the front bench.
- The class diagram used in teaching is still on the board. Leave it up.
- Most students work independently. Check any student who seems unsure of stage order.
- Condensation is the stage students find hardest. Refer them to the board diagram.