

Chapter 11-9: The Water Cycle

Water is the most abundant substance in living things. The human body, for example, is composed of about 70% water, and jellyfish are 95% water. Water participates in many important biochemical mechanisms, including photosynthesis, digestion, and cellular respiration. It is also the habitat for many species of plants, animals, and microorganisms, and it participates in the cycling of all of the materials used by living things. Water is distributed through the biosphere in a cycle known as the water, or hydrologic cycle. In this plate, we will examine some aspects of that cycle.

In this plate, we show the biosphere and several arrows that show the movement of water through it. Our primary emphasis will be on the arrows, and you should color them in darker colors than the other aspects of the biosphere.

We begin by looking at the atmosphere, which includes the clouds. When water vapor cools, it condenses and falls to Earth as rain. For instance, look at the arrow labeled (A), or precipitation over land; gravity draws the water back to Earth in the form of rain, sleet, and snow. Precipitation also occurs over oceans (B).

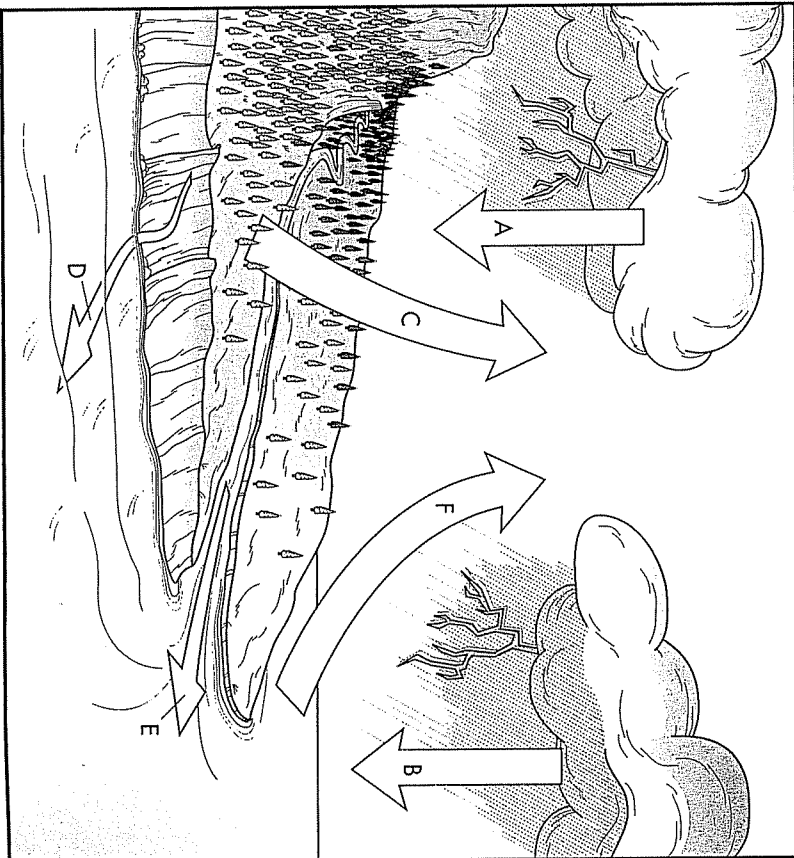
We have begun our discussion of the water cycle by showing how water reaches the Earth. We will now see how it is stored in living things before it is returned to the atmosphere. Continue your reading as you color the diagram, including its arrows.

The living things on Earth are represented, in our diagram, by the trees. Water is absorbed by the roots of the trees and used in photosynthesis, but it is also lost from their leaves through the process of **transpiration** (C). Water also returns to the atmosphere through evaporation from the soil and from numerous other sources. In general, the amount of precipitation received by an area helps determine what types of plants will grow there. The nature of the vegetation, in turn, determines the types of animals that inhabit a region.

Water from the land enters the ocean through seepage from the ground (D); it percolates from the surface down to the water table. This water-saturated zone of soil and rock is called an aquifer, and water seeps from the aquifer to the ocean. Water also reaches the ocean as runoff from the surface (E). Runoff from the surface includes flow from rivers as well as melting snowfields and glaciers.

Now that we have described how water reaches the oceans, we will explore how it returns to the atmosphere, completing the hydrologic cycle. Continue reading below as you complete your coloring.

The major reservoirs of water on Earth are the oceans. Oceans cover about three-quarters of Earth's surface and contain about 97% of its water. Solar radiation causes water's evaporation from the ocean (F). Over 80% of the evaporated water in the hydrologic cycle enters the atmosphere in this way, and about 52% of this falls back into the oceans in the form of rain. The remainder remains in the atmosphere as clouds, ice crystals, and water vapor and then precipitates over land. On a global scale, the quantity of ocean water that evaporates each year is equivalent to a layer that's 120 cm deep and covers the entire surface of the ocean.



- The Water Cycle
- Precipitation Over Land.....A
 - Precipitation Over Ocean.....B
 - Transpiration.....C
 - Seepage From Ground.....D
 - Runoff From Surface.....E
 - Evaporation from Ocean.....F

The Water Cycle

Chapter 11-10: The Carbon Cycle

Energy flows from the sun into the biosphere, but nutrients do not enter the biosphere from an outside source. Essentially, the same pool of nutrients has circulated for the billions of years that the Earth has been in existence. Some nutrients, called macronutrients, are used by organisms in large quantities, while others, micronutrients, are used only in trace quantities. Macronutrients include carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, and phosphorus; micronutrients include iodine, iron, zinc, and some others. Both macronutrients and micronutrients are recycled; they are passed back and forth between living and nonliving components of the ecosystem in processes that we call biogeochemical cycles. This plate and the ones that follow trace the pathways of several elements through biogeochemical cycles.

The prime focus of this plate is on the arrows that show how carbon travels among components of the biosphere. You should use darker colors for the arrows.

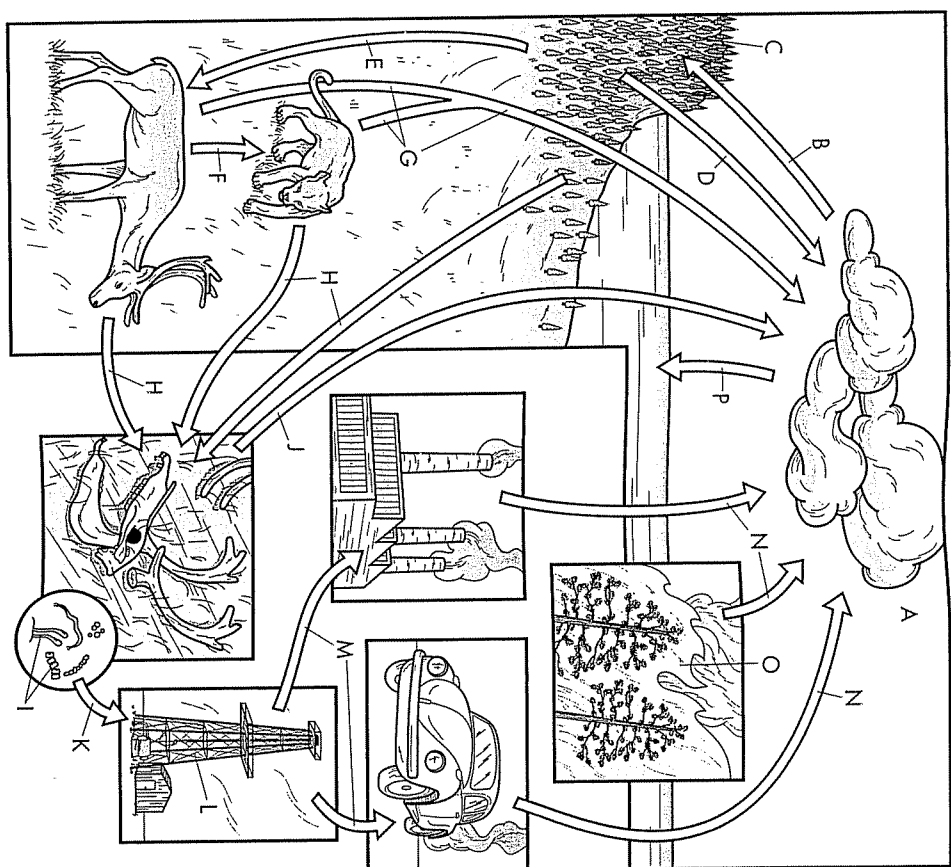
Material substances are incorporated into organic compounds by primary producers. Primary producers are then consumed by secondary consumers, and decomposers are ultimately responsible for releasing the material back into the nonliving environment. We will begin our study of the carbon cycle with the atmosphere (A), which is Earth's major reservoir of carbon, in the form of carbon dioxide. Carbon enters the biotic (living) part of the ecosystem through photosynthesis (B). We suggest a green color for the arrow. Plants of the forest (C) take the carbon in carbon dioxide and fix it in organic compounds such as glucose, starch, cellulose, and other carbohydrates. Respiration in plants (D) returns carbon dioxide to the atmosphere; an arrow shows this process.

We have seen how carbon enters the cycle of living things through photosynthesis, and we will now see how it passes through various life forms. Continue your reading below as you color.

Plants are primary producers. In the course of plant consumption (E), carbon passes into primary consumers, animals. When animal consumption (F) occurs, or when the primary consumer is eaten, carbon passes to a secondary consumer, represented by the lion in the plate. Respiration (G) takes place in cells of the primary and secondary consumers, and carbon is released back into the environment as carbon dioxide. When the primary and secondary consumers die, their organic matter enters the soil through the process of decay (H). It is broken down by the decomposers, or detritus feeders (I), which are small animals and microorganisms that subsist on decaying matter such as fallen leaves, dead bodies, and animal waste. Earthworms, mites, centipedes, insects, and crustaceans are detritus feeders. Thus, respiration in detritus feeders (J) also returns carbon to the atmosphere.

We have seen how carbon cycles through various living things on Earth. We will now turn to a storage process for carbon in the soil. Continue your reading below as you complete the plate.

Throughout history, much carbon has been converted to fossil fuel (K). High pressure and temperature transform carbon-containing organic matter into coal, oil, and natural gas. Fossil fuel processing (L) follows. There are many uses for fossil fuels (M). Some power plants generate electricity using fossil fuels, and automobiles are powered by gasoline. The products of the combustion (N) of fossil fuels include carbon dioxide and other carbon compounds that enter the atmosphere. Carbon also enters the environment from the burning of wood and plants that occurs during forest fires (O). A final aspect of the carbon cycle that we will examine is exchange with oceans (P). Some carbon dioxide from the air dissolves in oceans and combines with calcium to form calcium carbonate, which is incorporated into the shells of mollusks and other creatures. When these shells decay, they transform into limestone, which, over time, dissolves as it is exposed to water. Carbon is released from the limestone and may return to the atmosphere.



The Carbon Cycle

- The Carbon Cycle
- Atmosphere A
 - Photosynthesis B
 - Forest C
 - Respiration in Plants D
 - Plant Consumption E
 - Animal Consumption F
 - Respiration in Animals F
 - Decay H
 - Detritus Feeders I
 - Respiration in Detritus Feeders J
 - Conversion to Fossil Fuel K
 - Fossil Fuel Processing L
 - Uses for Fossil Fuel M
 - Products of Fossil Fuel Combustion N
 - Forest Fire O
 - Exchange with Oceans P