



Strand Map: Water Cycle

Introduction

This sequence of benchmarks leads to the goal in *Science for All Americans (SFAA)* that water evaporates from the surface of the earth, rises and cools, condenses into clouds and then into rain or snow, and falls again to the surface, where it collects in rivers, lakes, soil, and porous layers of rock (*SFAA*, Chapter 4: The Physical Setting). This goal appears in grades 6–8 and is extended in grades 9–12 to include an explanation for why evaporated water rises. Before students can understand that “when liquid water disappears, it turns into a gas (vapor) in the air,” they need to move beyond viewing air as something only produced by wind to accepting it as a permanent substance. Before they can understand rainfall in terms of gravity, they need to know that “things on or near the earth are pulled toward it by the earth’s gravity.” The Water Cycle strand contributes to, and is supported by, literacy goals related to the Conservation of Matter strand.



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