



The Water Cycle

Overview: Molecules of water can move from the surface of oceans, lakes, rivers and even cups of water into the air. This is called evaporation. Many clouds form from water that evaporates. Wind can blow clouds in many directions. If the clouds move over land, precipitation can fall and the water can start to flow downhill. Small streams can form. Water in small streams often flows downhill into larger streams and eventually into rivers. Rivers usually carry water all the way to oceans. Some of that ocean water will again evaporate into the air, form clouds and come back to earth as precipitation. This journey of water from bodies of water, into the air to form clouds, and then back to earth as precipitation is called the water cycle.

Experiment: Observe the process of evaporation and what factors might influence it by observing levels of water in cups in different locations over time.

Question: Over the course of a week which cups will have the least amount of water, which will have the most?

Prediction: Based on what you know, what do you think the answer to the above question will be?

Materials: 4 cups, water, colored pencils, pens, markers, etc., ruler

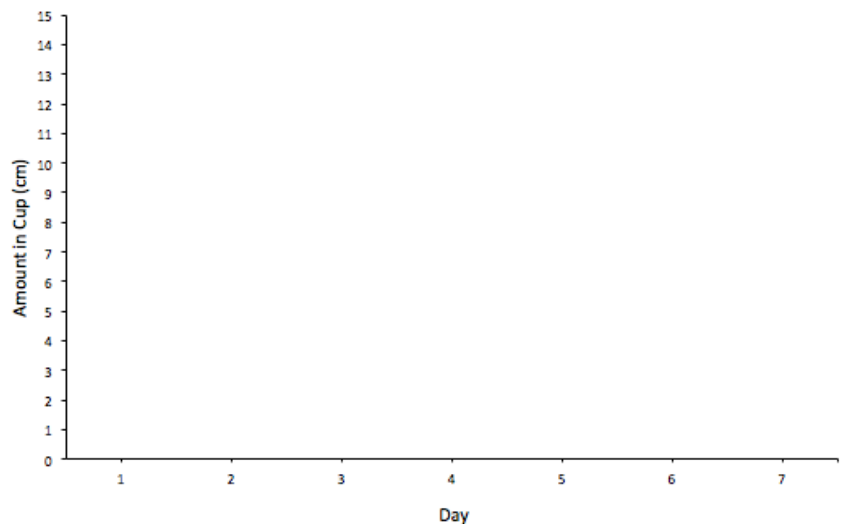
Method:

1. Fill four cups with an even amount of water. Label each cup 1-4.
2. Place one cup in the shade outside, one in the sun outside, one in a sunny spot inside, and one in a shady spot inside. (Make sure to keep away from pets who might drink the water!)
3. Each day, at the same time everyday, measure the level of water in each cup with a ruler. Record your results in the table below.
4. At the end of the week create a scatter plot, using a different colored writing utensil for each cup.

Data:

Amount in Cup (cm)				
Day	Cup 1	Cup 2	Cup 3	Cup 4
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Amount of Water in Cups Over Time



Conclusion: What did you find? Was your prediction correct? If so, why? If not, why not? What part of the water cycle was occurring in your cups?