Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Academic Vocabulary

Read the short story and answer each question.

The Water Cycle in Action

Have you ever wondered where rain comes from—or where it goes after it hits the ground? The answer is part of something called the **water cycle**, a system that moves water through the Earth's surface, air, and sky again and again.

Evaporation is the first step. When the sun shines on oceans, lakes, or puddles, it heats the water and turns it into a gas called water vapor. That gas rises into the sky. This is evaporation—when liquid water turns into a gas because of heat.

Next comes **condensation**. As the water vapor goes higher, the air gets cooler. The vapor turns back into tiny water droplets. These droplets form clouds. Condensation means the gas has turned back into a liquid.

Then comes **precipitation**. When the clouds get heavy, the water falls back to Earth as rain, snow, or hail. That's precipitation—any kind of water falling from the sky.

Finally, the water moves into **collection**. It flows into rivers, lakes, or underground, ready to begin the cycle again.

Each word—evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and collection—describes a step in the cycle. And together, they explain how water keeps moving around our planet.

Name:

The Water Cycle in Action

1. What does the word *evaporation* mean in the passage?

A. Water being stored in rivers

B. Water turning into gas because of heat

C. Water getting cold and forming clouds

D. Water freezing into ice

2. What does *precipitation* describe?

A. Water that disappears

B. Water that turns into fog

C. Water that falls to Earth from clouds

D. Water that flows into the ocean

3. Fill in the blank:

When water vapor cools and turns back into liquid droplets that form clouds, that process is called _____.

4. Explain the meaning of *condensation* using information from the text. Why is it an important part of the water cycle?

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5. Choose one domain-specific word from the passage and explain how the author helps the reader understand what it means.

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Instructional Guide

Guide Reading Level: P
Lexile Level: 645L-795L
Grade Level: 4th Grade, Beginning of the Year
Genre: Informational Nonfiction – Earth Science

Introducing the Text

"In this passage, students will learn about the water cycle and focus on figuring out what science words like *evaporation* and *precipitation* mean using clues in the sentence and paragraph. This supports vocabulary development and science understanding."

Vocabulary: evaporation, condensation, precipitation, collection, water vapor

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you already know about how rain forms or where water goes?
2. Have you ever seen steam or mist rising from a hot surface?
3. What happens to puddles after a sunny day?

During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does the word *evaporation* mean, and what causes it?
2. How does the word *condensation* connect to clouds forming?
3. What happens during *precipitation*, and how does the author help you understand it?

After Reading Discussion Questions

1. Which word in the text was the most difficult to understand? How did you figure it out?
2. How do these four vocabulary words work together to explain a big science idea?
3. How does using context clues help us figure out science words we don't know?

Activity Idea

Give students four index cards, each labeled with one water cycle word. On the back of each card, they draw a picture and write a sentence using context clues to explain what the word means. Then, use the cards in a matching game or as part of a water cycle poster project.